

SOCIETAL STRIFE AND STAGNATION: A TRANSCRIPT OF THE MANIFESTATIONS OF SOCIETAL FACTIONS WITHIN AMISH TRIPATHI'S SHIVA TRILOGY

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Abstract

This paper examines the manifestations of societal factions within Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy, focusing on the themes of societal strife and stagnation. By analysing the narrative elements and character interactions, this study aims to shed light on the complex dynamics of factionalism and its impact on societal progress within the trilogy. Introduction: Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy is a renowned literary work that explores the mythical world of Lord Shiva and his journey as the Neelkanth. Amidst the epic narrative, the trilogy also delves into the intricate to analyse the caste systems and demonstrate the level of depravity to which the human mind may fall in order to hang on to power and dominance. It does so by using Amish's Shiva Trilogy as a jumping-off point. The concerns of separation and discrimination that were adhered to centuries ago and that are just as important as they were then are brought to mind by The Trilogy as a warning of the dangers of such situations. Amish investigates the myriad of restrictions that are placed on those of lower caste during the course of the Shiva Trilogy (Nagas, Vikarmas). The following are some examples of the regulations that they followed: wandering about with a drum called 'dhol' and pounding on it to signal their approach so that others may flee the area to avoid getting contaminated; residing outside the city borders; and not touching other people. In addition to this, it exposes the hypocrisy of Hindu philosophy and shows a community that is unable to stop allowing crime to go unpunished. The caste structures depicted in the Shiva Trilogy serve as the primary source material for the article. It is an attempt to explore their origin, nature, gravity, and deprivation, as well as to discuss how tradition and culture combine to produce a unique form of social bondage, which frequently becomes the reason for violence, physical assault, and humiliation. In addition, it is a discussion of how tradition and culture combine to produce a unique form of social bondage. In the Shiva Trilogy, the mistreatment, persecution, and caste discrimination of the Vikarmas and Nagas, as well as Shiva's challenge to these norms, are discussed.

Keywords: Maika System, Casteism, Nagas, Vikarmas, Hypocrisy

Societal factions have been explored in literature for centuries, from Shakespeare's tragedy Romeo and Juliet, where the Montagues and the Capulets are in perpetual conflict, to George R.R. Martin's book series A Song of Ice and Fire, where different factions with varying

degrees of the power divide the seven kingdoms of Westeros. Ralf Dahrendorf, a German sociologist, proposed a theoretical perspective on societal factions, where he argued that they are the result of the inevitable competition for resources and influence between different social groups. Dahrendorf's perspective provides a theoretical framework to analyse the societal factions portrayed in the Shiva Trilogy. Societal factions can be defined as the groups of people that comprise a society, based on social, economic, or cultural differences. These factions can be a source of conflict and can lead to the formation of opposing groups that struggle for power and control. Many factors can lead to the formation of societal factions, such as religion, culture, ethnicity, and ideology. It is pivotal to analyse the interactions between the different factions in a society as it can provide insight into the power dynamics and struggles that exist within that society.

The Immortals of Meluha, written by Amish Tripathi, is set in ancient India and explores the theme of societal factions. The novel's narrative is set in the imaginary land of Meluha, which was once a peaceful and prosperous land but is now on the brink of war due to conflicts between different societal groups. The novel explores the theme of societal factions through the interactions of different social groups in Meluha and their struggles for power and control. The Secret of the Nagas is the second novel in the Shiva Trilogy written by Amish Tripathi. The novel deals with the theme of societal factions, where the inhabitants of the fictional land of Meluha are divided into various groups based on their identities and beliefs. The theme of societal factions is a prevalent one in literature, as it explores the power dynamics and struggles within society.

The Shiva Trilogy, written by Amish Tripathi, tells the story of a fictional ancient civilization in India, where different factions with opposing beliefs, values, and interests emerged. The Immortals of Meluha, a fictional account of a lost civilization, is set in ancient India and explores the social constructions within this society, focusing on societal factions in Meluha. The narrative revolves around the character of Shiva, a warrior from outside the land of Meluha, who is invited to Meluha to save it from the evil forces that threaten it. The novel explores the political tensions between the king of Meluha, Daksha, the Suryavanshi (Sun dynasty), and Chandravanshi (Moon dynasty), a community of people believed to have rebelled against the great King of Meluha, Lord Ram. The Secret of the Nagas is a work of fiction that is set in ancient India, but it is not a historical novel. Instead, it is a fictionalized account of a land called Meluha, which is under the control of the Suryavanshis, a group of people who consider themselves to be descendants of the gods. The Chandravanshis are their main rivals, and they believe that the Suryavanshis have usurped their rightful place as rulers of the land. The Nagas is a third group that is shrouded in mystery, and they are accused of being responsible for the recent attacks that have been carried out against the Suryavanshis. The Brangas are a fourth group that is introduced in The Secret of the Nagas, and they are portrayed as a group of outcasts who have been forced to live in exile.

It is necessary to take into account geographic shifts, space reorganisation, and the modernization process in order to comprehend the nature of crime and its relationship to a place. Both capitalism and proletarianism are crucial to the formation of geography. The transformation of a location into a space has an impact on its social, cultural, political, and historical geography, which includes a variety of narratives, unheard voices, and struggles for

survival. In *Das Kapital*, Marx refers to it as ‘inner contradictions,’ while in *Of Other Spaces*, Foucault refers to it as ‘heterotopias.’ The reorganisation of spaces is defined as follows by Edward W. Soja in *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989):

Restructuring is not a mechanical or automatic process, nor are its potential results and possibilities pre-determined. In its hierarchy of manifestations, restructuring must be seen as originating in and responding to severe shocks in pre-existing social conditions and practices; and as triggering an intensification of competitive struggles to control the forces which shape material life. (159)

The *Immortals of Meluha* explores the societal faction of the Suryavanshi, a group said to have descended from the Hindu god, Lord Ram. The Suryavanshis are one of the main groups in Meluha, and they consider themselves to be a superior race. They believe that they are descended from the gods, and they have created a caste system that places them at the top of the social hierarchy. They believe in a caste-based system and are divided into different clans such as the Nagas, the Pandits, and the Vaishyas. In the novel, their representation is of a loyal, disciplined, and rule-abiding group of people, who are interested in maintaining the sanctity of their caste and they believe that their way of life is the only way that society can function properly.

The Chandravanshis are the main rivals of the Suryavanshis, and they believe that they are the true rulers of Meluha. The Chandravanshi societal faction is portrayed as rebels against the authority of Lord Ram, who are now seeking to establish themselves as rulers in Meluha. They represent a broader society that is opposed to the rule of the upper caste and the prevailing caste-based system. They are considered the lower caste in society and are often subjected to discrimination and oppression due to their caste. They are depicted as cunning and deceitful, and they are at the forefront of the struggle to overthrow the Suryavanshis. Shiva is astonished to know that the Chandravanshis too in the tradition of the Suryavanshis believe in the legend of the Neelkanth. Anandmayi reveals to Shiva: “The legend is not false. And we are obviously not evil. It is just that you are too naïve. You have been misled by the evil Suryavanshis. I will set it right. I will show you the goodness of our path” (*The Immortals of Meluha* 378). In the series of intermittent consultations with the Vasudevs, Shiva fulfils their quest of identity. Connecting with Gopal, the Chief Vasudevan Guide, Shiva makes the point, “May be the Nagas deserve the hearing. Maybe everyone else has been unfair to them. Maybe they deserve the benefit of doubt” (*The Secret of Nagas* 274). Thus, Shiva becomes a harbinger of destruction and creation of various identities which finds full expression in *The Secret of Nagas*.

The Chandravanshis are also shown to be more pragmatic than the Suryavanshis, and they are willing to adopt new ideas if they believe that they will help them to achieve their goals. Here Tripathi makes an attempt to emphasise his philosophy of the good and the evil and takes his readers on a journey to discover the truth. These two balancing forces constitute a kind of duality which is explicitly preached by the Pandit or Vasudev in the concluding chapter:

...a duality that is one of the many perspectives of the universe- the masculine and the feminine. The Asuras and the Suryavanshis represent 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. Neither can ever be destroyed. Otherwise, the universe will implode. (The Immortals of Meluha 392)

The Nagas is a mysterious group that is often blamed for the attacks that have been carried out against the Suryavanshis. They are not well understood by the other factions in Meluha, and this has led to a great deal of suspicion and mistrust. The Nagas are depicted as being ruthless and dangerous, and they are feared by all who encounter them. The Brangas are a group of outcasts who have been forced to live in exile. They are viewed as inferior by the other factions in Meluha, and they are often subject to discrimination and abuse. However, the Brangas are also portrayed as being resourceful and resilient, and they are able to adapt to their new surroundings and create a thriving community of their own. The third societal faction is the Non-Aligned Meluhan Faction, a group that comprises people from all castes who reject the existing caste system's legitimacy. This faction represents those who are characterized as wise, educated, and intelligent. They take a rational and pragmatic approach to governance and are seen as being opposed to the caste-based system. The non-aligned faction includes people from both the Suryavanshi and the Chandravanshi communities, and its members support the idea that government should be based on merit.

Michel Foucault has criticized the enslaving powers of the institutions crushing the liberty of the individuals. The Nagas are victims of state-owned power structure. Foucault comments thus:

The exercise of power can produce as much acceptance as may be wished for: it can pile up the dead and shelter itself behind whatever threats it can imagine. In itself, the exercise of power is not a violence that sometimes hides, or an implicitly renewed consent. It operates on the field of possibilities in which the behaviour of active subjects is able to inscribe itself (The Subject and Power 341).

The emergence of the Nagas as a formidable geopolitical player adds complexity to the narrative. The Nagas, residing in the city of Panchavati and later expanding to create their empire, challenge the existing power structures. Their territorial ambitions and expansionist policies parallel historical examples of empires seeking to extend their influence and control over neighbouring regions. Hence Tripathi acknowledges evil as potent as good itself and states that they are the two sides of the same coin. He exhorts that even human life on this earth is under the godly scheme of balance as we take in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide which may be dangerous for some but we have been gifted with extraordinary power of mind. This power enables us to create a balance. In The Oath of Vayuputras, Tripathi illuminates, "Therefore, if the universe is trying to maintain balance, we must aid this by ensuring that Good is not enjoyed excessively. Or else the universe will re-balance itself by creating Evil to counteract Good. That is the purpose of Evil: it balances the Good" (97).

The Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis are engaged in a bitter struggle for power, and this has led to a great deal of violence and bloodshed. The two groups are portrayed as being deeply divided, and there is little hope of reconciliation between them. The Nagas are viewed with suspicion by both the Suryavanshis and the Chandravanshis, and there is a great deal of conflict between them. The Brangas, on the other hand, are largely ignored by the other factions in Meluha, and they are able to go about their business without interference. Shiva, the protagonist of The Shiva Trilogy, is initially unaware of the divisions that exist in

Meluha. However, as he becomes more involved in the politics of the land, he begins to see the ways in which the different factions interact with each other. Shiva is initially sympathetic to the Suryavanshis, but as he learns more about the other factions in Meluha, he begins to question the validity of their claims of superiority. Shiva is particularly drawn to the Nagas, whom he believes have been unfairly demonized by the other factions in Meluha. Foucault defines the power thus:

Usually, power is understood as the capacity of an agent to impose his will over the will of the powerless, or the ability to force them to do things they do not wish to do. In this sense, power is understood as possession, as something that can be owned, but rather something that acts and manifests itself in a certain way; it is more a strategy than a possession. (The History of Sexuality 3)

However, the Foucauldian exploration of social factions in the Shiva Trilogy extends beyond the mere exercise of power. It also encompasses resistance, subversion, and the uncanny.

The Foucauldian perspective necessitates a scrutiny of the disciplinary mechanisms at play within the Shiva Trilogy. Tripathi's narrative presents a society governed by a rigid code of conduct, rituals, and norms. These mechanisms are reminiscent of Foucault's examination of discipline in institutions such as prisons and asylums. In the trilogy, the caste system, hierarchical social structures, and the enforcement of caste-based norms mirror the disciplinary nature of power that Foucault expounded upon in his seminal works. The caste system becomes a tool through which power is exercised, creating divisions, hierarchies, and a sense of social control. The Marxist theory examines the role of economic and social structures in shaping human behaviour and social relations. In the context of the Shiva Trilogy, Marxist theory is relevant in analysing the role of economic and social structures in shaping power relations between different groups. The following quote by Karl Marx, a prominent Marxist theorist, highlights the role of economic structures in shaping social relations: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (11, 12). Marx argues that social existence determines consciousness, highlighting the importance of economic and social structures in shaping human behaviour.

The emergence of these factions is the result of historical, social, and political factors. The Vasudevs have existed for centuries and have established their dominance through their control over religion and culture. The Vayuputras emerged as a response to the Vasudevs' monopoly, and they believe that technology can be used to improve society. The Chandravanshis are a product of militarization and the belief in the use of force to maintain their power. The novel highlights how these factions have different approaches to societal problems. The analysis of social factions within the Shiva Trilogy, from a Foucauldian perspective, also include the study of the geopolitical aspects of knowledge. The narrative's depiction of conflicting belief systems, religious beliefs, and the pursuit of concealed knowledge provides clear evidence of Foucault's claim that knowledge is inherently connected to power and is influenced by historical and cultural circumstances. The competition between the Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis extends beyond a basic battle for control over land, including a clash for knowledge and narratives. The portrayal of the Vayuputras as custodians of old wisdom highlights the geopolitical dynamics of knowledge

in the story, as knowledge serves as a means of acquiring power and exerting authority. Foucault in *Power/ Knowledge* comments thus:

None of the political struggles, the conflicts waged over power, with power, for power, the alterations in the relation of forces, the favoring of certain tendencies, the reinforcements, etc., that come about within this civil peace that -none of these phenomena in a political system should be interpreted except as a continuation of war. (90)

The novel *The Oath of the Vayuputras* portrays three major social factions: the Vasudevs, the Vayuputras, and the Chandravanshis. The Vasudevs represent the traditional Brahmin caste, and they control the religious and cultural aspects of the society. The Vayuputras, on the other hand, are a sect that follows Lord Shiva, and they believe in the use of technology to achieve their goals. The Chandravanshis are a warrior clan that reveres Lord Ram and believes in the use of military power to maintain their dominance. The novel explores the power dynamics between these factions and their impact on society. The interactions between these factions are characterized by conflict, manipulation, and power struggles. The Vasudevs and the Vayuputras are in constant conflict for control over society's religious and cultural aspects. The Chandravanshis use their military power to expand their territory and maintain their dominance. The novel portrays the adverse effects that these factions have on society, such as religious intolerance, violence, and discrimination.

The novel's portrayal of societal factions is consistent with Dahrendorf's perspective, where the competition for resources and power creates an inevitable conflict between different social groups. The Vasudevs, Vayuputras, and Chandravanshis fight for control over resources and influence, and their actions have adverse effects on society. The novel highlights the Dahrendorfian perspective on societal power struggles. The societal factions in the novel have a profound impact on society, as they shape its religious, cultural, and political aspects. The Vasudevs control the religious aspects of society, the Vayuputras introduce new technological advances into society, and the Chandravanshis maintain their power through military control. The three factions have different approaches to societal issues, and their interactions have adverse effects on social harmony and coexistence.

The Immortals of Meluha and *The Secret of the Nagas* explore the theme of societal factions through the portrayal of the Suryavanshi, the Chandravanshi, the Nagas, the Brangas and the non-aligned Meluhan factions. The inhabitants of Meluha are deeply divided, with each group having a distinct identity and set of beliefs. The Suryavanshis, the Chandravanshis, the Nagas, and the Brangas are all depicted as being different from each other, and this has led to a society that is deeply fragmented. The interactions between these factions are characterized by conflict and mistrust, and there is little hope of reconciliation between them. The novels showcase how religion, culture, and caste-based systems can lead to societal factions that are in conflict with each other. The three factions' representation highlights the power dynamics of society and the oppression and discrimination that are based on caste and status. The novels raise important questions about the legitimacy of the existing power structures and call for the examination and challenge of existing societal factions.

The Oath of the Vayuputras explores the theme of societal factions and their implications for society. The novel portrays the conflict between three major factions: the Vasudevs, the Vayuputras, and the Chandravanshis. These factions have emerged as a result of historical,

social, and political factors, and their interactions are characterized by power struggles and manipulations. The societal factions in the novel have adverse effects on society, as they perpetuate religious intolerance, violence, and discrimination. The novel's portrayal of societal factions aligns with Dahrendorf's perspective on societal power struggles. The implications of the societal factions portrayed in *The Oath of the Vayuputras* suggest that a balance between different social groups is crucial for the promotion of social harmony and coexistence. The study of societal factions in the *Shiva Trilogy* emphasizes the importance of understanding the complexities and realities of societal factions and their impacts on society. It also highlights the significance of literature as a tool for analyzing social issues and their representations and interpretations.

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