

УДК 2-1:233

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DEVUTT PATTANAİK'S INTERPRETATION OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY: TRADITION CONTINUATION OR SPIRITUAL CRISIS?

The relevance of the research. Nowadays, as a result of globalization and the policy of multiculturalism, favorable conditions are created for more active interaction between individuals from diverse traditions and cultural backgrounds. Contemporary Indian authors, such as Devdutt Pattanaik, engage in the reinterpretation of traditional myths, imbuing them with fresh perspectives and contemporary relevance, often infusing elements of Western influence into their narratives. To enhance the depth of his works, the aforementioned mythologist not only delves into the interpretation of myths but also engages with the fundamental tenets of Indian philosophy. His concepts regarding the application of religious knowledge in business, leadership, management, and education are quite popular within modern Indian society.

The objective of this study is to elucidate the transformation of foundational principles within Indian philosophy as manifested in contemporary myth-making projects, with a specific focus on the perspectives of Devdutt Pattanaik. In this work, particular attention has been directed towards his reflections concerning the nature of the Atman and the soul. To accomplish this objective, our *methodology* included textual analysis, a comparative framework, the hermeneutic method, as well as synchronic and diachronic approaches in the examination of the sociocultural space.

As a result of this research, we found that the contemporary Indian mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik interprets the term 'Atman' as synonymous with the concept of the soul. The frequent conflation of the terms 'Atman' and 'soul' can be attributed to the mythologist's inadequate exploration of the concept of 'Atman,' thereby leading to this inaccuracy. The author's books target a broad audience and serve as a demonstrative illustration of the influence of mass media on the contemporary socio-cultural space. Nonetheless, these 'spiritual products' frequently contribute to a lack of understanding of the principles that form the basis of Indian spirituality, leading to the oversimplification of profound religious and philosophical concepts. The process of Westernization and the infiltration of Western cultural values into Hindu contexts may result in the loss of the depth and nuance inherent in the meanings of Sanskrit terms. This erosion can impede their precise interpretation within texts and aspects of socio-cultural communication.

Key words: culture, multiculturalism, traditions, soul, interpretation, mythology, philosophical knowledge, existence, ontology, spirituality.

Introduction. In the 20th and 21st centuries, the processes of globalization and multicultural policies have fostered conditions conducive to increased interaction among representatives of diverse ideologies and cultural backgrounds. In India, a great number of new gurus and experts are emerging, each offering their unique interpretations of key facets of Indian philosophy, including ontology. Contemporary Indian authors, whom we classify as the representatives of 'new Indian myth-making' (such as Amish Tripathi, Kavita Kane, and Devdutt Pattanaik, among others), undertake the task of retelling myths through innovative narratives. To enhance the depth of his works, Devdutt Pattanaik not only engages in the interpretation of myths but also delves into the foundational aspects of Indian philosophy. Certain works by this author boast metaphysical profundity, offering reflections on humanity's spiritual quests in the 21st century. The exploration of the concepts of Atman and jiva within Hindu philosophy represents an ontological inquiry that shapes the comprehension of existence. Devdutt Pattanaik's works endeavor to illuminate profound questions surrounding the meaning of being, the essence of human existence, and the relationship between individuals and the higher cosmic order.

The key source under scrutiny in this article is the book *Devlok with Devdutt Pattanaik 2* [11]. This work draws from the inquiries posed to Devdutt Pattanaik and the responses provided by the mythologist during the second season of the television series of the same name. The show was aired in 2016 on Epic TV, and after that, a book was published. Within both the program and the books, Devdutt Pattanaik offers his analysis of characters from Indian mythology, their behavioral patterns, and the narratives of well-known myths. Furthermore, he delves into matters of Indian philosophy, exploring the origins and evolutions of various concepts. Importantly, he contextualizes these concepts within a contemporary framework, explaining their relevance to modern society.

The works of philosophers and scientists who have dedicated their studies to understanding the nature of the Atman became important for our research. Among them are representatives of the Advaita Vedanta school such as Gaudapada and Adi Shankara, a yogi and public figure Swami Vivekananda, theologian Swami Krishnananda Saraswati, as well as contemporary researchers S. Mukhopadhyay and T. N. Chapekar. Additionally, we turned to the philosophical treatise *Mandukya Upanishad*. Moreover, resources such as the Sanskrit-English dictionaries authored by M. Monier-Williams and A. McDonnell were consulted.

Aim and tasks. The purpose of this article is to show how the basic foundations of Indian philosophy are being transformed in contemporary myth-making projects, with specific emphasis on the insights offered by Devdutt Pattanaik. Based on this goal, several tasks have been delineated:

- exploring interpretations of the terms ‘jiva,’ ‘Atman,’ and ‘Paramatman’ within classical sources and the works of well-known philosophers and researchers;
- analyzing Devdutt Pattanaik's perspectives on these concepts of Hindu philosophy;
- identifying new meanings and accents in Devdutt Pattanaik's worldview, and finding out whether this is a continuation of traditions or a simplification of Hinduism and a manifestation of the crisis of spirituality in modern India.

Investigation methods. During this investigation, several methodologies were employed, including textual analysis, comparative analysis, hermeneutic method, as well as synchronic and diachronic methods of research in the sociocultural space.

Main material. The central figure of our investigation, Devdutt Pattanaik, is a significant contemporary Indian writer and mythologist. Influenced by globalization and the politics of multiculturalism, Devdutt Pattanaik crafts fresh interpretations of ancient myths and places them in new contexts. His ideas for integrating religious wisdom into domains such as business, leadership, management, and education resonate widely within modern Indian society. Moreover, Devdutt Pattanaik has served as the host of television programs such as *Business Sutra* on CNBC-TV18 and *Daan Sthapana* on SonyLiv. Additionally, through lectures and consultations, he expounds on the relevance of both Indian and Western myths in contemporary life, offering insights on cultural development and leadership ideas.

In this work, we will undertake an analytical exploration of a key topic in Hindu philosophy, namely the question concerning Atman, as well as engage with other significant philosophical concepts. Before delving into an examination of the questions and responses presented by Devdutt Pattanaik in his book *Devlok with Devdutt Pattanaik 2* [11], it is necessary to define the foundational concepts prevalent in the article.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* provides the following definition of Atman: “(It is) unseen (by any sense organ), not related to anything, incomprehensible (by the mind), unthinkable, indescribable, essentially of the nature of Consciousness constituting the Self alone, negation of all phenomena, the Peaceful, all Bliss and the Non-dual. This is what is known as the fourth (Turiya). This is the Atman and it has to be realised” [12, p. 50].

When mentioning the jiva in the *Mandukya Upanishad*, the impossibility of its birth from the point of view of the highest reality is emphasized: “Those Jivas (entities) or beings are said to be born. But that birth is never possible from the standpoint of Reality. Their birth is like that of an illusory object. That illusion, again, is non-existent” [12, p. 289]. In other words, the existence of the individual soul (jiva) is illusory, since a comprehension of birth or death is lacking within the the Supreme spiritual

reality. This philosophical thought accentuates the concept of the unreality of the material world: while the ultimate reality is one and indivisible, everything that is perceived as birth and death is part of the world of illusion (Maya).

The philosophical concept of Atman presents an intriguing aspect for individuals raised in a European cultural environment. Differences in philosophical and religious traditions between Hinduism and Western cultural contexts often pose challenges in interpreting the term. Consequently, there is a tendency for Atman to be frequently translated as ‘soul.’

The M. Monier-Williams dictionary provides the following definitions for the terms ‘Atman,’ ‘jiva,’ and ‘Paramatman’:

आत्मन्, *ātman*, m. the breath; the soul, principle of life and sensation; the individual soul, self, abstract individual [9, p. 135]

Paramātman, m. all the heart <...>; the Supreme Spirit, Up. [9, p. 588]

जीव, *jīva*, m f n. living, existing, alive <...>; m. the principle of life, vital breath, the living or personal soul (as distinguished from the universal soul, see *jīvātman*) [9, p. 422]

If we turn to A. McDonell's dictionary, we find the following definitions for the terms:

आत्मन्, *ātman*, m. breath; soul; life, self, essence, nature; peculiarity; body; intellect, understanding; universal soul [7, p. 38]

परमात्मन्, *paramātmān*, m. supreme or universal soul [7, p. 153]

जीव, *gīv-á*, a. living, alive; living on; causing life; m. principle of life, (individual) soul <...>; m. n. living being, creature [7, p. 102]

Having analyzed the terms, we suggest that within the framework of the European worldview, the most appropriate Sanskrit term for ‘soul’ is ‘jiva,’ and the translation of the term ‘Atman’ as soul is not correct. Within the Hindu tradition, the terms ‘Atman’ and ‘jiva’ refer to distinct aspects of spiritual reality. Atman is typically conceived as the supreme, immortal principle, which is infinite and unchanging. It is considered uncreated and transcendent, indivisible from the ultimate reality (Brahman or Paramatman). While jiva is subject to the cyclical process of rebirth, is bound by the laws of karma, and is limited by time and space.

The inquiry into the nature of Atman and its relationship with the jiva has worried Indian philosophers as well as scholars worldwide for centuries. Let us delve into the fundamental insights of select gurus and contemporary scientists.

The philosopher Gaudapada (6th century), the founder of Advaita Vedanta, claimed that there exists no distinct individual self or soul (jiva), but rather, only the Atman, in which individual personalities can be temporarily delineated. Central to the philosophy of Adi Shankara (c. 700–750) is the assertion that Brahman, synonymous with Paramatman, constitutes the ultimate reality, while the world is illusory. According to Adi Shankara, the Self is Brahman, and the realization of this fact can lead an individual towards spiritual liberation [3].

Indian yogi, philosopher, and social activist Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) stated: “There is no ‘moving soul’, there is only one Atman. Jiva (individual soul) is the conscious ruler of this body, in whom the five life principles come into unity, and yet that very Jiva is the Atman, because all is Atman.” [13, p. 55] This statement can be interpreted as follows: Swami Vivekananda regarded Atman as the one reality permeating the universe and omnipresent in everything. He viewed jiva as the ruler of the body and the ‘shell’ for the Atman. Swami Vivekananda thought that if every existing entity is perceived as a manifestation of Atman, or more precisely Paramatman, then individual souls are also part of this reality.

Swami Krishnananda Saraswati (1922–2001), an Indian theologian, yogi, philosopher, and writer, who served as the President of the Sivananda Literature Research Institute and the Sivananda Literature Dissemination Committee, provides insights into the understanding of Atman and jiva in his book *The Philosophy of Life*. He describes Atman as the transcendent observer or witnessing Self, liberated from the limitations of the jiva's existence. Drawing parallels, Swami Krishnananda Saraswati likens the relationship between jiva and Atman to that of Maya and Brahman. The theologian underscores that the jiva's existence is not eternal, and upon the dissolution of limiting conditions

such as birth, aging, and death, the jiva reunites with eternal radiance. He emphasizes, “The whole history of the Jiva is but the procession of the activities of these external vestures, – nothing real to the Atman.” Swami Krishnananda Saraswati perceives the salvation of the jiva in renouncing vanity and pleasure, alongside recognizing the absolute perfection of Brahman [6, Chapter 10].

In the contemporary scientific society, the inquiry into the essence of Atman attracts the attention of not solely philosophers, but also of experts in diverse fields such as Ayurveda, media communications, business, leadership, and more. Nevertheless, a concerning trend has emerged where the term ‘Atman’ is misinterpreted as the soul, which leads to a distortion of the original text and a misapprehension of Hindu philosophy [5; 8].

Researcher Subhdeep Mukhopadhyay, in the article *Dualities and Convergences: A Comparative Examination of Soul and Atman in Marvell and Shankara*, reflects on the different traditions of studying human existence. As the author notes, literal translations from Sanskrit into other languages often lead to illogical interpretations. He also states that “Referring to soul as Atman, imbues the term soul with characteristics which are often against the basic tenets of Christianity.” It is difficult to disagree with this, because the term ‘Atman’ refers to the immortal and divine essence, and is not a synonym for the individual soul [10].

Returning to the philosophical perspective of the modern Indian mythologist, Devdutt Pattanaik, it is observed that in his discussions on Atman, the term ‘atma’ is utilized without the letter ‘n’ at the end of the word. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that despite minor spelling differences, this variant of the term ‘Atman’ is semantically identical [1].

1. Atman, Jiva and Manas

The concepts of Atman and Paramatman stand as central concepts within Hindu philosophical discourse. In light of this, it is worth turning to the question posed to Devdutt Pattanaik: “What is the exact meaning of atma? Is it soul or mind?” [11, Chapter 6].

Reflecting on the formulation of the question, it is important to clarify that neither manas nor jiva represents Atman, despite the common English translation of the term Atman as soul. Unfortunately, the scope of this article does not allow us to fully quote Devdutt Pattanaik's responses. Consequently, the decision was made to extract and analyze the key ideas by the mythologist for critical examination.

In the beginning of his response, Devdutt Pattanaik asserts that “atma is what makes a being alive” [11, Chapter 6]. However, this statement appears to present a logical inversion. It is more accurate to claim that it is the being, embodied in the form of jiva, that animates the Atman and endows it with awareness of the material reality.

Atman is a contingent, uncreated focal point of Paramatman. Naming Atman ‘alive,’ as interpreted by Devdutt Pattanaik, may present challenges. The concept of Atman–Paramatman is often perceived by human consciousness as emptiness. In this regard, it is important to explore the understanding of emptiness, as human consciousness tends to apprehend the Atman–Paramatman concept through a lens similar to that applied to emptiness. Among its attributes are formlessness, infinitude, eternality, invisibility, inaudibility, intangibility, and unconsciousness. However, the higher concept of Atman–Paramatman transcends the notion of Emptiness; rather, it should be considered absolute Fullness.

If Atman, as the original point of Paramatman, cannot be alive as emptiness, then how can it make a being alive (according to Devdutt Pattanaik) if it is inanimate? Atman, devoid of self-awareness, only attains consciousness through the emergence of the individual jiva. Before the instantiation of a jiva (and other material forms), Atman exists as an uncreated, immaterial, and unmanifested entity. Each Atman follows its one trajectory within the Wheel of Samsara (a chain of reincarnations). To progress along this path, Atman needs the embodiment of a jiva, which provides it with consciousness. The individual Atman, as the Highest Spiritual Self, acquires wisdom, experience, and knowledge within the process of reincarnation of the jiva. It allows Atman to get spiritual evolution and future reincarnations.

Continuing his discourse, the mythologist contrasts the concept of Atman with the notion that “any material object can decay with time, is located in a particular space and has certain properties” [11, Chapter 6]. At the same time, he posits that it is the soul that remains “unaffected by time,

space, form.” He inadvertently confounds the concept of jiva (soul) with that of Atman (existing as the antecedent spiritual point of Paramatman). It is essential to note that it is the Atman, not the individual soul (jiva), that remains unaffected by time, space, etc.

2. Moksha, Nirvana and Atma-Jnana

Devdutt Pattanaik was asked the question: “Would it be right to say that moksha is attained when there’s knowledge of atma?” [11, Chapter 6], which was formulated incorrectly. In our opinion, it would be appropriate to frame the question as follows: “Is nirvana attained through the realization of the Atman?” But even having replaced the term, a logical inversion persists in this question. Nirvana is not attained through the realization of the Atman; rather, atma-jnana (knowledge of the Atman, also known as atma-gyan) is attained through the interaction of Atman with the material form. Upon achieving nirvana, Atman loses self-awareness, and therefore the ability to comprehend itself.

When discussing the conditions under which the process of liberation (moksha) occurs, it becomes necessary to focus on the departure of Atman from the material form. It signifies the liberation of Atman from knowledge or renunciation of atma-jnana. In the *Mokshadharma*, this concept is underscored through non-attachment to Maya, or material illusion [4]. Numerous religious and philosophical texts within Hinduism, including the *Bhagavad Gita*, underscore the significance of attaining moksha, which is achievable through detachment from the material world and the riddance from desire, fear, and anger. [2, p. 269–270].

Despite the logical error in the question, Devdutt Pattanaik responds, “Absolutely. The shramans said that only when you quit worldly matters will you acquire knowledge of atma. But, in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, they say that you can get it even while doing your daily activities” [11, Chapter 6].

To delve into this issue, we suggest considering the hypothesis of returning to the original point before the creation of the material Universe by Brahma. In this scenario, the entire world space is pervaded by Paramatman, but the material world remains non-existent. Paramatman doesn't have the capacity for self-contemplation and self-interaction (atma-jnana), as Maya has yet to manifest. But after Brahma creates the material Universe, Paramatman fragments into myriad individual Atmans, which begin to interact with external material forms, forming jivas and incarnating into bodies.

For the Atman to attain self-awareness, it must encounter its reflection. Material illusion (Maya) serves as a kind of mirror for this process. Thus, the Atman can be aware of itself through interaction with its material manifestation. The Atman cannot act on its own as it lacks agency. When distanced from the material realm, the Atman loses its capacity for self-awareness. However, upon reengagement with the material world, the Atman regains self-awareness. Consequently, the assertion made by the shramans that “only when you quit worldly matters will you acquire knowledge of atma,” warrants scrutiny. Furthermore, sources such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, cited by Devdutt Pattanaik, suggest that the cognition of Atman is possible even amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are fundamental epics that cannot be refuted by anyone, including the shramans. From a logical standpoint, before the creation of material existence, Paramatman's self-awareness was unattainable, since it couldn't interact with itself. The emergence of self-awareness appeared after Brahma's act of cosmic creation. Subsequently, Paramatman fragmented into myriad Atmans, each engaging with various material forms and undergoing self-cognition, forming atma-jnana.

In this context, it appears that Devdutt Pattanaik abstains from asserting a definitive position and instead refers to different sources. He alludes to the shramans who advocate the merits of withdrawing from worldly distractions, and at the same time, he cites the epics, which claim that self-realization is achievable in any moment of everyday life. The mythologist's personal thought remains unclear. Then, Devdutt Pattanaik offers several examples intended to persuade readers and listeners of the gods' possession of atma-jnana.

Devdutt Pattanaik asserts that “Krishna too has atma-gyan” [11, Chapter 6]. Even the slightest semblance of comprehension regarding one's Higher Self, denoted as the Atman, signifies the presence

of atma-jnana, even if in a rudimentary capacity. The acknowledgment of one's existence within the material realm inherently entails a degree of self-awareness. Is there merit in reiterating the banal notion that Krishna possesses atma-jnana?

3. The Concept of the Soul in Hinduism and Christianity by Devdutt Pattanaik

Devdutt Pattanaik was also asked about the difference between the concepts of soul and Atman: “Christianity has the concept of soul. Are atma and soul one and the same?” [11, Chapter 6].

Devdutt Pattanaik, like numerous English-language authors, appears to confuse the concepts of Atman and soul. He claims: “in English atma is often referred to as the soul” [11, Chapter 6]. The term Atman should not be mentioned as soul, but Devdutt Pattanaik does not address the crucial distinction between these terms. It is important to recognize that labeling Atman as a soul in English provides a misinterpretation, as Atman and soul represent distinct concepts and substances. Atman signifies an uncreated point and a part of Paramatman, whereas the soul denotes a substance inherent in all living beings, subject to the laws of karma. Therefore, equating Atman with soul is an error.

The Sanskrit words ‘Atman’ and ‘jiva’ lack precise equivalents in the English language, rendering it challenging to give exact translations of these concepts. Consequently, there is confusion in the interpretation of these concepts in research and scientific discourse.

Devdutt Pattanaik states, “Christianity believes in one life, one soul” [11, Chapter 6]. It's crucial to note that Christian doctrine posits belief in a singular earthly existence wherein the soul resides within the human body. Upon death, according to Christian belief, the soul separates from the body and faces judgment. Unlike followers of Eastern teachings and religions such as Hinduism, Christians do not believe in soul reincarnation across multiple bodies. It's also noteworthy to mention that the concept of a single soul is a common belief shared among adherents of various religions.

Devdutt Pattanaik states that “the soul is corrupted by the Devil” in Christianity [11, Chapter 6]. The story of the serpent tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden, leading to the eating of the forbidden fruit, is often cited in this context. However, the Bible does not indicate anywhere that the tempting serpent is the devil, so all arguments that it is the devil must be considered at the level of hypothesis. Hence, Devdutt Pattanaik's statement that the devil corrupted the soul stands speculative.

Devdutt Pattanaik claims that “Your soul is polluted because you did not obey God’s word as given in the Book of Genesis in the Bible” [11, Chapter 6]. However, it is more accurate to frame the narrative differently. Humanity, represented by Adam and Eve, was cast out of paradise after they disobeyed God's command regarding the consumption of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Devdutt Pattanaik's effort to engage with Christianity is understandable in the context of multiculturalism and serves as a bridge for dialogue among diverse nations and cultures. Nevertheless, his interpretation appears more as a superficial retelling rather than a profound analysis. While aiming for intercultural dialogue, Devdutt Pattanaik's simplified approach may hinder readers from grasping the depth of Christian doctrine.

Then Devdutt Pattanaik moves to Hinduism and claims that “This concept does not exist in Hinduism. Here, there’s rebirth; there’s no fallen soul. The soul is always pure and perfect, but covering it is a body that is tied to karma” [11, Chapter 6]. The soul is not always pure. Here the mythologist again confuses the concept of soul with the concept of Atman. While the Atman is indeed considered pure and perfect, representing the individual's ultimate spiritual essence, the soul (jiva) undergoes a transformative journey influenced by karma throughout the cycle of reincarnation.

He ends his answer with the phrase: “These are two separate thought processes” [11, Chapter 6]. If we talk about the soul in Christianity and the jiva in Hinduism, there are practically no differences. The soul changes configuration, its future depends on the karmic consequences of the present life. Therefore, it may be more accurate to say that in Christianity there is no concept of Atman.

Devdutt Pattanaik argues that the interpretation of the soul in Christianity and the interpretation of the soul in Hinduism are two different phenomena. Despite the specificity of the query, Devdutt Pattanaik's discussion lacks a direct answer to the differences between Atman and soul. Reading his answer, we can once again be convinced that the mythologist does not answer the question, since he does not have his position. That is, we must again assume that Devdutt Pattanaik confuses the concepts of Atman and soul and stops talking about the properties of Atman, but begins to talk about the soul.

Instead of explaining the difference between the Atman and the soul, he goes into discussions about Christianity and the properties of the soul in Hinduism. His answer lacks discussions about the nature of the Atman and the difference between the Atman and the soul.

Conclusion. In his books and speeches, Devdutt Pattanaik actively touches on the key topics of Indian philosophy. For comparative analysis, a modern Indian mythologist often draws comparative parallels with Abrahamic religions. The main inaccuracy of the specialist is his interpretation of the term Atman as the soul. However, given that the incorrect fusion of the terms Atman and soul is common, this inaccuracy can be explained by the fact that the concept of Atman has not been sufficiently explored by Devdutt Pattanaik.

The television series *Devlok with Devdutt Pattanaik*, alongside the books published on its basis, was targeted at a mass audience and is an effective example of how mass media shapes the modern socio-cultural space. Judging by the passages we have analyzed, Devdutt Pattanaik rarely delves into the essence of Indian philosophy and often neglects the profound meanings, tending to simplify the presentation and demonstrate mythological aspects without sufficient understanding of their philosophical roots. Such ‘spiritual products’ lead to insufficient understanding of the original principles and ideas underlying Indian spirituality, and the simplification of deep religious and philosophical ideas.

Furthermore, the new interpretation of Indian philosophy is influenced by Westernization. The impact of Western culture and values on other cultural contexts leads to the loss of the depth and subtlety of the meaning of Sanskrit terms. This, in turn, complicates their correct and accurate interpretation both in texts and in various aspects of intercultural communication.

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ФІЛОСОФІЯ ІНДУЇЗМУ В ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ ДЕВДАТТА ПАТТАНАЙКА: ПРОДОВЖЕННЯ ТРАДИЦІЇ ЧИ КРИЗА ДУХОВНОСТІ

Актуальність дослідження. В наш час у результаті глобалізації та політики мультикультуралізму створюються сприятливі умови для більш активної взаємодії між представниками різних традицій та культур. Сучасні індійські автори, зокрема Девдатт Паттанаїк, переосмислюють традиційні міфи, надають їм нове звучання та актуальний контекст, вестернізують їх зміст. Для того, щоб зробити свою творчість більш ґрунтовною, вищезгаданий міфолог займається не лише інтерпретацією міфів, а й зачіпає основи індійської філософії. Його ідеї щодо використання релігійних знань у бізнесі, лідерстві, менеджменті та освіті досить популярні в сучасному індійському суспільстві.

Метою цього дослідження є виявлення трансформації базових принципів індійської філософії у сучасних міфотворчих проектах на прикладі поглядів Девдатта Паттанаїка. В рамках нашої роботи ми зосередилися на його роздумах щодо природи Атмана та душі. Для досягнення цієї мети ми використали текстологічний аналіз, компаративістський

підхід, герменевтичний метод, а також синхронічний та діахронічний підходи у дослідженні соціокультурного простору.

У результаті цього дослідження ми встановили, що сучасний індійський міфолог Девдатт Паттанаяк тлумачить термін «Атман» як душу. Оскільки некоректне злиття термінів «Атман» і «душа» (англ. *soul*) зустрічається часто, цю неточність можна пояснити тим, що поняття «Атман» недостатньо досліджене міфологом. Книги даного автора орієнтовані на широку аудиторію і є ілюстративним прикладом впливу мас-медіа на сучасний соціокультурний простір. Проте, подібні «духовні продукти» часто сприяють недостатньому розумінню принципів, що складають основу індійської духовності, та призводять до симпліфікації глибоких релігійно-філософських концепцій. Вестернізація та проникнення західних культурних цінностей у індуїстські контексти може призвести до втрати глибини та тонкощі сенсу санскритських термінів, ускладнюючи їх правильне та точне тлумачення у текстах та в аспектах соціокультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: культура, мультикультуралізм, традиції, душа, інтерпретація, міфологія, філософське пізнання, буття, онтологія, духовність.