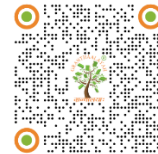


Original Article

## BETWEEN FAITH AND FANTASY: MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES AND CONTEMPORARY STORYTELLING IN THE SHIVA TRILOGY

Dr. Devesh Kumar Chaturvedi <sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, GIC Pindoriya Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, India



### ABSTRACT

This research paper examines Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy, in which he seamlessly blends faith, fantasy, and mythology with contemporary concerns. By carefully reading the text and studying the plots and settings that blend mythology with modernity, the author demonstrates how Indian culture has always been preoccupied with achieving the spiritual, which fosters moral values and the attitudes of generosity, simplicity, and frugality. Tripathi's books, especially The Shiva Trilogy, have enthralled readers by fusing contemporary storytelling techniques with old mythical tales.

In order to understand how Tripathi reimagines classic characters and traditions to appeal to modern audiences, this study explores the thematic reworking of Indian mythology in his books. The study explores the core ideas of divinity, morality, and leadership in these stories, emphasizing how Tripathi's depiction of these components both respects and revitalizes classic tales. This essay aims to comprehend the wider ramifications of Tripathi's work in the context of contemporary Indian literature and its connection to ancient mythology by closely examining his narrative techniques, character development, and thematic themes. The results imply that Tripathi's books act as a link between the past and the present, giving readers a fresh perspective on classic tales while simultaneously making social criticism pertinent to current affairs.

**Keywords:** Mythology, Science, Symbols, Culture, Modernity, Myths, Trilogy, Folklore, Folktales, Culture, Metamorphoses, Generation, Humanity, Civilization, and Religion

### INTRODUCTION

Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy, which draws influence from ancient Indian history and mythology, presents a humanized portrayal of the Hindu god Shiva in a fictitious historical context, fusing faith with imagination. In addition to touching on societal difficulties and political intrigue, it examines themes of love, treachery, good against evil, and the complexity of human nature. Amish Tripathi's "Shiva Trilogy" is a work of fiction that reimagines the Hindu deity Shiva in a fantastical environment. By fusing components of philosophy, history, and mythology, it challenges readers' conventional understandings of faith and investigates the human side of a holy person. In addition to telling a gripping story of Shiva's journey, the series addresses issues of good versus evil, the nature of leadership, and the effects of social systems.

Though it offers a chance to examine Shiva legends from other perspectives, the author's depiction of myth does not alter the original's religious or philosophical beliefs. In order to understand society and any civilization, mythology is essential. By examining a culture's mythology, folklore, and folktales, we might learn more about its ideological convictions. In the Western literary tradition

#### \*Corresponding Author:

**Email address:** Dr. Devesh Kumar Chaturvedi ([deveshchaturvedi258@gmail.com](mailto:deveshchaturvedi258@gmail.com))

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of the 18th century, mythology became a popular literary style. Greek and Roman classics have served as the basis for a large portion of its material.

The word myth is derived from the Greek word *mythos*, which means "which has a range, from 'word,' through 'speaking,' and 'story,' to 'fiction.'" The word *logos*, whose validity or truth may be contested and shown, can be compared with *mythos*' undeniable validity (Buxton, online). Information from these masterpieces has been reimagined by literary writers in their unique ways. Both literature and other forms of art have made use of these classics. *Metamorphoses*, the ancient Roman poet Ovid's retelling of Greek stories, had a profound effect on later writers and painters. Chaucer in England and the Latin authors Dante and Petrarch in Italy are also influenced by Ovid's poetry. Aesop's Fables served as the inspiration for many of the stories written by French poet La Fontaine.

James Joyce's masterpiece *Ulysses*, was written as a contemporary version of Homer's *Odyssey* for many centuries. There are many allusions to Greek and Roman mythology throughout Shakespeare's works. In the 18th and 19th centuries, John Keats, William Butler Yeats, and P.B. Shelley were all influenced by Greek mythological tales and figures. We found a wide variety of myths, folklore, and folktales when we took into account India's mythical framework. The cultural and civilizational wealth of India, the sacred country, has always been tremendous. Vedic literature is regarded as the best of all the literature in the world. Mythological themes abound in Indian literary works such as the Veda, Puranas, and Upanishads.

These Scriptures present the Gods, Goddesses, Demi-Gods, and Demons in such a way that they provide a large range of subject matter for a literary artist. When it comes to Indian myths, two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, have always been popular. Their characters, scripts, narratives, and presentation all resonate deeply with contemporary Indian society. Readers worldwide have been captivated by Indian tales and their supernatural characters. Audiences have been enthralled by mythological themes in English Indian literature. This research focuses on Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy. His use of myth and the way he blended myth and modernity to add a pleasing twist to his compositions.

The Shiva Trilogy is made up of the Immortals of Meluha, The Secret of Nagas, and The Oath of Vayuputras. The Shiva Trilogy by Amish Tripathi is among the best-selling novels in Indian publishing. Numerous national and international languages have been translated into it. A well-known alumnus of Calcutta's renowned Indian Institute of Management (IIM) is Amish Tripathi. He was a finance professional before he turned to writing. Amish Tripathi's works transformed the literary world in the early years of his career. His works have sold more than 6 million copies globally. He is presently the Director of the Nehru Center and a government figure in the United Kingdom. Additionally, he has presented the Legends of the Ramayana program on Discovery Television. *The Shiva Trilogy*, *Ram Chandra Series*, *Immortal India*, *Dharma*, and *Legends of Suheldev* are among his nonfiction and fiction works. A new generation of readers has been enthralled by his ability to eloquently portray our vast history and mythologies: "The majority of young Indians today are ignorant of their rich mythological heritage." She understands her mythology in a vague and fuzzy way. The short stories, poems, and novels that children read as they grow up, however, are replete with Western myths and legends. Throughout this trilogy, Shiva is shown as a mortal human being who transforms into a divine savior by his deeds. Amish Tripathi used science, myth, and history to develop a new storytelling style. He also makes allusions to kinship, cultural values, and contemporary culture in his stories.

Critically analyzing how these themes are used throughout the work is essential. The Shiva Trilogy by Tripathi blends mythology and Indian gods with contemporary culture. The interaction between these two aspects will be illustrated through specific cases. Shiva is portrayed in the book as a strong, moral man whose struggles and efforts to create an equitable society have made him everlasting rather than as a god.

The Immortals of Meluha begins with a stunning scenery description that presents Shiva, the protagonist: "Shiva gazed at the orange sky above." The sun had barely set behind the clouds that covered Mansarovar Tripathi (2010). "The brilliant giver of life had called it another day." Hindu gods were a part of Amish Tripathi's strategy of fusing myth and fiction. He helped Shiva rise to the position of Guna tribal head. Shiva is the destroyer in Hindu mythology. Shiva is also linked in stories to the power that defeats evil.

Plot changes notwithstanding, the work's core content remains constant. A fascinating story of how Shiva became known as Neelkantha is told in the book's first chapter. The main idea of the story is that Neelkantha will show up and protect the Meluhans from evil. According to custom, "The Neelkantha will be a foreigner." "And that when he drinks the Somras, his neck would become blue" Tripathi (2010) indicates that he cannot possibly be from Sapt-Sindhu. Some academics claim that Amish Tripathi's Meluha and Swadeep stories are included in the trilogy.

From Gujarat in the south to Kashmir and Afghanistan in the north, Punjab in the east, and Sindh in the west, Meluha encompasses the whole northwest of the Indian subcontinent. In addition to the Indian states of Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, Meluha includes the entirety of Pakistan. It also includes eastern Afghanistan. Consequently, the description in the book seems to apply to the Indus Valley. There is a lot of information on the Indus Valley civilization in the first volume of the trilogy. As we read the book, we learn about the city's meticulous sanitation efforts to prevent diseases, personal toilets, an efficient drainage system, and a well-planned layout.

Shiva is amazed by the state-of-the-art facilities in the city as he arrives with his gunas: There was an adjoining bathroom in each room, with a sloping floor that allowed water to naturally flow to a hole carved into a big pit. Water can pass through the side walls thanks to a device that can be turned Tripathi (2010). The book also recounts another incident in which the tribe was taken to

contemporary assisted living accommodations and faced a plethora of new and luxurious items that were unfamiliar to the Guna tribe, such as mirrors, towels, bed linens, and furniture. They were mesmerized by the comfort of the beds that were made available to them. Shiva questioned, "What is this material?" with confusion. The designated orientation executive remarked. Chitraangadh gave a hearty reply to Cotton Shiva. "The cloth you are holding is made from a plant that is grown on our lands" [Tripathi \(2010\)](#).

Books like this have incorporated contemporary features like soap and the bathroom's built-in faucet: "he turned the magical device on the wall to increase the flow of water." Using the strange cake-like substance that the Meluhans said was soap, he cleaned the body [Tripathi \(2010\)](#). The accessories and decorations on the table seem more contemporary. Even though the food and dishes are expensive, they nonetheless capture the spirit of the moment while giving the impression that the party is being held in a castle.

Being from a primitive background, Shiva thought it was a fantastic arrangement because nothing made sense to him. Sati reviewed the arrangements. The traditional low table and floor cushions that Meluhans often sat upon to eat were replaced with a formal table and chairs for breakfast. Gold plates had taken the place of the cherished banana tree leaf. Refined silver glasses have taken the place of the taste-enhancing kullads or mud cups [Tripathi \(2010\)](#). The quotations from the novel show how all of the old formalities were impacted by the new arrangements. The Naga mythology will be clarified when Brahaspati examines the whole situation involving Shiva and Nagas in the third volume of the series. His thorough research has demonstrated how the Somras impacts the local people as well as the surrounding area.

Amish Tripathi highlights the catastrophic effects of scientific and technological progress on the depletion of natural resources. "The amount of Saraswati water used didn't matter when Somras was being made for just a few thousand," claims Brahaspati. However, things changed when we began manufacturing Somras in large quantities for eight million people. The massive industrial plant at Mount Mandar began gradually depleting the waters [Tripathi \(2011\)](#) Long-term Somras drinkers observe several physical changes as a result of the substance. Due to the release of Somras' waste into the river Tsangpo, which flows into and meets the Branga water, the people of Baranga are currently dealing with a terrible disease that causes their children to die and contributes to the depletion of the Saraswati River.

Shiva hears Brahaspati explain this in detail: "The Somras caused Nagas to be born with abnormalities. If the parents have been eating Somras for a long time, it can have a random effect on a few unborn children while they are still in the womb [Tripathi \(2011\)](#). Brahaspati then discusses the operation of the body's Somras system. We used to think that the Somras gave people long lives by clearing their bodies of harmful oxidants, he continues. However, it does not operate in that manner alone [Tripathi \(2011\)](#).

By examining the circumstances surrounding the Saraswati and Somras rivers, he hopes to draw a comparison between the present conditions of the rivers running through India. Amish's portrayal of the women in the book is amazing, and he skillfully blends mythological and modern concepts. Finally, he treats the book's female characters with objectivity. In the Shiva Trilogy, women are treated equally outside of the classroom as well. The trilogy has a total of nine female characters: Ayurvati, Sati, Kali, Anandamayi, Kritika, Uma, Tara, and Veerini. They play a significant role in the narrative and adopt their stances. They are all proficient in self-defense and get along just as well with their male spouses.

Sati, a Kshatriya princess, came from a royal family. Similar to how Kshatriyas are known for their military prowess, Sati is famous for her Kshatriya dharma. In her initial appearance, she is shown riding a chariot and "guiding the horses expertly into the courtyard while a lady champion by her side held on the railings" [Tripathi \(2010\)](#). By drawing comparisons between legendary weapons and astras and contemporary military technologies, the Shiva Trilogy also demonstrates these concepts. From the start of each chapter until its conclusion, there are numerous clashes and disagreements in the novels. Many such encounters have been reported, including that between the Gunas and Parakritiks and Shiva and the Nagas.

The writings mention specific astra names like Brahmastra and Pashupatinath Astra, which are also utilized to exterminate evil on the battlefield in Hindu epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Daivi astras often solely murder men. However, some, such as the Brahmastra, have the power to demolish any city, if not a kingdom. My friend, the Brahmastra, is a weapon of destruction; it can demolish cities and kill large numbers of people. When shot on certain terrain, a massive mushroom cloud will rise to a height that is sufficiently high to touch. Everything and everyone in the designated areas would be destroyed in an instant. Those who are fortunate enough to live will endure suffering for generations after they leave the inner circle of destruction. For decades to come, the land's water will be tainted. No crops will grow on the land, rendering it useless for millennia. For centuries after it has been deployed, the weapon will continue to kill [Tripathi \(2013\)](#). The description that follows makes it quite evident that Amish Tripathi is alluding to the World War II atomic bomb disaster. In this way, history and myth are linked, reflecting our contemporary civilization with its increasing diseases and environmental problems. The novel's journey starts with the search for evil in other people, but as it progresses, it seems that evil exists only within us.

Amish Tripathi has taken a much more captivating approach to today's political, social, and environmental challenges, holding the reader's interest throughout. The second idea I will focus on is modernism, which I find in this book. Baudelaire first used the term "modernity" in the middle of the nineteenth century. In his piece "The Painter of Modern Life," he presents modernity as stylish, fleeting, and dependent on craftsmanship, limiting it to the unchangeable and eternal. Modernity can be defined as either the trait of being contemporary that is distinct from traditional styles or the distance and fragmentation of modern man's life. The novel makes use of a few modern structural points of view, objects, and styles.

In the third book, *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, Shiva and Gopal were shown a sumptuous suite of rooms with two distinct sleeping chambers. Every possible luxury has been installed in the room. Several corners of the rugs had bolsters and cushions of different sizes scattered throughout, creating cozy spots to sit on the floor. The mantelpiece and wall shelves were embellished with lavish gold and silver-plated accessories. Shiva is treated to idlis, a contemporary breakfast food, at one location. During the battles, modern war formations are used. A sumptuous set of rooms featuring two distinct sleeping chambers was shown to Shiva and Gopal. Every possible luxury has been installed in the room. Several corners of the rugs had bolsters and cushions of different sizes scattered throughout, creating cozy spots to sit on the floor.

The mantelpiece and wall shelves were embellished with lavish gold and silver-plated accessories. Shiva is treated to idlis, a contemporary breakfast food, at one location. During the battles, modern war formations are used. Several sacred books from ancient India elaborated on the status of women, stating that they were on an equal footing with males. Equal opportunities were granted to women in the fields of education, law, property, politics, administration, and social or religious service. Amish Tripathi's 'The Immortals of Meluha' portrays the role of women in navigating life and family in the Rig Vedic era. The female characters in Amish's 'The Immortals of Meluha' exhibit the dignity of Vedic females, who were characterized by their independence and self-reliance.

Aside from their household duties, they all had access to training with the capacity to discover the most amazing truths. Another generation of essayists is riding the wave, producing one book of mythological fiction after another, and the younger generation in India is increasingly interested in considering its fundamental underpinnings. High contrast is always available in all shades, just as good and evil exist within every one of us. The mythical reading exhorts us to rid ourselves of vices and recognize temperance within ourselves. Scholars will benefit from this research by having a variety of metrics to examine mythology. This will resolve any problems with mythological allusions, both ancient and modern.

Amish Tripathi attempts to confront the socioeconomic realities of modern society in this book. He reinterprets the Shiva story to address the evil intentions of those in positions of authority and how their naive desires result in devastation and ruin. He suggests addressing these problems from a logical perspective. The modern world is entwined with the fantastical aspects of the Shiva story. Mythical storytelling is used to address the problem of natural pollution. In this sense, we can conclude that the Amish have prevailed in building historical and religious certainty as well as socio-cultural and geographical togetherness. Every main character strives for everyone's well-being. Reading the Trilogy is fascinating. Modern structures make use of historical facts, logic, and mythological components.

## CONCLUSION

Amish Tripathi has applied a contemporary viewpoint that draws from historical, philosophical, cultural, subjective, and imaginative viewpoints. Daivi astras often solely murder men. However, some, such as the Brahmastra, have the power to demolish any city, if not a kingdom. My friend, the Brahmastra, is a weapon of destruction; it can demolish cities and kill large numbers of people. When shot on certain terrain, a massive mushroom cloud will rise to a height that is sufficiently high to touch. Everything and everyone in the designated areas would be destroyed in an instant. Those who are fortunate enough to live will endure suffering for generations after they leave the inner circle of destruction.

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