



20-2 April - June 2026

Published on 14, April - June 2026

ISSN:2320-4842 (P) 3049-2688 (O)

## Mythical Narratives and Scientific Paradigms: A Critical Study of Rational Discourse in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy

**S. Gayathri,**

Ph.D. Research Scholar (Part -Time )

**Dr. V. S. Shakila**

Research Supervisor, Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of English  
The Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam college for women (Autonomous), Sivakasi.  
(Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai)

### Abstract

Hindu mythology occupies a foundational role in shaping cultural narratives and collective consciousness, not only within India but also across the global diaspora. These mythological traditions, rich with allegorical and symbolic content, have continually evolved and adapted to contemporary contexts. Notably, Amish Tripathi's reinterpretation of ancient Hindu myths exemplifies this adaptive process. Through his literary works, Tripathi reimagines mythological figures and narratives with a speculative lens that integrates elements of modern science and rationality. A salient theme in Tripathi's reworking particularly evident in his *Shiva Trilogy* is the portrayal of myth as a form of proto-scientific inquiry. Concepts such as radio waves, cellular processes, and advanced war technologies are woven into the mythos, suggesting that ancient civilizations possessed forms of scientific knowledge encoded within symbolic frameworks. This paper attempts to explore the scientific interpretation of Mythology in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy*.

**Keywords:** Scientific theories, Mythology, Radiology, Genetic mutation, Rationality.

### Introduction

In his widely acclaimed *Shiva Trilogy*, Amish Tripathi presents a compelling fusion of mythology and science, transforming traditional religious narratives into rational and scientific explanations. One of the most significant fictional-scientific constructs in his narrative is Somras, a substance central to the socio-political and biological life of the Meluhan civilization. The novels depict Meluha as an advanced society with modern infrastructure, hygiene systems, and strict medical protocols, including quarantines. Weapons like Pashupatyastra and Deviastra mirror modern atomic nuclear technologies, while military strategies such as the Chakravayuh are described with tactical precision.

### Genetic Mutation and Water Contamination

Initially depicted as a miracle, elixir, capable of enhancing immunity and prolonging life, Somras symbolizes both the potential and the peril of scientific advancement. While it offers immense benefits to its users, its mass production and unchecked consumption result in catastrophic ecological and biological consequences. The depletion of the Saraswati River, outbreaks of disease, and the emergence of genetic mutations among the Nagas are all consequences of long-term Somras use. In the book, *The Immortals of Meluha*, Brahaspati states that, "After a lot of research, Lord Brahma invented the Somras, which when consumed, reacts with the oxidants, absorbs them then expels them from the body as sweat or urine. Because of the somras, there are no oxidants left in the body"(137). Moreover,

the environmental degradation caused by waste disposal from Somras manufacturing particularly the pollution of the Tsangpo river serves as a critique of industrial practices that prioritize progress over sustainability. Thus, Tripathi's narrative does more than modernize mythology; it transforms it into a platform for examining ethical dilemmas, environmental concerns, and the unintended consequences of technological ambition. His work invites readers to reflect on the parallels between ancient myth and contemporary scientific practice, suggesting that the myths of the past may carry persistent warnings for the future. One of the key issues raised in the novel is environmental degradation, particularly water pollution, which Tripathi reflects through the metaphor of the river losing its purity, a direct commentary on the condition of Indian rivers such as the Ganga and Yamuna, which are portrayed as being on the brink of ecological collapse.

Tripathi introduces the Nagas, a group of people born with physical deformities such as additional limbs or elephant-like facial structures. These deformities are attributed to genetic mutations caused by the consumption of contaminated water, primarily due to exposure to Somras, a mythical substance. The author utilizes the metaphor of pollution caused by the byproducts of the Somras (a divine elixir) to critique environmental degradation and the socio-economic consequences of unchecked technological advancement. Here, the Nagas, deformed due to Somras-induced mutations, symbolize those marginalized by modern systems of progress an allegory for the victims of industrial and biomedical waste in contemporary society. The stigmatization of these characters, despite their strength and wisdom, articulates a subversive message: deviance from the norm does not equate to evil, thereby challenging dominant moral binaries. The novel, *The Oath of Vayuputras* offers a scientific rationale for these anomalies through the character of Brahaspati, who explains that excessive consumption of Somras accelerates cellular division, thereby increasing the likelihood of cancer-causing cells and birth deformities as follows, "*The cells keep dividing while remaining healthy. In most people, this continued division is regulated. But in a few, some cells lose control over their division process and keep growing at an exponential pace*" (16). This contrasts with traditional Hindu mythology, which attributes Ganesha's elephant head to divine intervention, Tripathi instead pre-

sents a biological cause rooted in teratogenic effects of polluted substances.

### **Scientific Concepts Embedded in Narrative**

The *Shiva Trilogy* incorporates multiple scientific concepts under the guise of mythological and historical settings. For instance, the conversion of food into energy is explained in terms of cellular respiration, where oxygen plays a key role in metabolizing nutrients. Tripathi skillfully integrates this knowledge into the storyline to draw parallels between modern biology and ancient practices. "*While Sunlight falls on the leaf the leaf's physical properties are such that it absorbs the colors violet, indigo, blue, yellow, orange and red. It doesn't absorb the color green, while is the reflected back to eyes. Hence, we see the leaf as green*" (298). Furthermore, concepts like radio waves and electromagnetic communication are woven into the plot. Characters such as Pandit in *The Secret of the Nagas* explain how sound and radio waves travel and are used for communication, akin to current technologies such as mobile phones, air-traffic control systems, and satellite communication. "*This is not a theory. This certainly not a theory. This a fact. Just like light, which help you to see, there are radio waves to help you hear*"(104). This modernization of ancient wisdom underlines the continuity between ancient Indian knowledge systems and modern scientific thought.

### **Technological Sophistication of Meluha**

The depiction of Meluha, an ancient civilization, is remarkably similar to modern urban societies. Tripathi describes multistorey buildings, quarantine protocols, advanced hygiene systems, and luxurious accommodations, including reflective copper mirrors. These references not only modernize the mythological setting but also suggest that ancient civilizations might have been far more technologically advanced than traditionally believed. For instance, when Shiva and his companions arrive in Meluha, they are astonished by the well-organized urban infrastructure such as platforms built to withstand floods, bridges constructed with stone and baked bricks, and a strict public health system that enforces seven-day quarantines for outsiders to prevent disease transmission. The character Ayurvati, a female physician, symbolizes the presence of scientific and gender-progressive medical practice, showcasing both allopathic and homeopathic treatments, such as managing 'internal hemorrhaging' - a term famil-

iar in modern medicine.

### Reinterpretation of Mythological Weapons and Warfare

Tripathi draws analogies between mythological weapons and modern military technology. For example, the Pashupatiatra and Deviatra are portrayed with destructive capabilities similar to atomic and nuclear bombs. The *Chakravayuh*, a military formation described in the Mahabharata, is reimagined using realistic tactical strategies involving terrain, river fleets, and troop positioning closely resembling modern warfare strategies. The scientific explanation for Shiva's blue throat also reflects this theme. Rather than being a divine miracle, the discoloration is attributed to a chemical reaction involving a dormant medicine administered during his childhood and reactivated upon consumption of Somras. This rational explanation reframes a mythological event through the lens of biochemistry and pharmacology.

### Mythology as a Vehicle of Scientific Literacy

Amish Tripathi's, *Shiva Trilogy*, offers a groundbreaking reconstruction of mythology, aligning it with scientific principles and modern sensibilities. The major factor which distinguishes Tripathi's work is his ability to re-contextualize mythology using scientific reasoning, thereby making ancient stories accessible and engaging for the modern, rational-minded reader. Themes such as cell biology, chemistry, environmental science, and medical ethics are embedded within the narrative, effectively making the novels a platform for scientific literacy. Tripathi's storytelling methodology bridges traditional and cultural narratives with contemporary scientific thought, offering both entertainment and education. His work encourages readers to re-examine ancient texts and myths not just as spiritual or moral guides, but as repositories of early scientific knowledge. Tripathi integrates scientific explanations into mythological narratives, such as energy conversion through oxygen, the reason leaves appear green, and the concept of radio waves. He reimagines Shiva's blue throat as the result of a chemical reaction rather than a divine act.

### Conclusion

In the *Shiva Trilogy*, the author reinterprets Hindu mythology through a scientific lens, addressing contemporary issues such as water pollution. He presents rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna as being endangered, linking the deformities of Naga children to the consumption of polluted water and

Somras, a mythical substance that accelerates cell division, drawing parallels to cancer. Characters like Ganesha and Kali are portrayed as biologically altered beings rather than divine anomalies. By blending myth, science, and speculative fiction, the author not only reinvents popular legends but also initiates meaningful discourse on topics like pollution, public health, genetic mutation, and advanced technology. His reinterpretations serve to bridge the gap between ancient heritage and contemporary science, establishing him as a significant voice in modern Indian literature that appeals to both traditionalists and rationalists alike. By combining myth with modern science, Tripathi offers a rational and engaging reinterpretation of traditional stories, making them accessible and appealing to contemporary readers.

### References

1. Chouhan, Rajendra Singh, and Kaḡhaiyalal Malviya. "Myth and Reality in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy." *International Journal of Engineering and Science Research*, vol. 14, no. 4, Oct-Dec 2024, pp. 297-301. [www.ijesr.org/index.php/ijesr/article/view/1434](http://www.ijesr.org/index.php/ijesr/article/view/1434).
2. Christina, Mjs & Muthamilselvi, K & Christopher, George. *Destiny and the World: Exploring Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy Series The World of the Shiva Trilogy: A Blend of Myth and Reality*. 2024.
3. Gaurang Bavchandbhai, Patel. *Revisiting Mythology in Select Novels of Devadutt Pattanaik and Amish Tripathi*. 2022.
4. Garima, Dr. "Myth and Identity: Reinterpreting Tradition in Amish Tripathi's The Secret of the Nagas." *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2024, pp. 374-76. <https://doi.org/10.33545/26648652.2024.v6.i2c.250>
5. Hariharan, V., and T. Deivasigamani. "Myth, Adventure and Secrets: A Review of The Secret of the Nagas." *South Eastern European Journal of Public Health*, vol. XXVI S8, 2025, pp. 58-63. <https://doi.org/10.70135/seejph.vi.6850>.
6. Kumar, S. Vignesh, and R. Ajith. "Postcolonial Perspectives in Amish Tripathi's the Secret of the Nagas." *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, vol. 30, no. 10, 2024, pp. 857-58. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i10.10298>.
7. Navaneetham, N., and C. Arun. "The Reimaging of Hindu Mythology: A Study of Naga Myth in The Secret of the Nagas." *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, vol. 6, no. 10(2), 2023, pp. 1785-89. [https://doi.org/10.53555/jrtdd.v6i10s\(2\).3469](https://doi.org/10.53555/jrtdd.v6i10s(2).3469)
8. Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. Westland Ltd, 2010.
9. ---, *The Secret of Nagas*. Westland Ltd, 2011.
10. ---, *The Oath of Vayuputras*. Westland Ltd, 2013.