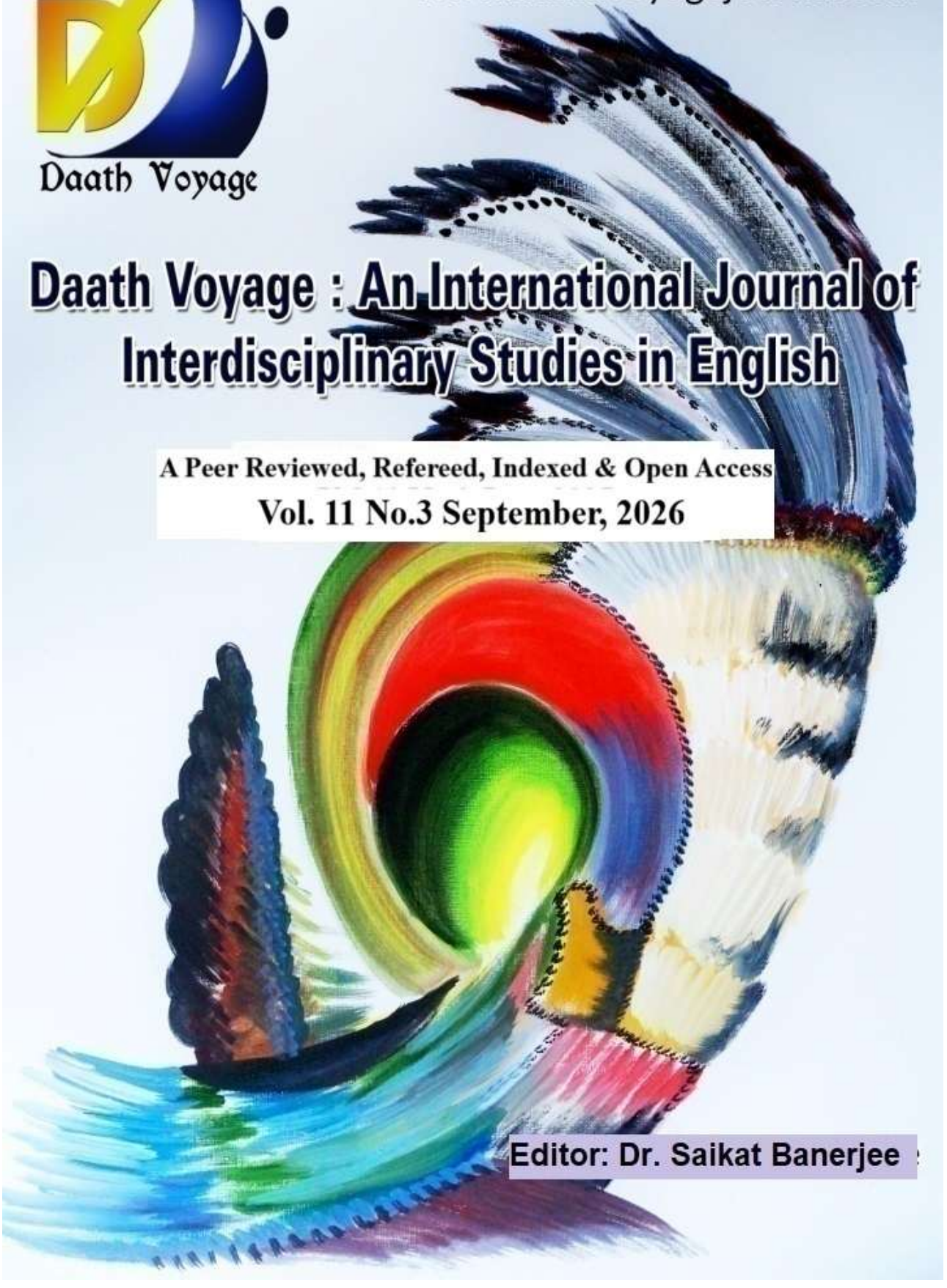
ISSN 2455-7544
www.daathvoyagejournal.com

Daath Voyage

Daath Voyage : An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English

A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access
Vol. 11 No.3 September, 2026



Editor: Dr. Saikat Banerjee

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

A Jungian Journey into the World of *Shiva Trilogy* of Amish Tripathi

Ravikrishnan T.
Research Scholar in English,
Bharathidasan University, Tamilnadu,
Dr. V Vinod Kumar
Professor and Head, Department of English,
Bharathidasan University, Trichy, Tamilnadu
&
Dr Rakhi Raghavan
Associate Professor and Head,
Department of English,
Pazhassi Raja N.S.S College,
Mattanur, Kannur, Kerala

Received 14 August 2026 Revised 21 August 2026 Published 30 September 2026

Abstract: This article attempts to explore the archetypal themes, images, and characters in Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* from a Jungian perspective. Jung has fascinated the world of psychology and literature through his concepts of "collective unconscious" and the "archetypes." Many archetypal critics are influenced by Jungian concept of the "primodial images" and the force of the 'collective unconscious. A reading of Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* will unravel the unconscious world of the human mind and help readers to understand the different universal patterns of archetypes and primordial images that work within the text. Myth is a belief system that works within a society, and holds its cultural identity. Myth critics like Maud Bodkin, Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye try to identify the universal patterns or archetypes hidden in the literary text. The archetypal figures in literature include the concept of the hero, the shadow, the persona, the anima/animus, the wise old man/woman, the mother, the father, the child, the trickster, the maiden, etc. A mythological reading of a text using the concepts of Jung will help in understanding the deeper layers of the human psyche, transcending cultural and historical boundaries.

Key words: Archetypes, Persona, Anima, Individuation, Shadow.

Amish Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* has renewed interest in the world of mythological literature due to its success and popularity. There are many mythological writers in the Indian subcontinent who have contributed to the myth genere like Devdutt Pattanaik, Anand Neelkanthan, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kavita Kane, Dharamvir Bharati, and Kevin Missal along with other Indian Writers in regional languages.

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

The work of a mythological writer is a mythological rendition of the author's understanding of myth, history, geography, and our present. Tripathi's *Shiva Trilogy* is an allegorical voyage of the modern generation into the mythical world of Shiva, one of the supreme deities in Indian mythology. T.S. Eliot in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" says, "historical sense involves a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence..." to understand the tradition in poetry (*The Sacred Wood* 44). Similarly a 'mythical sense' is required to fully understand the mythical code hidden in the mythological reproductions.

India is a world replete with myths and for Indians myths are not just stories of the past; many live in the world of myths in the form of religious practice, rituals, customs etc. So in Indian circumstances it is doubtful whether mythology can be treated as "a religion in which we no longer believe" (Abrams, *A Glossary* 122). Further, M. H. Abrams observes,

> In classical Greek, "mythos" signified any story or plot, whether true or invented. In its central modern significance, however, a myth is one story in a mythology- a system of hereditary stories of ancient origin which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain … why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances, and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives. Most myths are related to social rituals … but anthologists disagree as to whether rituals generated myths or myths generated rituals. (*A Glossary* 121-22)

M S Nagarajan in his book "*English Literary Criticism*" points out that "The acted part of the myth is the ritual, and the spoken part of the ritual is the myth. The myth is the central informing power that gives significance to the ritual," (143). So it can be observed that most of the cultural practices have an undeniable connection with myth. Literature is a cultural product, and in many ways codes the beliefs and customs of the society. In the case of mythological literature it is all the more predominant, as the reinterpretation of myths address the various issues of the modern world within the arch of mythology. Amish Tripathi's mythological re-imaginations, the "Shiva Trilogy", relocate modern problems within the pattern of mythology and thus connect them in mythical proportions. Myth critics try to identify the universal patterns, images, themes present in literature to highlight a text's significance. The important figures other than Jung who contributed to myth criticism are James G Frazer, Maud Baudkin, Joseph Campbell, and Northrop Frye. Among these, according to Abrams, Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1995)

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

"identified elemental patterns of myth and ritual that , it claimed, recur in the legends and ceremonials of many diverse and far-flung cultures" (Abrams *A Glossary* 223) While, Carl G. Jung's concept of "archetype," which are "primordial images" that survive in the "collective unconscious," finds its manifestation "in myths, religion, dreams, and private fantasies, as well as in works of literature" (Abrams *A Glossary* 223). In other words, any form of great literature or those that claim to have the status of classics will echo the archetypes of the human psyche, those "primordial images" which emerge from the collective unconscious or racial memory.

A mythological reading of a text through Jungian perspective will further unravel the world of human psyche. Jung's psychological concepts were used by literary critics and mythologists for the interpretation of literary works. In the 20th century, Jungian principles seem to be contrary to the idea of mind at birth as a "blank slate" or what is generally termed as "tabula rasa." The English philosopher John Locke in section "Neither Principles nor Ideas are Innate" of his work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), says that "The way shown how we come by any Knowledge, sufficient to prove it not innate" (ch. II, par.1). Here Locke denies the presence of any inherent knowledge at birth by using the term "tabula rasa" for the condition of human mind at birth. Perhaps, by the "tabula rasa" concept, Locke tried to prove the innocence of the child and save him from the guilt of the original sin of disobedience to God in Christianity. While Jung takes a different stand about human mind, and is of the opinion that the human mind comes with certain predispositions like racial memory or primordial images stored in the collective unconscious. Jung also differed from his teacher Sigmund Freud in the concepts of the psyche and the collective unconscious. Jung held the view that "libido" is more psychic than sexual and gave more importance to "collective unconscious" than to "unconscious." In Jungian psychology, archetypal images are universally recognisable symbols or themes that reside in the collective unconscious. Jung has chosen the term ''collective" because "this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (*The Archetypes* 3-4).

The archetypes manifest in myths, dreams, art, and literature of various times and places. Some typical examples of archetypal images critics point out include the hero, the persona, shadow, anima/animus, the wise old man/woman, the mother, the father, the child, the trickster, the maiden, etc., and the theme of

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

quest and the process of individuation. These archetypes are not rigid categories but rather fluid and dynamic symbols. These archetypes appear in various forms across cultures and individual experiences help understand human behaviour. While making an archetypal reading of the *Shiva Trilogy*, in spite of it being a modern retelling of Shiva myth, one can find that it is replete with the archetypal motifs, images, characters, and patterns.

Shiva, in *The Immortals of Meluha*, is a typical archetypal hero who was, what Ayurvati and Sati had said on the first instance on seeing him, living a kind of "uncouth immigrant" (Tripathi, *The Immortals* 16) like life, living in close affinity with nature, at the same time battling with other tribes for the survival. Like a new entrant to a school he wonders on reaching Meluha. He is like a novice who is brought into the world of intrigues that later develops into a world of chaos. Shiva upon reaching Meluha is being introduced into the world of artificiality and sophistication. Like a child he is marvelled at the wonderful artefacts and architecture that the Meluhans have built.

> After marching continuously for four weeks, the caravan of invited immigrants crested the final mountain to reach the outskirts of Srinagar, the capital of the valley of Kashmir. Nandi had talked excitedly about the glories of his perfect land. Shiva had prepared himself to see some incredible sights, which he could not have imagined in his simple homeland. But nothing could have primed him for the sheer spectacle of what certainly was paradise. *Meluha*. The *land of pure life!* (*The Immortals* 10)

This makes the "persona" of the hero look similar to his true "self." While Jung observes, "The persona is a complicated system of relations between the individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual" (Jung, *Two Essays* 264). Daksha is a person who has successfully used his "persona" as a king among his people for a long time; it is said in the novel that Daksha has tuned 184 years (Tripathi *The immortals* 83), and ruled Meluha in a systematic manner that of a sophisticated society, though his ambitious project of controlling the whole part of Indian peninsula using the myth of *Neelkanth* becomes counterproductive as the trilogy progress.

In Indian culture the concept of the hero who saves the people in a crisis is deep-rooted. This idea is also an archetypal theme in literature. The verse 4.7 of the Indian holy text *Bhagavat Gita* of *Mahabharata* speaks of the incarnation of the lord, in avatar form, for the destruction of the evil and for the propagation

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

of the good. The Hindu mythology of Shiva is a picture of the destroyer and the saviour. In Tripathi's modern version the image of the saviour is transferred to Shiva, because of his blue throat. Entire region of Sapt Sindu is waiting for the saviour, Neelkanth. Daksha in *The Immortals of Meluha* says, "But what the legends also tell us is that when the problems become insurmountable for ordinary men, the Neelkanth will appear" (117). In the Shiva Trilogy the people of the Sapt Sindhu believes in the concept of 'Neelkanth' the saviour, and in the 'fate' of the Vikarma people who had committed sins in their previous life. These themes are deep rooted in the collective unconscious and forms archetypal images in the Shiva Trilogy. Vikarmas "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. This is the only way they can wipe their karma clean of the sins of their previous births" (*The Immortals* 117).

Shiva goes through a process of what Jung terms as "individuation," as the novel progresses. Jung observes "Individuation means becoming an 'in-dividual,' and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self. As such, we might translate individuation as "attaining one's true self' or realizing oneself' (Jung, Two Essays 238). Initially, Shiva, who imagined himself as one of the tribal leaders struggling with his own problems, realises his role, joins the Suryavanshis and leads the war against evil. In a way, the idea of evil changes from Chandravanshis to Nagas, and finally moves to the true culprits, the Somras and its controllers, the Suryavanshis. In this process, Shiva is able to experience his own 'selfhood' or "self-realisation."

Similar to the archetypal hero Shiva, is involved in the "quest" for the identification and, of course, the elimination of the evil. Shiva's quest for evil is justified by Brahaspati's words, "Somras has been the greatest Good of our age is pretty obvious.... It has shaped our age. Hence, it is obvious that someday it will become the greatest Evil. The key question is when would the transformation occur" (Tripathi The Oath 10). Like that of Joseph Campbell's Hero, in *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Shiva goes through various stages of hero's journey in the process of identifying the evil and destroying it. In *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, to end the evil permanently, Shiva destroys the city of Meluha to bring an end to the evil Somras. Shiva he departs on a search for evil to destroy it, finds the wise man, gets the assistance and guidance, solves the riddle, destroys the evil to restore normalcy.

The "shadow" archetype in the *Shiva Trilogy* is played by many characters and groups at different times. Jung observes shadow as "the dangerous aspect of the unrecognised dark half of the personality" (*Two*

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

Essays 139). Daksha uses his 'persona' as a king successfully but his 'shadow' is exposed later; he is engaged in a kind of blame game wherein his failure to understand the reality is projected onto Swadweepans and Nagas. Nagas are the most misunderstood people, and feared by the society; they are under the "shadow" image in *The Immortals of Meluha* while in *The Secret of the Nagas* this image gets dissolved. Chandravanshis played the role of shadow in the first book, *The Immortals of Meluha* of the *Shiva Trilogy*, only to be discovered later in *The Secret of Nagas* that they are not real evil; then the concept of evil moves to Nagas, who are dreaded by all in Meluha, but later they are also understood as not being evil. In the end, in *The Oath of Vayuputras*, Shiva realises that it is the Somras that is evil and Daksha and Bhrigu who try to control it come under the role of shadow archetype.

The role of "wise old man" archetype in the *Shiva Trilogy* is played by Brahaspati who serves as a mentor figure, scaffolding Shiva with knowledge, and wisdom. He says to Shiva at Panchavadi, "The coin of Good and Evil is flipping over and India needs the Neelkanth. It needs you, Shiva. Otherwise, Evil will destroy this beautiful land of ours," (*The Oath* 5) and on another occasion he says, "…the solution to the Somars problem is not in my hands anymore. It's in your hands. It doesn't matter if I live any longer. Mount Mandar will be reconstructed. It's a matter of time. And Somras production will begin once again. You have to stop it, Shiva. For the sake of India, you have to stop the Somras" (*The Oath* 45).

Vasudev Pandit Gopal also functions as a mentor of Shiva in the *Shiva Trilogy*. Whenever Shiva has any serious doubts he clarifies it with the Pandit:

> Yes, despite so many challenges, you have arrived at the right answer to the question posed to every Mahadev: What is Evil? Does that mean you were already aware of the right answer? Of course …. The Mahadev's key question is: What is Evil? For the Vishnu, there are two key questions: What is the next great Good? And *when* does Good become Evil. (*The Oath* 95-96).

Veerbhadra, throughout the Shiva Trilogy, has always been the "good friend" type. Shiva, fearing that the Gunas could be in danger, put the protection of the Gunas entirely on Veerbhadra. Shiva tells him "I'm worried the Gunas will be arrested and held hostage as leverage over us. Before they do so, I want you to slip into Meluha quietly and take our people to Kashi. I will meet you there" (Tripathi *The Oath* 36-37).

Anima is the womanhood principle in man which is, in essence, one's "soul image," (Jung *Two Essays* 270), In Lady Sati's character of the Shiva Trilogy, we see the aspects of anima and the maiden. She is

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
(A Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Indexed& Open Access Journal)

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.11/No.3 September, 2026

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

Shiva's girlfriend, and their liaison enables him to carry out his destiny. The encounter of Shiva with Sati is beautifully described in the following lines:

> The moment that every unrealised heart craves for. The unforgettable instant that a soul, clinging on to the purest memory of its previous life, longs for. The moment which, in spite of a conspiracy of the gods, only a few lucky men experience. The moment when *she* enters *his* life. (Tripathi *The Immortals* 48)

The male counterpart, as such, to the woman's anima is animus. The anima, being of feminine gender, is exclusively a figure that compensates the masculine consciousness. Animus is a figure which has been the subject of discussion with regard to gender complementarity. Animus is an opposite gender personality element, thus it is possible to call woman's inner counterpart male as animus (Jung *Two Essays* 281). Therefore, anima is symbolic of the female aspect in man whereas animus is symbolic of the masculine aspect in woman. Briefly, the concepts show the opposites of the human personality like the case of Hindu icon of Ardhanareeswara that symbolises the union between Shiva and Shakthi. In the narrative of *Shiva Trilogy,* Sati is the soul mirror of Shiva, and this hold true, for she was always the main driving factor behind Shiva's activities in Meluha, and the story of her relationship with Shiva was eventually turned out to be one of universal importance as the couple's love story was also very closely linked to the event of the liberation of the whole world from evil caused by the consumption of Somras.

When Jungian concepts are applied to the interpretation of Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy, the book becomes not just a reading material but a deep understanding tool of human psychology and cultural developments. We are familiar with the world of archetypal figures, symbols and themes which the readers can use to get the bigger picture of human nature. Readers can trace the reasons behind the conscious and unconscious actions of the characters through Jung's concepts of human psychology. It cuts across cultural boundaries and considers a literary product as a deep expression of shared human experiences derived from the collective unconscious.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. 6th ed., Prism Books, 1993.

Eliot, T.S. *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/57795.

Jung, C.G. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 9, Part 1: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Translated by R.F.C Hull, Edited by Herbert Read, et.al. Routledge & Kegan Paul London. 1959. api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9781317534617_ A26855752/preview-9781317534617_A26855752.pdf

---. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. 2nd ed. www. jungiancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Vol-7-two-essays-on-analytical-psychology.pdf

Lock, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* www.gutenberg.org/files/10615/10615-h/10615-h.htm#chap1.02

Nagarajan, M S. *English Literary Criticism and Theory*. Orient BlackSwan.2016.

Tripathi, Amish. *The Immortals of Meluha*. Westland, 2010.

---. *The Secret of the Nagas*. Westland, 2011.

---. *The Oath of the Vayuputras*, Westland 2013.

.