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(De)psychologizing Shangri-La: Recognizing and Reconsidering C.G. Jung's Role in the Construction of Tibetan Buddhism in the Western Imagination

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**(De)psychologizing Shangri-La:
Recognizing and Reconsidering C.G. Jung's Role in the
Construction of Tibetan Buddhism in the Western
Imagination**

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All my writings may be considered tasks imposed from within; their source was a fateful compulsion. What I wrote were things that assailed me from within myself. I permitted the spirit that moved me to speak out. I have never counted upon any strong response, any powerful resonance, to my writings. They represent a compensation for our times, and I have been impelled to say what no one wants to hear...I have the feeling that I have done all that it was possible for me to do. Without a doubt that life work could have been larger, and could have been done better; but more was not within my power.

C.G. Jung

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Introduction

Treading Old Paths and Plotting New Ones: **Framing Our Project**

There is only one way and that is your way. You seek the path? I warn you away from my own. It can also be the wrong way for you. May each go his own way. I will be no savior, no law giver, no master teacher unto you.¹

C.G. Jung

Having dedicated much of his life to exploring and making sense of the world's many mythologies, it is only fitting that Carl Jung's life and work have taken on a mythic quality in their own right. Despite his exhortations against such deification, Jung's voice has, for better or for worse, authoritatively resounded in both academic and popular discourse. His wide variety of pursuits have led to him being understood as a man poised between worlds, living as a psychoanalyst and a psychonaut, a scientist and an alchemist, a scholar of comparative religion and a mystic.

As a builder of bridges between disparate disciplines and cultures, Jung occupied a position of special privilege during a period in which vast stores of Asian religious texts were being translated into English and other European languages for the first time. Standing at this liminal intersection, Jung played a key role mediating and introducing Asian religious practices and conceptions to his European and American audiences, as well as in bringing the work of contemporary Indologists and Sinologists to a wider audience.² His authority is both demonstrated and reproduced through his authorship of prefaces to the translations of several of the most widely known Eastern texts among Westerners, such as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*³ and the *I-Ching*.⁴ Jung's participation in the Eranos lectures^a, a forum dedicated to creating a dialogue between Eastern and Western systems of thought, further cemented his inseparable ties with Asia.

As one of the earliest scholars attempting to render Asian religions in terms intelligible to Westerners, Jung established analytical precedents that have carried into contemporary discussions about appropriating Asian cultures. Whether or not Jung

^a The Eranos conferences began in 1933 and occur annually in Switzerland up to this day.

intended for this to be the case, his authority and influence have grown far greater than the man himself. Even though Jung himself advised others against treading the same path that he laid forth,⁵ it has nevertheless become a road well worn over the course of the past century, and a reappraisal of this path seems particularly timely. Given the tremendous proliferation of interest in Asian religions, particularly Buddhism, over the past several decades in America, a closer look at one of the forerunners of this movement will prove highly beneficial.

Although it was not the only Eastern religion on which Jung wrote, or even the first,^b Tibetan Buddhism was certainly the one that received his greatest attention and most extensive commentaries. In addition to contributing a psychological commentary to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, he also wrote an extensive introduction to the *Tibetan Book of Great Liberation* and performed detailed analyses of mandala symbolism. Jung's analyses of these three distinct artifacts of Tibetan Buddhism have established him as a key mediator in the transmission of Tibetan Buddhism to both academic and general audiences in Europe and America.

In light of Jung's significance in the construction of Tibetan Buddhism in the West we must now raise the obvious questions: How should we understand Jung's encounter with Tibetan Buddhism and what should we do with his psychological interpretations? This is the query that will guide this entire thesis and that will shape our appraisals of Jung, his psychological commentaries, and his extended influence on contemporary conceptions of Tibetan Buddhism in the popular Western imagination.

I first attempted to tackle this question nearly two years ago in a work entitled *Vajrayana Buddhist Psychological Transformation: Going Beyond Sonic Frequencies*. I had just discovered Jung's analytical psychology, as well as Tibetan Buddhism, and my mind was flooded with possible points of comparison between the two systems of thought. Considering that Jung himself had viewed Tibetan Buddhism as a system analogous to his own, I was eager to follow in the psychologist's footsteps by laying out a series of connections between the theories of analytical psychology and those of

^b In 1912, Jung provided psychological interpretations of passages from the Indian *Upanishads* and the *Rig Veda* in his *Transformation and Symbols of Libido*. (Shamdasani, 2012, xix)

Tibetan Buddhism. I became so caught up in the legitimacy of these comparisons that I ultimately lamented the degree to which Jung had been ridiculed for his ideas and advanced the ambitious claim that his works are “a light shining through a world of intellectual darkness,” applauding their tremendous potential for illuminating the foreign ideas of Tibetan Buddhism to European and American audiences.

As I have further explored Jung’s thought and its relation to Tibetan Buddhism, I have since come to nearly the opposite conclusion: analytical psychology does not unveil fundamental truths about Tibetan Buddhism but psychologizing Tibetan Buddhism can tell us something about analytical psychology and about Jung. Deeper engagement with Tibetan Buddhism and the post-colonial critiques of representation have shown me that Jung’s attempts to analogize his own system to that of Tibetans is highly problematic. They reflect certain political and professional agendas as determined by his position as an intellectual writing in twentieth century Europe. Within this zeitgeist, Orientalist discourse played a crucial role in shaping Jung’s commentaries. “Orientalism” here refers to the epistemological system that Europeans used to make sense of the Asian East that commonly entailed reducing their objects of inquiry into misrepresentative tropes for the sake of analysis.⁶ This agenda complicates the possibility of using ideas that emerged in a particular time and place to represent concepts that developed under entirely different circumstances, raising larger questions about using Jungian concepts to shed light on foreign cultural phenomena.

However, my initial mistake was not solely that of an overexcited student posturing far beyond my actual erudition. Rather, it is an interpretive problem endemic to many intellectuals attempting to make sense of Tibetan Buddhism following Jung’s writings on the religion in the early twentieth century. While this thesis will only touch upon a handful of scholars who have proven particularly susceptible to the allure of Jung’s psychological interpretations, such as Timothy Leary,⁷ Radmila Moacanin⁸, and Rob Preece⁹, it points toward a larger trend in contemporary conceptions of Tibetan Buddhism.

Given that Tibet was never colonized by a European power and consequently did not have formal Western academic institutions before the Tibetan diaspora in 1959, systematic study of the religion did not begin until the 1960s. Although Westerners, and

Romantics in particular, demonstrated great interest in Tibet prior to that period, specific methodological and rhetorical tools for analyzing Tibetan Buddhism were not codified until well after Jung had performed his psychological interpretations. As such, early accounts of the religion like Jung's played a huge role in establishing its identity in the broader Western intellectual imagination.

Although it is not the only, or even the dominant, interpretive lens applied to Tibetan Buddhism, psychologism is certainly prevalent in popular discourse on the subject. This particular theoretical framework rests on the assumption that human nature and behavior are best explained by psychological mechanisms that can be uncovered through empirical investigation.¹⁰ Consequently, psychologism often results in reductionism that interiorizes practices and transmutes cultural beliefs into expressions of psychological structures and treats them as carriers of timeless psychic data. This essentializing strategy not only supplants the voice of actual Buddhists by locating the 'essence' of the religion in its experiential aspects, but also further dismisses their truth claims by suggesting that their religion is nothing more than phenomenological experience. Psychologism is thus intellectually imperializing to the highest degree, denying all other traditional interpretations in favor of the psychological.

Psychologism's reductionism exemplifies what Susan Sontag refers to as formalist interpretation.¹¹ According to Sontag, formalist interpretation and hermeneutics are epistemological fallacies that place an overabundance of importance on meaning at the expense of how the source material actually appears and functions in its original context. In this view, analysis is an act of translation that seeks to establish correspondences between the new object that we're studying (the material to be interpreted) and old objects with which we are familiar (the background of our interpretation.)¹² Interpretation thus introduces meaning to a text or a practice that it did not previously have. Consequently, "nothing is ever comprehended, but rather designated and distorted."¹³ By this logic, Jung's attempts to interpret Tibetan Buddhism are unable to produce faithful reproductions of their source material, instead churning out palimpsests that retain traces of the original content, which are reinscribed according to Jung's own positionality and agenda of advancing analytical psychology.

How and why did Jung fall prey to this fallacy of interpretation so easily? A possible clue lays in the clinical practices in his own field of psychoanalysis. In psychotherapy, it ordinarily takes two to make a diagnosis: a patient with a set of symptoms and the psychiatrist that classifies and labels them. Yet in cases in which psychoanalysts are working not with a person, but with a text or a symbol, such as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* or a mandala, there is no voice other than that of psychoanalyst himself/herself. As the sole speakers, they are thus imbued with a tremendous authority to find what they wish in the text and to speak on its behalf without even realizing that they are doing so, thereby erasing the cultural and historical context that renders the text unique and significant.

While Jungian inspired psychologism has occasionally been directly and unequivocally applied to considerations of Tibetan Buddhism, as in the cases of Leary, Moacanin, and Preece, it is more broadly problematic due to the convenient terminology it provides to describe the religion's foreign concepts. Through continued use and normalization, Jungian linguistic conventions have subtly infiltrated even the most well-intentioned and well-informed portrayals of the religion for popular audiences. In doing so, psychologism slyly transforms Tibetan concepts into Jungian ones, often without even acknowledging that this transformation is taking place. While Tibetan Buddhism undoubtedly possesses elements that we would classify as 'psychological' according to our current disciplinary categorizations, it possesses a bevy of other dimensions as well. These additional aspects, which include devotionism, physiology, cosmology, and ritualism, are often brushed aside or reduced to human psychology when contemporary interpreters replace Tibetan Buddhist concepts with Jungian ones.

Engaging in a critical yet sympathetic analysis of Jung's encounter with Tibetan Buddhism serves a twofold purpose. First, it allows us to recognize the distorting lens that Jung imposes on contemporary conceptions of the religion through his reductionist commentaries and the persistent impact of his psychologism. Additionally, this analysis also enables a consideration of any potential benefits or more productive ends that his works might serve. In order to capture these dual movements of criticism and reappraisal, our project consists of two parts. To begin, Jung's psychologism of Tibetan Buddhism instrumentalizes the religion by using it to support and advance his own system of

analytical psychology rather than seeking to accurately understand it. This treatment qualifies Jung as an academically imperializing Orientalist whose methodology and rhetoric have carried into contemporary discourse and thereby perpetuated the trend of intellectually dominating the religion. However, contextualizing Jung's writings within a field of power relations reveals that his commentaries should not be treated as illuminating Tibetan Buddhism, as scholars have often done, but as further insight into his own system of analytical psychology. This contextualization also offers a new hermeneutical approach to Jung's writings that highlight its potential to deconstruct the Orientalist episteme that he seemingly perpetuates.

Recognizing and Reconsidering Jung: Plotting our Path Forward

The first section of this thesis, which consists of the first four chapters, explores the specific ways in which Jung overemphasizes the psychological dimension of Tibetan Buddhism. In short, it is an examination of what is wrong with Jung and his Asian encounters. In Jung's particular interpretation of the text, there are a number of authorial strategies that constitute acts of Orientalism. Edward Said has suggested that when we track the impact of the Orientalist episteme on textual interpretation we should pay close attention to "style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original."¹⁴ While Said provides helpful signs of Orientalist representations, we should rethink his decision to ignore the correctness of these depictions. Given that psychological perspectives are often implicitly treated as an accurate reflection of the Tibetan stance on their own beliefs and practices, we must go further than Said suggests and directly engage with the contents of Jung's psychological commentaries to examine the specific distortions that occurred as he transmitted ideas from Tibet to the West.

This exploration will therefore follow the critique of Jung that Luis Gomez lays out in his *Oriental Wisdom and the Cure of Souls: Jung and the Indian East*.¹⁵ Gomez critically reconsiders Jung's interpretation of key concepts in the *Amitayur-dhyana Sutra*, concluding that the psychologist primarily used the text to validate the universal applicability of his own system of analytical psychology and to advance it as a superior practice of inner healing.¹⁶ From his position of authorial authority, Jung claims

privileged access to Tibetan Buddhism and its doctrines, which he asserts are unusable to his Western audience in their unrefined form.¹⁷ These ideas, however, closely correspond to those of Jung's own system of analytical psychology. By merging the East's supposed concern for internal wellness with the West's dedication to rationality and empiricism, Jung presents analytical psychology as a holistic practice for mental health that is more appropriate for his modern Western audience than traditional belief based religions. His concern with advancing analytical psychology thereby ensures that his interpretations do not represent Tibetan Buddhism as a cultural phenomenon in its own right, but transform it into convincing evidence for his own theories. By following Gomez's astute analysis, we place ourselves in the best possible position to understand the intellectual harm inflicted upon Tibetan Buddhism by Jung's initial interpretations and their influence on subsequent scholarship.

This analysis begins by providing background on Jung's project of interpreting Tibetan Buddhism in the broader context of European and American (which, following discursive conventions common to Jung's time, we will refer to as the 'West') engagement with Asia (the so-called 'East') over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the framework of Orientalism. Armed with the rhetoric of Orientalism, European and American scholars participated in the construction of 'Mystic Tibet' and 'Western Buddhism.' Although these representations claim to derive from evidence gathered from Asian cultures, they are ultimately far more representative of the Orientalists that constructed them than of the ideas they claim to explicate.

These claims to authenticity highlight the essential problem of Orientalist constructions of the East. By producing representations that assert their 'authenticity' yet have little grounding in the actual material they claim to depict, Orientalism is primarily a discourse of domination. It enabled Western scholars to elevate themselves to a Benthamite position of authorial authority from which they could pass judgment on their Eastern objects of inquiry, rendering them into familiar and therefore useable analytical forms. From this position, Jung attempted to fit Tibetan Buddhism into the incommensurable framework of analytical psychology and used Tibetan materials to advance his own system of psychology as a superior alternative to traditional religions.

As he approached the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and mandala iconography for his psychological interpretations, Jung picked through his source material for information that would prove most useful in the construction and legitimization of analytical psychology. He distorts Tibetan Buddhism by failing to mention its devotional and ritualistic elements, as well as the physical aspects of practice. His overemphasis of the psychological dimension of Tibetan Buddhism at the expense of its other features has helped to establish a distinctly psychological thread in broader contemporary understandings of the religion. While current scholars of Tibetan Buddhism such as Donald Lopez, Georges Dreyfus, and Janet Gyatso, have largely discredited Jungian psychology's applicability to Tibetan Buddhism, Jung's perspective still persists in popular intellectual accounts of the religion, thus warranting much of the harsh criticism levied toward Jung for his role in this misrepresentative construction.

While these appraisals of Jung as an Orientalist ring true and reflect very real problems with the psychologist's engagement with Tibetan Buddhism, they also oversimplify his writings and use Jung as a scapegoat for larger issues present in any attempts to make objective statements about unfamiliar cultural phenomena. Reducing Jung's appropriation of Tibetan Buddhism to nothing more than an act of intellectual imperialism ignores the potentially positive dimensions of this practice. As Jung himself noted, it would not be wise to follow directly in his footsteps¹⁸, though there is much to be learned from the way in which he walked the path, as well as the fact that he walked it at all.

The second section of this thesis plots out the social and intellectual milieu in which Jung laid out his particular interpretive methods and uses this contextualization to reconsider the significance of his interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism. Chapter five will develop a Foucauldian analysis to complicate straightforward criticisms of Jung as an Orientalist by framing him within the set of power relations specific to his time and place. This contextualization paves the way for a consideration of the value of Jung's interpretive psychology. This analysis will locate Jung within an ideological matrix and appraise the different variables that factored into his specific method of psychology. Among these various factors under consideration are Jung's background as a child growing up in Switzerland, his endless fascination between the conscious Self and the

unconscious Other, the development of psychiatry in France as an offshoot of scientific positivism, and the scholarly trend of focusing primarily on texts and inner experience as Western intellectuals sought to make sense of foreign religions. Each of these discursive forces helped to shape Jung's rhetoric and methodology as he metaphorically traveled East to produce his commentaries on Tibetan Buddhism. By considering each of these powers in turn, we can arrive at a deeper sense of Jung's positionality and its influence on his perspective of the religion.

Locating Jung in his social and intellectual context enables us to reevaluate common criticisms and draw out a more productive use for his writings in the final chapter. Rather than forgiving Jung as a product of his times or wholly dismissing his psychological commentaries, we will find a middle way between these two extremes. From this new perspective, we can reevaluate Jung's psychologism as merely one perspective on Tibetan Buddhism that sheds light on a single dimension of the religion. This evaluation also prompts a reconsideration of the extent to which Jung's voice should be considered to speak about Tibetan Buddhism at all, revealing that Jung himself did not view his claims as reflecting a traditionally Tibetan stance on Buddhist practice and that his commentaries are ultimately far more indicative of himself and of analytical psychology than the material he appears to explicate.

Finally, performing a Derridean analysis on Jung's own writings provides the necessary tools to "deconstruct"¹⁹ the Orientalist episteme from within which he writes. Although Jung's writings perpetuate and advance the Western Orientalist domination of the East, the foundational ideas of analytical psychology ultimately run directly counter to the cognitively imperializing methodology he adopts in his interpretations. Analytical psychology and psychoanalysis in general occupy a unique position in the European intellectual tradition as continuations of prior attempts to make sense of human identity that simultaneously break from their lineage. By proposing the existence of an unconscious mind that is constitutive of our identity and yet forever unknowable, psychoanalysis deeply problematizes the possibility of self-knowledge and objectivity. Our existence as autonomous Subjects with the ability to make objective statements about the world around us is undermined by the presence of an obscure, internal Other on which our identities depend. Psychoanalysis is thus fraught with tensions that challenge

its own basis for existence because the methods that it uses to reify itself as a legitimate discipline are undermined by the very ideas it seeks to establish.

This paradoxical nature of psychoanalysis suggests that its application to the study of the East was not a typical Orientalist endeavor. By questioning the fundamental relationship between observing Subject and observed Other, psychoanalysis casts doubt upon any Western attempts to speak objectively about the East. While European Orientalists may impose their ideas upon Asia and consequently appear to dominate it, the East simultaneously defines the West by providing a boundary for everything that it is not. Just as the unconscious is constitutive of consciousness by demarcating its limits, the East colludes with the West in the formation of each of their unique identities. Psychoanalysis thereby reveals that Orientalist intellectual domination of Asia does not place the West in a position of absolute superiority in relation to the East, but that the West is dependent on the East for self-definition as well.

This tension between Jungian psychoanalysis and the methods that he requires to validate them as he writes about Tibetan Buddhism occasionally breaks through in his writings. These points of self-doubt provide opportunities to reconsider Jung's psychological commentaries and catch a glimpse of the instability of Orientalism as an epistemological framework, thereby allowing us to deconstruct it. This deconstruction enables a rereading of Orientalism that reveals the futility of the West's attempts to establish itself as hegemonic and presents us with the possibility of appropriating differently. In this light, Jung's psychological commentaries are not solely misrepresentative accounts of Tibetan Buddhism, but are also material that enables a reconsideration of the psychological aspect of Tibetan Buddhist Modernism and the Orientalist episteme.

It would thus seem that the question of, "What should we do with Jung and his psychological interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism?" is not quite as simple as we might like to imagine. In the following pages, we will trace how this question has typically been answered and then provide a new answer. Ultimately, it seems that we would do well to abide by Jung's words that opened this chapter, though with a slight caveat. We should not tread the path that Jung laid out and that many subsequent interpreters have

mistakenly traveled down but, instead, taking a hint from Jung, will now find our own way forward.

¹ Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009) 308.

² Shamdasani, *C.G. Jung: A Biography in Books* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012) 163.

³ Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴ Wilhelm, *The I-Ching: Or Book of Changes* (London: Routledge, 1950).

⁵ Jung, *Red Book*, 308.

⁶ Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 6.

⁷ Leary Metzner, and Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964).

⁸ Moacanin, *Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism: Western and Eastern Paths to the Heart* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1986).

⁹ Preece, *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2006).

¹⁰ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions* (Indiana: World Wisdom Inc, 2004) 313.

¹¹ Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1966).

¹² McGowan, *What is Wrong with Jung* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1994) 159.

¹³ Spivak, "Translator's Preface," *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) xxiii.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 21.

¹⁵ Gomez, "Oriental Wisdom and the Cure of Souls: Jung and the Indian East," *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 197-250.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 221-222.

¹⁷ Lopez. "Introduction," *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 17.

¹⁸ Jung, *The Red Book*, 308.

¹⁹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 101-140.

Chapter One

What's Wrong With Jung: Setting the Stage for Jung's Journeys East

What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that is what they are.¹

-Friedrich Nietzsche

Although our ultimate aim is to reconsider the scholarly significance of Jung's psychological accounts of Tibetan Buddhism, we will begin with the traditional critique of Jung that views his engagements with the religion as a series of acts of cognitively imperializing Orientalism. By positioning Jung within Orientalism's larger project of transmitting Buddhism from Asia to Europe and America, we can begin to reclaim Tibetan Buddhism from his psychological interpretations and reassess the place of these interpretations in popular scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism.

As a discourse and epistemological system, Orientalism denotes a particular way in which Europeans and Americans (the 'West') speak about the Asia (the 'East.')

Grounded in the distinction between a Western Subject and an Otherized Eastern Object, Orientalist discourse allows European scholars to explicate and dominate over Asia via the analytical categories through which they treat it as an object of study. Among the many Orientalist constructions of the East is that of 'Mystic Tibet,' which paints the Himalayan region as a land of purity and spiritual renewal, as well as 'Western/Modern Buddhism,' which portrays the Asian religion as a promising supplement to the spiritually impoverished West.

In addition to providing background on Orientalism and the constructions of 'Mystic Tibet' and 'Western Buddhism', we will also briefly examine Jung's own system of psychology. Given that this is the primary theoretical framework through which Jung filters all of his analyses of Tibetan Buddhism, a cursory understanding of analytical psychology is essential to our project. Having achieved a grasp of the incommensurable

psychological theories that Jung later equates with Tibetan concepts, we may then engage with his commentaries on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and mandala iconography to reconsider the significance of the psychological dimension of Tibetan Buddhist Modernism.

The ‘East’ in the ‘Western’ Gaze: The Orientalist Episteme and Discourse

In his 1961 preface to *History of Madness*, Michel Foucault declared that,

In the universality of the ‘Western’ *ratio*, there is this division which is the Orient...[offering] to the colonizing reason of the Occident, but indefinitely inaccessible, for it always remains the limit...The Orient is for the Occident everything that it is not, while remaining the place in which its primitive truth must be sought. What is required is a history of this great divide, all along this Occidental becoming, following it in its continuity and its exchanges, while also allowing it to appear in its tragic hieratism.²

Seventeen years later, Edward Said responded to this call with *Orientalism*,³ a vigorous critique of Europe’s creation of the ‘East’ as a historical, cultural, and political entity. While Said is responsible for the popularization of the term “Orientalism” and his definition has proven quite durable and influential in discussions of postcolonial theory and European depictions of Asia, other scholars, notably, Ronald Inden,⁴ Richard King,⁵ Jukka Jouhki,⁶ and Eric Meyer,⁷ have also discussed Orientalism, expanding the geographical zones under consideration beyond Said’s specific treatment of the Middle East. An extended consideration of Orientalism as an epistemological system will prove useful in unpacking Jung’s writings on Tibetan Buddhism by providing a framework for understanding his methodology and rhetoric for deciphering texts as ‘Eastern.’ Furthermore, it is only by laying the foundation of the Orientalist episteme that we can construct a metanarrative of the discursive forces acting upon Jung and rethink the proper place of the psychologist and his commentaries.

In its simplest form, Orientalism is a system of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between the ‘Orient,’ or the ‘East,’ and the ‘Occident,’ otherwise referred to as the ‘West.’ This linguistic pair of East-West is built on a relationship of mutual dependence that positions the West as observing Subject in

relation to the East as passive Object. Although grounded in geographic relations, these concepts are not geographic designations *per se*, but are socially constructed concepts in the Andersonian sense.⁸ The ‘East’ and the ‘West’ do not exist in their own right as concrete places but, rather, are reified by collective perception and recognition.

From the mid-1800s onward, Orientalism became the accepted grid through which all knowledge of Asia could be safely transmitted to Europeans and Americans.⁹ According to Said, an Orientalist is anyone who claims to have expert or first-hand knowledge of Asia and the Middle East and therefore contributes to social institutions that deal with the East by “making statements on it, authorizing views on it, describing it, [and] teaching it,” which then disperse throughout the general cultural consciousness.¹⁰ This is not solely the work of academics, but of anyone at all the claims to speak authoritatively on Asia and further contributes to an ever-growing body of knowledge of the East.

While the construction of the ‘Orient’ might have lain in the hands of Europeans and Americans, this is not to say that the concept was purely imaginative with no corresponding reality. But it is certainly not an accurate reflection of Asia either. Rather, the ‘East’ as a discursive construct reflects the concerns, interests, and agendas of European colonialism. This representation, while claiming to speak of Asia, actually requires the absence of the real Orient and the perspectives of its inhabitants. Such accounts might disrupt the apparent stability of Orientalism by contradicting its internal consistency and disrupting the stability of the discourse.¹¹ The creation of the ‘East’ that relies on a complete silencing of actual ‘Eastern’ voices consequently affords European intellectuals a position of dominance over their Asian counterparts by denying them any sense of agency in the creation of their own identities in the Western imagination.

This dominating aspect of Orientalism is ultimately one of the defining characteristics of the episteme. In terms of the Lacanian theory of discourse, Orientalism is a discourse of the Master that places the European Subject in a position of authority over Asia, its Object.¹² From this position of authority, the West places the East in its panoptic gaze, assuring mastery through knowing: “to have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for ‘us’ to deny autonomy to ‘it’-the Oriental space- since we know it and it exists, in a sense, as we

know it.”¹³ In Lacanian terms, the West as the Subject and Master orders knowledge according to its own values while repressing outliers as ‘fantastic’ and reconfiguring their potential along the lines of Western ethical and epistemological forms.¹⁴

While this will to power may be considered to be the “fundamental impulse of man,”¹⁵ Orientalism indulges this impulse to a tremendous degree by providing a pervasive way of speaking and thinking about an entire geographic region and its population. This enables Western scholars to instrumentalize the East by putting it to use according to the economic, political, and intellectual agendas of colonialism. For example, European colonial agents commonly portrayed the Orient as a denigrated Other in relation to the Occidental Subject, characterizing the East as sensual, backward, disposed toward despotism, mentally aberrant, and habitually inaccurate. This portrayal of Asia thus justified the ascendancy of Europe as a world power, having successfully risen above the mire of its past of irrationality that is now represented by the Orient.¹⁶

However, on the converse side of this sort of explicitly imperially driven Orientalism, we find accounts like Jung’s that positively valorize their Asian subjects of enquiry; these accounts have been labeled as Spiritualistic, Idealistic, and, as we will employ here, Romantic Orientalism.¹⁷ At the heart of Romantic Orientalism lies the idea that the East can revitalize the West by undermining the materialism, mechanism, and universalism that dominate European and American thought.¹⁸ Moreover, Romantic Orientalists believed that Asian religious traditions could supplement Christianity with their mystical leanings, which had largely disappeared from mainstream Western religions in contemporary Europe.¹⁹ While the Romantics still figured the East as the mysterious Other, it was by virtue of this very Otherness that the Orient presented such lofty possibilities for a renewal of Western society.

While Said’s writings on Orientalism have often seemed to imply some sort of master agency at work in these constructions,²⁰ perhaps that of a metaphorical imperialist puppet master pulling the strings, this is hardly the case. Although it would be fruitless to deny that Orientalist discourse contributed to maintaining a particular colonial status quo, Orientalism perpetuated itself once its key tenets were established. It is highly unlikely that Romantic Orientalists actively set out to subjugate their Asian subjects of inquiry but, as we shall see with Jung, they nevertheless became caught up in an inherently

dominating discourse in which they were profoundly and irrevocably enmeshed. Once they were assimilated into the discourse, Romantic Orientalists were prone to producing representations that are reductionist, pseudo-empirical, and internally consistent yet simultaneously ambiguous. Collectively, these characteristics established a framework for deciphering the East that proved all but inescapable for any writer seeking to make sense of the Asia.

As a system intended to filter tremendous quantities of information, Orientalism is reductionist by its very nature. Orientalism, as a Lacanian discourse of the Master, establishes itself as a master signifier that refers analysis of all Eastern phenomena back toward itself in order to make them comprehensible. This involves taking complex phenomenon that each have their own social, economic, and political histories, and fitting them into a predetermined schema. Thus stripped of everything that made these phenomena what they were, they are then reshaped into representative figures and tropes that are easily deciphered and analyzed. The very factors that give the people, places, and things of Asia their unique identity are excised, making them fit for European understanding. In doing so, Orientalism turns individuals into abstractions, dehumanizing them in the process.

This reductionism also enables the internal consistency that gives Orientalism its tremendous persuasive power. Once foreign phenomena are refigured into manageable forms, writers can easily place them within the closed system of Orientalism in which, “objects are what they are because they are what they are, for once, for all time, for ontological reasons that no empirical material can either dislodge or alter.”²¹ This sort of circular logic ensures that anomalies are either discounted or transformed, maintaining the internal consistency that is the bedrock of Orientalism as an epistemological system. While Orientalists might like to regard themselves as concerned solely with the facts of Asia, this pretense of empiricism is little more than a facade. However, by claiming to participate in the scientific positivism that was so highly lauded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Orientalists were able to position themselves as social scientists, lending credibility to their outlandish claims and generalizations.

On the converse side of this internal consistency is the remarkable ambiguity of Orientalist accounts of their Eastern objects. Once Eastern phenomena are flattened into

easily recognizable tropes, they are easily enlisted in the dialectical construction of Western subjectivity. By looking East, the West could define itself by what it is not, i.e. 'Eastern.' This process of projection and introjection consequently renders the East as fearful and fascinating, alien and familiar, dangerous and attractive.²² Without this projection, the West would not exist; it requires the opposing Eastern Other as a reference point that the Western Subject can measure itself against. By maintaining ambiguous accounts of the Orient, Orientalist scholars could vary their portrayals of the East according to particular circumstances. This ambiguity allowed Romantic Orientalists to depict the East positively when they sought to draw from its wisdom or to figure it negatively when advancing their own interests as Westerners with authorial authority.

Once these flattened figures of the East were constructed with both positive and negative valuations, it became nearly impossible for Europeans writing on Asia to avoid assimilating Orientalist tropes into their rhetoric. By providing a set of common, understandable, supposedly empirically verifiable tropes regarding the East that were widely accepted, Orientalism ensured that Asia was not a free subject of thought. Orientalism consequently imposed a set of limitations upon speaking about Asia that became so naturalized that they were scarcely recognizable to those caught up in the discourse. In this context, the very act of interpreting the East inevitably involves an appropriation and colonization of the material under consideration. Thus, even though Romantic Orientalists valorized their objects of inquiry more positively than their more overtly imperializing counterparts, the ambiguous nature of Orientalist tropes and their role in defining Western subjectivity ensured that the resultant accounts were no less dominating.

As Romantic Orientalists scoured the East for sources of redemption, they were particularly drawn to Buddhism, viewing its unique form of rational spirituality as a promising supplement to Western materialism. This appeal to Buddhism and the uncanny East had an undeniably strong allure, drawing in a number of influential scholars in a period that has been dubbed the "Oriental Renaissance."²³ The West's increasing faith in materialism and the consequent fissures in the European psyche provoked impassioned lamentations by figures such as Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Baudelaire, and Nietzsche in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁴ These men saw that, although materially circumstances

seemed to continually improve, Western moderns were simultaneously experiencing severe inner degeneration.²⁵ In the midst of this cultural crisis, the Oriental Renaissance established the East as a source of renewal and Orientalism, “helped to give expression and substance...to the loss of faith in the West’s idea of progress through scientific rationalism, and to a need for new modes of representation.”²⁶ Although Indian Hinduism and Vedic religion had been prioritized in the nineteenth century as amenable to such modes of representation, eminent thinkers such as Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) began looking toward Buddhism in their writings.²⁷ Furthermore, in the wake of the First Opium War of 1839 and the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857^a, China and India came to be considered corrupt civilizations and therefore invalid sights/sites of ‘authentic’ Buddhism. Scholars turned their gaze to Tibet and were delighted to discover that it contained the exact elements the West required for its spiritual reawakening. Painted as a land of purity and redemption, ‘mystic Tibet’ was born.

The Search for ‘Mystic Tibet’: Tibet in the Western Imagination

Although Romantic Orientalists conceived all of Asia as the spiritually charged East, this romanticization of geographically and metaphorically distant lands is nowhere more apparent than in the myth of ‘mystic Tibet.’ As a region located on the high planes of the Himalayas, Tibet has come to serve as a site of fantasy and romance for Westerners dissatisfied with the perceived materialism and spiritual ennui of Europe and America. From as early as the seventeenth century when Europeans first explored the territory, Tibet assumed a position as “a kind of sacred space within the desecrated wastes of the modern West.”²⁸ This hunger for something Other in Tibet that might revitalize the internally impoverished Western Subject is echoed in Philip Rawson’s statement,

^a The First Opium War and Sepoy Mutiny are cases in which the peoples of economically colonized lands turned against the European imperial agents responsible for their oppression. These uprisings resulted in the deaths of a number of Europeans, not to mention the Chinese and Indian casualties, as well as serious setbacks to the Western colonial agenda.

[Tibet's] real interest for us is that Tibetan culture offers a powerful, untarnished, and coherent alternative to Western egotistical lifestyles, our short attention span, our gradually more pointless pursuit of material satisfactions, and our despair when these, finally, inevitably, disappoint us.²⁹

Tibet, perhaps more so than any other Asian country, has thus served as an ideal canvas on to which the West can project its own anxieties and desires as it struggles to come to terms with its own identity in the wake of its cultural crisis.

Although contemporary conceptions of Tibet are almost universally positive, the Romantic Orientalists' general ambiguity toward the East ensured that Tibet not only inspired awe and admiration, but fear and disgust as well. Within early conceptions of Tibetan Buddhism there was a strong trend of antipathy, evidenced by the claim of a European traveler to Tibet in 1903 that, "Lamaism [an alternative and now outdated term for Tibetan Buddhism] is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism, beneath which the sinister growth of poly-demonist superstition darkly disappears."³⁰ From this perspective, Tibetan Buddhism is rendered as a bastardization of a purer form of Buddhism that has been infiltrated by superstition. This stance reflects not only a fear of the unknown Other, but also the Western desire to identify and pin down the pure and 'authentic' essence of Buddhism, and the consequent frustration at the apparent inability to do so.

Opposing the view of Tibetan Buddhism as polluted by superstition was that of Romantic Orientalists, who viewed Tibet as a land of purity that possessed tremendous redemptive power for the spiritually impoverished West. This perspective has since taken the forefront of contemporary portrayals of the region. Excluded from the imperializing efforts of European nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Tibet was imagined as a sight/site of sealed off spirituality, free from the profane and contaminating influences of modernity. This exclusion from imperialism also ensured that Tibet was essentially absent from European world history before the Tibetan diaspora in the mid-twentieth century, further cementing its reputation as a land of alluring mystery. Europeans and Americans frustrated with life in the industrialized West thus turned to Tibet for guidance and redemption, viewing the high Himalayan region as one of the last

living links with civilizations of the distant past and bestowing it with epithets echoing with mysticism including “Shangri-La,” “Shambhala,” and “the Forbidden City.”³¹

This craving for preserved ancient wisdom is part of the common Romantic nostalgia for origins, which highlights Western ambiguity toward the East and reveals the implicitly critical aspect of Romantic Orientalist accounts of Tibet. On the one hand, Romantic nostalgia reflects the Western desire for a time when things were more ‘simple’ and ‘pure.’ Yet this positioning of Tibet as an origin point fixed in the distant past also relativizes the West as progressive and quintessentially ‘modern,’ highlighting the primitive nature of Tibet in the process.³²

As scholars captivated by the myth of Tibet first began to translate Tibetan texts into English and European languages over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they played upon this ambiguity by attempting to extract the positive dimensions of Tibet Buddhism from the backward lands in which it was practiced. Western philologists explored Tibet not for the sake of understanding the region’s unique form of Buddhism but, rather, to shed light on Indian Buddhism. Their interest was guided by the belief that Tibet had functioned as a hermetically sealed container of otherwise lost religious wisdom in the wake of Buddhism’s disappearance from India, ready to be opened by discerning scholars that could see through the distracting cultural practices that obscured the religion’s ‘true essence.’³³ In this view, even if Tibet was shamefully primitive in relation to the West, Romantic Orientalists imagined that they could cast aside its backwardness and distill Tibetan Buddhist doctrines down to their most basic forms.

Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) capitalized on this ambiguous vision of Tibet in the creation of the Theosophical Society in 1875. Founded in New York City before moving its headquarters to India in 1882, the Theosophical Society declared its mission as, “to diffuse among men a knowledge of the laws inherent in the universe; to promulgate the knowledge of the essential unity of all that is, and to determine that this unity is fundamental in nature.”³⁴ Blavatsky claimed to have spent seven years in Tibet under the tutelage of a secret order of masters called the Great White Brotherhood, following which she carried their enlightened teachings back to America to

disseminate among fellow spiritual seekers. She referred to this knowledge as “Esoteric Buddhism,” which she misleadingly claimed was the form that was practiced in Asia.³⁵

Blavatsky’s stance was part of the larger trend in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of valorizing Buddhism as the key to revitalizing spiritually ailing Europe, reflected with particular clarity in her claim that Buddhism is “incomparably higher, more noble, more philosophical and more scientific than the teachings of any other church or religion,”³⁶ By figuring Buddhism as “rational,” “scientific,” and “empirical,” European and American scholars and esotericists alike were able to reconcile it with modern science and Europe’s humanistic aspirations. In doing so, they created ‘Western/Modern Buddhism,’ which was the ambiguous sight/site of a system that was different enough from Western religion and philosophy as to provide it with the necessary tools for renewal, yet similar enough that it was comprehensible and easily adopted.

Of particular importance to the construction of Tibet and Buddhism in the Western imagination is the work of W.Y. Evans-Wentz. As a devoted member of the Theosophical Society, Evans-Wentz followed Madame Blavatsky in her admiration of Tibet and its “Esoteric Buddhism.” His translations of four Tibetan texts (*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, *Tibet’s Great Yogi Milarepa*, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, and *The Tibetan Book of Great Liberation*) are groundbreaking as the first texts to introduce Tibetan Buddhism to the English-speaking public.³⁷ Tibetan Buddhism’s exclusion from the realm of comparative religion prior to the diaspora in 1959 ensured that early accounts of the religion such as Evans-Wentz’s played a crucial role in the construction of the tradition’s popular identity among European and American audiences, as well as in establishing methodological and hermeneutical strategies for future inquiry.³⁸ As an earlier mediator in the transmission of Buddhism to the West, Evans-Wentz thereby assumed an “almost priestly function”³⁹ in his ability to discern the ‘true essence’ of Buddhism that its Asian practitioners had either overlooked or perverted, allowing him to (re)present Buddhism to the West as he saw fit.

However, of greater significance to our purpose, was the inclusion of Jung’s “Psychological Commentary” in Evans-Wentz’s translation of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. The text positions Jung as an essential bridge between Tibetan Buddhism and the

West, introducing and beginning to reinforce the trend of psychologizing the religion that remains present in broader intellectual portrayals of Tibetan Buddhism up to this day.

Mapping the Mind: Jung's Analytical Psychology

As Jung approached Tibetan Buddhism to write his psychological commentaries, he already possessed his own well-developed framework of analytical psychology to make sense of foreign cultural ideas. Psychoanalytic concepts like the collective unconscious, the archetypes, the shadow, and individuation all definitively shaped his interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism, leading to the variety of misrepresentations criticized by Gomez.

For Jung, there is a substrate of psychic instincts that, similar to our biological instincts, is common to all of humankind, which he labels as the collective unconscious. This shared psychological inheritance is populated by archetypes, which are “forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action.”⁴⁰ Jung conceived the archetypes as general thought patterns without any specific substance, manifesting in each of our lives according to the available cultural symbols with which they are compatible. For example, the archetype of the Self, which is the central archetype to Jung's analytical psychology and representative of psychological wholeness, is evident in the forms of Christ, Khidr (a legendary Muslim saint),^b and the Buddha. Although these are separate individuals belonging to disparate religious histories, Jung considers them all to be emanations of the archetype that is the Self, all refractions of a single light filtered through different cultural lenses.

Given the presence of innumerable archetypes in the collective unconscious, our distinct and conscious identities are therefore incomplete, reflecting a mere fraction of all that is contained within the human mind. Socialization to a particular culture largely determines which elements of one's personality are expressed as consciousness. It is only by repressing a myriad of Otherized elements in the unconscious that humans can exist as observing Subjects with their own unique subjectivities. Jung labels these underdeveloped and undifferentiated aspects of one's personality that society does not

^b For greater detail on Khidr as a historical figure, refer to Leaman, *The Qu'ran: An Encyclopedia* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006) 343-345.

allow them to express as the shadow.⁴¹ The shadow consists of those elements that society has deemed reprehensible and inferior, as well as those that have simply gone unrecognized and have not been given proper expression. While this need to account for and embrace one's own Otherness poses itself as a personal problem, it is also one that is shared by all persons, acting as a collective struggle for self-realization.⁴²

Jung proposed that uncovering the shadow by recognizing and embracing all of the archetypes is fundamental to the ultimate goal of psychoanalytic practice and, in his view, human existence: to realize one's true Self through the process of individuation.^c Through individuation, individuals dispel the illusion that their personalities consist exclusively of the elements of which they are conscious (i.e. their ego) and find a harmonious balance between the contents of the personal unconscious and those of the collective unconscious. Individuation thus constitutes the process by which individuals become psychically whole beings.⁴³

Taken together, these concepts of the collective unconscious, the archetypes, the shadow, and individuation form the bedrock of analytical psychology. While Jung's explicit appraisals of Tibetan Buddhism are almost unanimously positive, his interpretations of its foreign ideas into strictly Jungian terms places him in a position from which the East was forever fixed in his gaze and upon which he had deemed himself capable of passing judgment. His sense of awe and reverence towards the East is always balanced by an awareness of its instrumentality, treating it as, "a natural resource to be extracted and refined for the consumption of the West."⁴⁴ By defining and evaluating Asian traditions within the normative Western framework of analytical psychology, Jung ultimately participates in the same reductionism of cultural content as the more consciously imperialist Orientalists. From this position of unjustifiable authorial authority, Jung implicitly contributed to establishing a discrepancy between Tibetan Buddhism's place within Tibet and its contemporary portrayals in Europe and North America.

The ways in which Jung helped to produce this gap between Tibetan and Western depictions of Tibetan Buddhism are especially apparent in his analyses of *The Tibetan*

^c Jung further labels individuation as the "transcendent function," suggesting the religious leanings of his psychology. (Jung, 1954b, 489)

Book of the Dead and mandalas. Focusing on these analyses not only sheds light on Jung's role in developing the psychological dimension of Tibetan Buddhist Modernism, but also enables a recovery of some of the meaning of Tibetan Buddhism as it is practiced in Tibet from Jung's interpretations, laying the groundwork for more profitable and less intellectually dominating interpretive methods.

¹ Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense," *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin Group, 1976) 46-47.

² Foucault, "Preface to the 1961 Edition," *History of Madness* (London: Routledge, 2006) xxx.

³ Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

⁴ Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20 (3) (1986): 401-446.

⁵ King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁶ Jouhki, *Orientalism and India* (Finland: University of Jyväskylä, 2006).

⁷ Meyer. "'I Know Thee not, I Loathe Thy Race': Romantic Orientalism in the Eye of the Other," *ELH* 58 (3) (1991): 657-699.

⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso Books, 1991).

⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 6.

¹⁰ King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 83; Said, *Orientalism*, 73.

¹¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 21.

¹² Bracher, "On the Psychological and Social Functions of Language: Lacan's Theory of the Four Discourses," *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society* (New York: New York University Press: 1994) 117-120.

¹³ Said, *Orientalism*, 32.

¹⁴ Bracher, "Functions of Language," 117.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* (New York: Vintage Books: 1968) 168.

¹⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 205.

¹⁷ King, *Orientalism and Religion*; Meyer, "Romantic Orientalism."

¹⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 115.

¹⁹ King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 97.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 131.

²¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 70.

²² Meyer, "Romantic Orientalism," 680.

²³ Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

²⁴ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 28.

²⁵ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration; A European Disorder, c. 1848-c. 1918* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989) 37.

²⁶ Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997) 101.

²⁷ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 23-24.

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- ²⁸ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 126.
- ²⁹ Rawson, *Sacred Tibet* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991) 5.
- ³⁰ Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, xi, quoted in D. Lopez, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) 73.
- ³¹ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 126.
- ³² King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 147.
- ³³ Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 159.
- ³⁴ Lopez, "Foreword," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) B.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* C.
- ³⁶ Batchelor, *The Awakening of the West*, 269, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 65.
- ³⁷ Lopez, "Foreword," A.
- ³⁸ Lopez, "Afterword," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 244.
- ³⁹ Lopez, "Introduction," 20.
- ⁴⁰ Jung, "Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious," *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 9 (Part 1): The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 48.
- ⁴¹ Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic & Contemporary* (2nd ed.) (Boston: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997) 427.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Ibid.* 431.
- ⁴⁴ Lopez, "Foreword," B.

Chapter Two

Jung & The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Producing a Manual of Western Spirituality

My admiration for the great philosophers of the East is as genuine as my attitude towards their metaphysics is irreverent. I suspect them of being symbolical psychologists, to whom no greater wrong could be done to take them literally.¹

-C.G. Jung

Jung's "Psychological Commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*" serves as a highly instructive case of the interpretive methods that he applied to his analyses of Tibetan Buddhism. It is a discursive site for unpacking Jung's blatant acts of psychologism that reduce all phenomenological experience to nothing more than human psychology. In doing so, Jung distorts the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (henceforth abbreviated to *TBOD*) into a form nearly unrecognizable to traditional Tibetan interpretations while elevating his own system of analytical psychology over and above Tibetan Buddhism, positioning it as the ideal healing practice for European moderns. This misrepresenting of the *TBOD* and shifting away from its traditional interpretations did not stop with Jung but, unfortunately, is perpetuated to varying degrees in translations and commentaries of the *TBOD* since Jung's time until now.

Although many of the authors considered here, including Jung, claim to analyze the *Bardo Thos Grol*, they are actually working with the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* as it was first redacted by its original translator, the Theosophist W.Y. Evans-Wentz. As such, for the remainder of this exploration we will use the term "*Bardo Thos Grol/BTG*" to refer to the text as it is understood and practiced in Tibet, while "*The Tibetan Book of the Dead/TBOD*" refers to the English textual incarnations of the *BTG* that circulate in Europe and North America.

The *Bardo Thos Grol*: A Cosmological Guide to the In-Between Realms

The *Bardo Thos Grol* is a cycle of texts^a that are read aloud to deceased Tibetans in order to alert them to the various points at which they can achieve enlightenment during the intermediate states of consciousness between death and rebirth, referred to as the *bardo* realms. Tibetans should also read these texts over the course of their lives in order to familiarize themselves with the stages of the liminal *bardos*, which are partitioned into the *Chikhai*, *Chonyid*, and *Sidpa bardos*. Through a lifetime of preparation, the consciousness of the deceased becomes increasingly receptive to hearing the teachings of the *BTG* upon death, heightening the possibility of perceiving the true state of reality and achieving liberation. While Jung is strictly concerned with the psychological dimension of these texts, the Tibetan texts are deeply associated with devotion, Tibetan physiology, cosmology, and soteriology as well. The *BTG* thus has profound significance as a cultural and religious artifact beyond the cache of psychological data that it becomes in Jung's reading.

Authorship of the texts that constitute the *BTG* is traditionally attributed to Padmasambhava the Lotus Guru, an eighth century sage from India. This Indian mystic is said to have traveled to Tibet to spread the *dharma* where he exorcised the indigenous spirits that were hindering the transmission of Buddhism. Padmasambhava also translated a number of Pali and Sanskrit texts into Tibetan. Tibetan mythology maintains that, throughout his travels in the Himalayan region, Padmasambhava hid a number of religious "treasures" (Tibetan: *gter-ma/terma*) to be uncovered by "treasure seekers" (Tibetan: *gter-ston/terton*) in future ages, producing a tradition of continuing revelation within Tibetan Buddhism.² At the request of the Tibetan king Trhi Songdetsen (742-797), Padmasambhava composed the specific texts that would come to be known as the *BTG*, claiming that they contained, "secret instructions on a swift and powerful method for liberating oneself in a single lifetime without any effort whatsoever...[and] a teaching so effective that it could shut the gates to the lower realms simply by being heard."³ In actuality, the texts' instructions are somewhat more complicated, requiring practitioners

^a Although *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is commonly treated as a distinct composition, the Tibetan title actually refers to a collection of texts, collectively referred to as the *Bardo Thos Grol*.

to have an intimate understanding of their contents in order to reap the greatest benefits from observing the textual prescriptions. Nevertheless, simply hearing the texts as one passes through the various intermediate realms is said to facilitate an increased awareness of the nature of the *bardo* experiences; hence its title properly reads: *Great Liberation upon Hearing in the Bardo*. Looking into Tibet's future, Padmasambhava prophesized that the region was approaching dark times and that his teachings were destined for distortion and misunderstanding. As a result, Padmasambhava condensed his many secret teachings into abbreviated scriptures, which he concealed as a treasure on Gampodar Mountain in Central Tibet.

Six hundred years later, Karma Lingpa, a treasure seeking mystic, uncovered a number of these textual revelations, which are commonly referred to as the *Karling Peaceful and Wrathful* (Tibetan: *Kar-gling zhi-khro*). These texts contained esoteric yoga practices involving a mandala of Tibetan Buddhist deities and precise instructions for funeral liturgical processes, including a detailed description of the deceased's passage from death to rebirth to be read aloud in the presence of the corpse. The *Karling Peaceful and Wrathful* was further subdivided into two primary collections: the *Great Compassionate One, the Peaceful and Wrathful Lotus* and *Self-Liberated Wisdom of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*, from which the *BTG* was derived.⁴

In his analysis of the textual history of the *TBOD*, Bryan Cuevas untangles the development of the *BTG* texts from the mythos of Padmasambhava and his treasure seekers by elucidating the specific historical developments involved in their production. He explains their creation in the Kongpo region of Eastern Tibet as part of an ancient cult of the dead, which institutionalized its rituals in the late fifteenth century. The systematic accounts of the *bardo* realms contained in the texts are considered to derive from the firsthand experience of enlightened voyagers who passed through the in-between states and preserved the memory so that they may later report their experiences. As Robert Thurman notes, while this proposition may seem implausible to our Western minds, "Tibetans accept these reports of their psychonauts just as we do those of astronauts who report what happened on the moon,"⁵ suggesting the Tibetan claims are not as outlandish as we might initially suspect.

As enlightened Tibetan lamas produced these accounts that form the basis of the *BTG*, they were primarily transmitted in direct oral exchange between teachers and students, occasionally making their way down to more pious segments of the laity.⁶ While tradition proposes that Karma Lingpa uncovered the texts of the *BTG* in the fourteenth century, Cuevas comments that it is far more likely that they were not fully redacted and made widely available until the eighteenth century when xylographic technology was sufficiently advanced.⁷ As this technology flourished, it became easier for large monastic institutions to gather local manuscripts and compile them into the authoritative collection that would come to be known as the *BTG*. However, Donald Lopez notes that, although the *BTG* only contains a portion of the *Karling* texts, this process of revision and reorganization complicates attempts to identify which parts of the *BTG* text actually derive from the *Karling* cycle, especially because many of these works are no longer extant.⁸

Cuevas further considers twenty-one editions of the *Karling* cycle that encompasses these two collections and has identified three recurring texts that are central to the performance of Tibetan funerary rites. Among the large collection of texts that Karma Lingpa is said to have uncovered, Evans-Wentz only used three in his compilation of the *TBOD*, none of which has been identified as particularly significant in Tibetan funerary rituals. In fact, the three texts that Evans-Wentz chose are not even part of Tibetan funerary rites at all, but are actually meditation manuals for advanced Tantric practitioners.⁹ However, Evans-Wentz also had access to a larger collection of manuscripts that, although unpublished, informed his translation of the *TBOD*.¹⁰ The content of his translation is therefore relatively reflective of the redacted *BTG* texts as they are employed in Tibet even if his Theosophical terminology is not. Nevertheless, these developments remained unanalyzed until Cuevas and Lopez's recent reconsiderations of the *TBOD*, obscuring that what is almost universally treated in Europe and America as a distinct and unified text is actually only a small portion of a collection of fragmented texts selected by a European scholar who could not even read Tibetan and spent but a day on Tibetan soil.¹¹

This is not to say, however, that the unification and glorification of the text is not supported by Tibetan Buddhists themselves. In fact, H.H. The 14th Dalai Lama has

claimed that the *BTG* “is one of the most important books [Tibetan] civilization has produced.”¹² In order to understand exactly why this is so, we must briefly consider the ontological and epistemological premises that underlie Tibetan Buddhism. As with all forms of Asian Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhist cosmology posits that all unenlightened beings are trapped within an ongoing cycle of birth and death known as *samsara* (Tibetan: *khor-ba*), consisting of six realms of rebirth: gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. This theory of transmigration is not understood metaphorically but literally: death of the physical body is not the final end, but merely the completion of a single life in the endless play of innumerable existences.

Our cyclical existence in *samsara* is characterized by constant craving for sensory gratification (Sanskrit: *tanha*, Tibetan: *sred pa*), which drives us to think, speak, and act in ways that cause us to produce *karma*. Although Westerners often equate this concept to fate or predetermination, *karma* (Tibetan: *las*) is actually the universal law of cause and effect of physical, verbal, and mental actions, which dictates that all volitional actions produce a reaction, either in this lifetime or in one to come.¹³ However, although craving and *karma* are the apparent causes of *samsara*, they both ultimately arise from ignorance of the true nature of reality as voidness^b (Sanskrit: *sunyata*, Tibetan: *stong-pa nyid*). This ignorance of ultimate reality induces living beings to falsely believe in the existence of an independent self, impelling them to act in ways that produce *karma* in order to satisfy their cravings, thus perpetuating *samsaric* existence.

The Buddhist doctrine of voidness posits that, despite what conventional appearances might suggest, phenomena do not have any inherent essence that determines their true or absolute identity. This voidness characterizes the final and true state of all phenomena. As the fundamental reality of all reality, voidness is further equated with the *dharmakaya*, the Truth Body of the Buddha, and is sometimes known in Tibetan Buddhism as the Diamond Reality of Clear Light. Not only is this final reality characterized by absolute clarity, but it also consists of infinite bliss, beauty, and compassion.¹⁴ Inherent to all phenomena, including our seemingly independent existences, voidness and the *dharmakaya* allow for the possibility of natural liberation

^b *Sunyata* is often translated as emptiness as well.

from *samsara*.¹⁵ As Padmasambhava is said to explain in the *Natural Liberation Through Naked Vision*:

To introduce the forceful method to enter this very reality, your own awareness right now is just this! It being just this uncontrived natural clarity... Why do you say, 'I don't see the actuality of the mind'? Since the thinker in the mind is just it.¹⁶

It is only our fundamental ignorance of reality that prevents us from coming to this realization of voidness and the *dharmakaya*, thus causing us to continue to roam through *samsara*.¹⁷

As unenlightened beings travel through the *bardo* realms, their ignorance prevents them from seeing reality as emergent from the voidness of the *dharmakaya* and they are therefore overwhelmed by the appearance of various deities and *bardo* beings.¹⁸ Although these figures emanate from the voidness of the deceased's consciousness, unenlightened beings do not view them as such and are consequently terrified by the apparent reality of their experiences in the *bardos*.

This is where the *BTG* assumes its great significance in Tibetan Buddhism. The *BTG* texts are traditionally read aloud by the spiritual mentor of the deceased to alert the latter to the true nature of their experiences in the *bardo* realms following death.¹⁹ The text maintains that the consciousness of the deceased achieves a state of hypermindfulness in the *bardo* realms that greatly sharpens its intellect and improves its receptivity to the dictated instructions of the *BTG*.²⁰ Reciting the text in the presence of the deceased thus enables their consciousness to receive the teachings and realize the true nature of the *bardos* and thereby eliminate their ignorance and achieve natural liberation from *samsara*. Consequently, the *BTG* is of great importance to Tibetan Buddhist soteriology, serving as a tool to help bring about instantaneous Awakening.

However, contrary to what the English translation suggests, the *BTG* is not merely intended for the dead, but is of equal, and perhaps even greater, importance for the living. While it is possible for consciousness to achieve liberation during this state if it had never heard the text before, its chances for liberation are tremendously improved if the deceased familiarized himself/herself with it during life. Given that these teachings are concerned with life, death, and the possibility for liberation, they are of tremendous

consequence and the *BTG* adamantly expresses the need for continuous study during one's lifetime:

It is very important during your life to cultivate your mind with this *Book of Natural Liberation*. You should practice this! You should read it! You should recite it! You should understand it! You should memorize it accurately! You should rehearse it three times a day without fail! You should become very clear about its words and meaning. You should not forget them even if chased by a hundred murders!²¹

Due to the tremendously powerful pull of past conditioning and ignorance of the *dharamkaya*, *bardo* experiences can prove highly overwhelming if the deceased is not previously accustomed to its many terrifying sights and sounds. Preparation during life is therefore essential to reap the maximum benefits of its teachings. Unfortunately, the original translation of the title bestowed upon the text by Evans-Wentz obscures this far-reaching significance of the text by reducing its broad thematic range and practical applications to the monolithic function of a mortuary manual.

The *BTG* texts begin with a series of prayers to Amitabha, the Lotus Deities, and Padmasambhava, who each represent one of the Three Bodies of Buddhahood (Sanskrit: *trikaya*, Tibetan: *sku gsum*), followed by a call to make extensive offerings to the Three Bodies and the Three Jewels. These prayers and offerings reflect a distinctly devotional aspect of the text, a facet that is neglected by Jung and subsumed in his psychologism.

Following these opening preparations, the *BTG* proceeds to describe the physiological occurrences that comprise the death processes and their phenomenological correlates. According to Tibetan physiology, the human body is a psychophysical system that consists of a subtle body scheme of channels, winds, and drops that are closely related to developments in our consciousness. There are 72,000 channels (Sanskrit: *nadis*, Tibetan: *rtsa*), although our central axis consists of three main central channels that run from the crown of the head down to the coccyx.²² These channels carry our internal winds, which are considered to be the vehicle of consciousness and the animators of our bodies.

These descriptions are not intended as mere metaphors or poetics, but serve as specific instructions for the living to act on behalf of the dead. The living must closely

monitor the outer breath of the deceased and place the corpse into the proper position on its right side, squeezing the blood vessels in the neck to prevent the winds from exiting the central channel and obscuring the appearance of one's own consciousness as the Clear Light of Buddhahood.²³ These physiological developments are thus inextricably tied to the transformation of the deceased's consciousness and highlight the physical aspect of the *BTG*'s teachings.

Just as the breath ceases, consciousness enters the first *bardo* realm, the *Chikhai*, which is commonly translated as “*bardo* of the moment of death” and is characterized by the Clear Light of voidness.²⁴ However, unless the deceased are already intimately familiar with the notion of the Clear Light, it is unlikely that they will recognize it as such and will consequently undergo the eight dissolutions, which are the subjective experiences accompanying the decomposition of the body's five constitutive elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space.²⁵

Following the dissolution of these elements, the deceased enters the *Chonyid bardo*, which is referred to as the “*bardo* of the experiencing reality” and features hallucinations of various mild and fierce deities emerging from the *dharmakaya*. As one's mind stream travels through the interim realms, booming sounds and disorientingly bright lights continually overwhelm and disorient it.²⁶ Giving in to these feelings only exacerbates them, driving the deceased to believe more fully in their intrinsic reality and perpetuating the cycle of embodied existence. Both the calm and fierce appear as guides on the path, urging the deceased to a higher realm of rebirth or complete liberation.²⁷

Failure to achieve liberation in the presence of the calm and fierce deities propels the deceased's consciousness into the final *bardo* realm: the *Sidpa bardo*. This realm, which is often translated as the “*bardo* of rebirth,” is marked by the appearance of Yama, the Lord of Death, as well as visions of one's past life and potential future lives to come. Although not impossible, the *Sidpa bardo* presents far fewer opportunities to achieve liberation and so the text's concern shifts to helping the deceased direct their rebirth toward a favorable realm rather than escaping *samsara* completely.²⁸ As consciousness is propelled through the *Sidpa* realm, it is drawn towards the dull lights that emanate from each of the realms of *samsara*.²⁹ Ignorance and delusion prevent the deceased from recognizing the folly of following these lights, which appear to offer a salvational return

to mundane existence. In the common symbolic depiction of *samsara* of the Tibetan Wheel of Life, this misrecognition of *samsara* as salvific is referred to as contact (Sanskrit: *phassa*, Tibetan: *reg pa*), which is represented iconographically by a copulating couple. It is this contact with the external world via the sense pleasure of encountering the couple that one is thrust from the *Sidpa bardo* back into cyclical existence, ending the in-between state and undergoing rebirth.

The Birth of a New Guru: Jung analyzes *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*

In his “Psychological Commentary,” Jung recounts that the *TBOD* was his “constant companion” and the provocateur of many stimulating and fundamental insights.³⁰ Jung’s sentiment was common and his fascination reflects that of an entire generation of Westerners hungering for spiritual wisdom. As Donald Lopez has noted, “Along with the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Tao Te Ching*, [*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*] entered the canon of classics of Oriental mysticism for readers once again seeking the wisdom of the East.”³¹ As a text from ‘mystic Tibet,’ the *TBOD* came to serve as a symbol of lofty spiritual knowledge, representing an existential position different from that traditionally held by Western readers and, consequently, functioning as a supplement to traditionally European (and its Greek antecedent) modes of thought. Following its initial publication in 1927, the *TBOD* therefore served as a huge boon in the Romantic Orientalist quest to uncover Eastern knowledge that might help uplift the crushed spirits of Europeans.

Furthermore, the *TBOD* was the first work to provide a large English-speaking audience with a sustained elaboration of the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration.³² As one of Buddhism’s fundamental and more thought-provoking axioms, this elaboration of reincarnation attracted large European and American audiences, captivating not only individuals hoping to learn more about the world beyond the West, but anyone at all seeking to quell their fears of death. Separated from its cultural roots in Tibet, the *TBOD* therefore played a central role in mediating Westerners awareness and understanding of Buddhism in the mid-twentieth century.

Far from being a mere admirer of the text, Jung was one of the *TBOD*’s primary mediators as it was introduced to English-speaking audiences in Europe and America.

Although Evans-Wentz's translation was first published in 1927, the revised 1957 edition included additional commentaries and is still in use today.³³ This edition contains a new preface from Evans-Wentz, another introductory foreword by Lama Anagarika Govinda, and, most significantly for us, Jung's "Psychological Commentary."^c

The "Psychological Commentary" must be read keeping in mind that Jung was working with a version of the text that had been translated and filtered through the lens of Evans-Wentz's Theosophical background, which encouraged a "highly verbal and intellectual style,"³⁴ as well as imbuing it with many Theosophical ontological premises.^d Evans-Wentz's Theosophical leanings come across particularly strongly in his interpretation of *karma* and reincarnation, which he understands as a progressive process in which individual souls, or monads, are continually reincarnated until they achieve enlightened consciousness.³⁵ In this view, souls may reincarnate as higher forms, but never in a lower one, marking a clear deviation from the Buddhist perspectives on *karma* and transmigration.

Evans-Wentz, however, attempts to disguise this imposition of Theosophy onto the *TBOD* by claiming that his translated text derived from the teachings of his Tibetan guru, Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup.³⁶ This deferral to Tibetan lineage allows Evans-Wentz to form an identity between the *BTG* and the *TBOD*. By citing an actual Tibetan voice as the source of his translation, Evans-Wentz validates his interpretive efforts and effaces his interpretive liberties as condoned by the Buddhist tradition.

In addition to Evans-Wentz's modifications to the text, Jung was also influenced by Sir John Woodroffe's foreword that was included in the first publication of the *TBOD* in 1927. Woodroffe emphasizes the parallels between Hindu Tantrism, his own area of expertise, and the contents of the *TBOD*. By engaging in these cross-cultural comparisons, Woodroffe helped to lay the foundation for Jung's own method of amalgamating a number of different religious traditions. Woodroffe also referred to Evans-Wentz's guru as the source of the *BTG*'s supposed English translation and placed

^c Jung actually wrote his "Psychological Commentary" in 1935, but it remained untranslated from German until the 1957 edition of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. (Lopez, 1998, 48)

^d For greater detail on this initial transformation, see Lopez, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

tremendous emphasis on its Tibetan origin,³⁷ thus allaying any doubt as to the authenticity of Evans-Wentz's translation.

Consequently, although Jung continually refers to his commentary as an interpretation of the *BTG* by employing the Tibetan title, he is really already working with the *TBOD* instead. Nevertheless, while Jung was interpreting a text that had already been fundamentally altered through a selective compilation and Theosophical domestication for an English-speaking audience, he also took liberties to introduce his own modifications of the *TBOD*'s contents.

At the time of the revised text's publication, Jung was the first to approach the *TBOD* on strictly psychological terms, provoking a great deal of interest from academic and non-academics intellectual communities alike. Sonu Shamdasani (1962-present), a historian of psychology, has suggested that Jung's commentary was a significant factor in the book's overall popularity. Shamdasani refers to Evans-Wentz's comments that,

Dr. Jung's contribution has a unique value; it shows the advanced scientific attitude of Europe's foremost psychologist and suggests how in future ages the sages of the Occident and those of the Orient will grasp each other's hand in mutual understanding and respect.³⁸

Additionally, although this edition was published over fifty years ago, Evans-Wentz's translation and its successive generations of commentaries are still the most common point of reference for scholarly work on the *BTG*.³⁹ In other words, Jung's commentary, published in this translation, remains central to contemporary Western conceptions of the text. As Bryan Cuevas succinctly comments, "His psychological approach would come to have an enormous impact on all future interpretations of the Tibetan texts,"⁴⁰ a reference to Jung's centrality to Western conceptions of the *TBOD* and Tibetan Buddhism in general.

With the psychologist's help, the *TBOD* has thus become a book that is "not really Tibetan, it is not really a book, and it is not really about death."⁴¹ As an early mediator of Buddhism's transmission to the West, Jung was able to project his own system of understanding onto the *TBOD*, creating a distinctly psychologized simulacrum of it. This text, which has become integrally woven into European views of Tibetan

Buddhism, is thus far more reflective of Jung than of the tradition that he claims to represent.

Psychologism in the *Bardos*: Jung Travels Through the In-Between Realms

As a European with no prior background in Tibetan Buddhism, Jung's engagements with the *TBOD* and his distortions of its contents are hardly more admirable than those of Evans-Wentz. While Jung claims that his psychological interpretation is intended to domesticate the complex ideas of the *TBOD* for European and American audiences, his actual writings reveal a far different goal. As he transforms Tibetan Buddhist concepts into those of analytical psychology, he simultaneously denigrates the Tibetan ideas as confusing and dangerous to Europeans and uplifts his own system as more accessible and therefore of greater potential benefit. By setting the *TBOD* as an ambiguous marker of comparison that is similar yet inferior to analytical psychology, Jung promotes his own thought system as a preferable theoretical framework, revealing his disguised agenda of positioning analytical psychology as superior to religion or, if you will, as a religion after religion. In doing so, he absolutely psychologizes the contents of the *TBOD* by reducing the physiological, the cosmological, and the religious to nothing more than human psychology.

Jung opens his "Psychological Commentary" with a statement of intent, announcing his goal of "[making] the magnificent world of ideas and the problems contained in this treatise a little more intelligible to the Western mind."⁴² This claim neatly fits alongside the general interest of Romantic Orientalists in exposing Europeans to different modes of human existence to supplement their materialism and relieve their spiritual ennui. To a certain extent, we might find this ambition praiseworthy insofar as it demonstrates an intense compassion for his European audiences that inspires him to enlighten them to a more satisfying form of existence.

However, Jung's superficially laudable project is complicated by the ambiguity that undergirds all Orientalist attempts to make sense of and transmit knowledge of their Asian subjects of inquiry. On the one hand, Jung clearly believes that the *TBOD* contains important knowledge, knowledge that, "because of [its] deep humanity and [its] still deeper insight into the secrets of the human psyche, make an especial appeal to the

layman who is seeking to broaden his knowledge of life.”⁴³ This attitude reflects the Romantic Orientalist belief that the East holds essential wisdom that has been lost in the West’s dedication to materialism but is nevertheless salvageable. Although this represents a positive valorization of the Orient, it also demonstrates Jung’s will to power, mastery, and knowledge, testifying to “the Faustian obsession of Western man with the project of fixing the Orient in his gaze, with deciphering its secrets, possessing its riches, and making it yield its meaning.”⁴⁴

Jung approaches Tibetan Buddhism not because he has any desire to learn about the religion or the culture as they exist in practice, but because he believes they have the potential to be useful to his Western audience and to his own aims of solidifying the theoretical foundation of analytical psychology. Through the relationship he posits between Tibetan Buddhism and Western thought, Jung makes possible the Western ideal of psychological wholeness and unity. The objective is not to accurately understand the Other, but to catalyze the emergence of an empowered observing Western Subject through its encounter with the Eastern Other. Speaking on such desires, bell hooks has stated that,

The lure is a combination of pleasure and danger. In the cultural marketplace the Other is coded as having the capacity to be more alive, as holding the secret that will allow those who venture and dare to break with the cultural anhedonia and experience sensual and spiritual renewal.⁴⁵

Not only does this statement reflect the ambiguity that exists in every encounter with the Other, but also reveals the projection that occurs in these interactions. Rather than viewing the Tibetan Other as a legitimate Subject with its own cultural, intellectual, and social histories, Jung transforms it into a blank slate upon which he can project his hopes for spiritual transformation and psychic wholeness. Even when Jung praises the *TBOD*, his admiration is not of the text as an artifact of Tibetan culture but for what it can become in his hands.

Qualifying Jung’s positive evaluation of Oriental religious knowledge is his characterization of that same knowledge as potentially dangerous and threatening to his audience. Although, for Jung, the ideas contained in the *TBOD* contain tremendous potential for Europeans’ personal development, one must also exercise extreme caution

when working with them: “These things really are dangerous and ought not to be meddled with in our typically Western way. It is a meddling with fate, which strikes at the very roots of human existence...”⁴⁶ By Jung’s estimation, Westerners cannot simply adopt the practices described in the *TBOD*. He must first domesticate these ideas so that Westerners can approach them to reap the greatest possible rewards with minimal risk.

By portraying the *TBOD* as a source of tremendous insight that must nevertheless be filtered into terms acceptable to European consciousness, Jung subsumes the representation of Tibetan Buddhism as an Eastern Other into a reconfirmation and expansion of Western subjectivity. He first praises the Tibetan text for its redemptive potential in a typically Romantic Orientalist move, noting that Westerners could use it to expand their knowledge of themselves and of life. He then immediately undercuts the legitimacy of the Tibetan system as dangerous and as requiring domestication, calling its validity into question. Furthermore, his claims regarding the necessity of such a reconfiguration implicitly stress the strangeness of the Tibetan Buddhists who produced the text and their fundamental difference from individuals in the West.⁴⁷ His point, in short, is that Westerners could benefit from the Tibetan knowledge but a mediator is required in order to safely assimilate it into Western consciousness. As a European man with the theoretical framework of analytical psychology and (self-proclaimed) experience with the *TBOD*, Jung thereby elevates himself to the position of a trustworthy authority who will guide the reader into the unknown realm of Tibetan Buddhism.

From this vantage point, Jung’s writings express a hyperawareness of the ontological premises that, for him, govern the relationship between Western and Eastern conceptions of reality. In his discussion of the *TBOD*’s “essential metaphysical premises,” Jung explores Tibetan Buddhists’ capacity to maintain the ambiguity of ‘both-and’ statements, as opposed to the Western demand for the clear-cut clarity of ‘either-or.’⁴⁸ Although drawing this distinction between Europe and Asia on the grounds of an “East-West” dichotomy falls into the Orientalist trap of generalizing, Jung’s statement does, in fact, reflect a truth of the *BTG*: cosmological, physiological, metaphysical, and psychological truths are all maintained in balance.

Unfortunately, although Jung points out this discrepancy between European and Asian ontological frameworks, he nevertheless falls prey to the Western commitment to

dualism and looks upon the text with a domineering gaze through a distinctly European ontological lens. . Only a paragraph after condemning the “niggardly European ‘either-or’,”⁴⁹ Jung issues the proclamation that, “the *Bardo Thodol* is in the highest degree psychological in its outlook” and that, “metaphysical assertions...are *statements of the psyche*, and are therefore psychological.”⁵⁰ Without even realizing it, Jung commits the very same interpretive fallacy that he claims to view as so egregious. Unable to maintain the ambiguity of the *TBOD*’s assertions as being both metaphysical *and* psychological, he reduces them solely to the latter.

Jung justifies his psychological approach on the grounds that the *TBOD* is of particular interest because it expresses an outpouring of the unconscious mind. He asserts that, “it is an undeniable fact that the whole book is created out of the archetypal contents of the unconscious. Behind these there lie--and in this our Western reason is quite right--no physical or metaphysical realities, but ‘merely’ the reality of psychic facts, the data of psychic experience.”⁵¹ In one swift stroke of psychologism, Jung paints an ontological picture that reduces metaphysics and cosmology to nothing more than psychology. Having done so, Jung is able to transform the *TBOD* into a carrier of psychic data, which he uses in service of supporting the legitimacy of his own ideas. The text becomes dehistoricized and decultured, no longer representing the product of Tibetan religion and culture but instead serving as a complex cipher that can be decoded to unveil fundamental psychological truths about humankind.

While the *BTG* certainly contains elements are distinctly psychological, its cosmological and physiological premises are equally prominent, a fact to which Jung does not do justice in his psychologizing reductionism. Jung’s treatment of the text as a manifestation of the contents of the human unconscious neglects the Tibetan stance that the events described in the *TBOD* reflect occurrences that have real cosmological significance for the fate of the deceased’s consciousness. His mystification of the text as an outpouring of the unconscious undermines the credibility of the Tibetan lamas that produced it and removes the attribution of intentionality of the putative knowers, as well as the significance of their intellectual and spiritual labors.

Having expunged the text of its non-psychological dimensions, Jung is able to form the fundamental identity between Buddhist ontology and analytical psychology that

is the bedrock of all his other analogies: the *dharmakaya* (Truth Body of the Buddha and the foundation of reality) is nothing more than the collective unconscious. Jung correctly⁵² understands the goal of the *BTG* as bringing the deceased to realization of the *dharmakaya* as the fundamental nature of their own mind.⁵³ His view of the collective unconscious as the underlying matrix of all phenomenological experience that sentient beings must recognize in order to achieve a higher state of consciousness⁵⁴ appears extraordinarily similar to the *dharmakaya*'s function in Tibetan Buddhism^e and thereby enables him to form an identity between the two concepts.

However, while this equation may stand up to superficial scrutiny, closer analysis reveals a number of discrepancies between descriptions of the *dharmakaya* and the collective unconscious. To begin with, the *dharmakaya* is believed to be the fundamental reality of all phenomena⁵⁵, not merely the basis of human consciousness as the collective unconscious is described. Furthermore, the *dharmakaya* is clear voidness free of any intrinsic permanent existence and is thus infinite potentiality flooded with bliss and compassion⁵⁶: as nothingness itself, the *dharmakaya* is simultaneously everything. It is “your own conscious awareness, unceasing, bright, distinct, and vibrant... Just this presence of the indivisibility of your awareness’s naturally insubstantial voidness and the vibrant bright presence of your conscious awareness.”⁵⁷ While the nature of the *dharmakaya* presents an obviously cognitive aspect to one’s passage through the *bardo* realms, the characterization of this mental facet is distinctly different from Jung’s proposition.

The collective unconscious is not defined by voidness, but, on the contrary, is populated with a variety of particular thought and emotional patterns in the form of archetypes. While the specific content of the archetypes can never be satisfactorily pinned down, they nevertheless are “eternally inherited forms and ideas” that are “the original structural components of the psyche.”⁵⁸ Far from the indiscriminate awareness of the *dharmakaya*, the collective unconscious has particular forms that determine the fabric

^e “Now the pure clear light of reality dawns for you... This, your present conscious natural clear void awareness, this presence in clear voidness without any objectivity of substance, sign, or color—just this is the reality, the Mother, Buddha All-Around Goodness!” (*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 1994, 126)

of our phenomenological experiences. Thus, while Jung may seek to equate these two concepts, they are fundamentally different almost to the point of direct opposition.

However, by establishing this identity and imposing it upon his readers, Jung authorizes his psychologizing aims and definitively declares that the experiences of the deceased are nothing more than projections of the unconscious mind. In this rendering, the *BTG*'s "five Dhyani Buddhas are themselves no more than psychic data...[and] the world of gods and spirits is truly 'nothing but' the collective unconscious inside me."⁵⁹ Beyond this point, Jung does not clarify what the significance of the Buddhas is, or for what reason they appear; he merely notes that they are archetypes. For his purposes, that is all Jung is obligated to do. Through his claims, he demonstrates that the archetypal contents that he found present in himself and his European analysands^f are also evident in the minds of Tibetans far removed from Western civilization. Yet by doing so, Jung completely obscures the importance of the figures that arise from the mind of the deceased, content with simply labeling them as archetypes and moving on with his analysis. He describes the appearance of Amoghasiddhi, Amitabha, Ratnasambhava, Vajrasattva; their accompanying colors; and their mandala-like arrangement. But his commentary on them is purely descriptive, absent of any further elaboration,⁶⁰ which denies the significance that lies behind these Buddhas and bodhisattvas in Tibetan Buddhism.

In fact, according to the *BTG*, each of these figures appears at a particular time and for a specific reason. They are not archetypes that spontaneously arise from the unconscious mind, but figures that are intended to redirect the attention of the deceased toward the ever-present possibility for liberation in the *bardos*. Furthermore, each of the five Dhyani Buddhas that appears possesses qualities that align with the elements and processes of the mundane universe.⁶¹ By drawing parallels between the seemingly supranormal experiences of the *bardo* realms and those of daily life, the mind stream of the deceased is directed toward the possibility for transmuting ordinary experience into enlightened existence. Similarly, the arrangement of the deities in a mandala invokes Buddhist cosmology as a set of Pure Lands, with one in the center and one in each of the four directions.⁶² Each of the peripheral Pure Lands and its accompanying Buddha is also

^f "Analysand" is the technical term for a person receiving psychotherapy.

associated with a particular form of enlightened wisdom,⁶³ further contributing to the dense web of associations between cosmological, physiological, and philosophical concepts. By continually building upon this network of associations, there is an increased possibility that any one of the experiences of the deceased will be that essential moment at which they apprehend the reality of voidness and the *dharmakaya*.

Jung fabricates yet another connection between the contents of the *TBOD* and analytical psychology by likening the deceased's journey through the *bardos* to the Jungian concept of individuation. In order to draw this comparison, Jung suggests that his European audience read the *TBOD* backwards.⁶⁴ Drawing from the common Orientalist epistemological premise of duality between the 'East' and the 'West,' Jung estimates that the psychology of Westerners, which is characterized by its "thoroughly intellectualistic and rationalistic worldly-mindedness,"⁶⁵ and "love of clarity and unambiguity,"⁶⁶ must deal with the text on different terms than it was produced. He adopts the Orientalist assumption that Orientals are more inwardly focused and comfortable with ambiguity, as evidenced by their "magnificently affirmative 'both-and'"⁶⁷ statements, suggesting that their dominant psychological predispositions are the exact opposite of those of his audience. Thus, their ideas require a literal inversion if Europeans are to glean anything of value from them.

This inversion conveniently transforms the Tibetan Buddhist guide to the processes of death and rebirth into a European description of individuation. This transformation uses the rhetorical invocation of sameness-difference as a way of furthering Jung's own aims. By noting the similarity between the text's ideas and those of analytical psychology he gathers support for individuation, only to immediately draw attention to the literal backwardness of Tibetan Buddhism. These complementary moves allow Jung to invoke the simultaneous wisdom and strangeness of the religion, thus reconfirming his own system of thought as superior.

In accordance with Jung's inversion of the text, he begins his close reading with the *Sidpa bardo*, which is the final stage of the *BTG*. Jung relates this realm to Freud's psychoanalytic findings regarding sexual fantasies, the omnipresence of the Oedipus complex, and neuroticism.⁶⁸ As the final state of *bardo* existence in which one finally returns to one of the six realms of being and experiences rebirth, the *Sidpa bardo* consists

of coming upon a copulating couple, at which point the Oedipus complex comes into play. According to Jung, “If [the dead man’s] *karma* destines him to be reborn as a man, he will fall in love with his mother-to-be and will find his father hateful and disgusting.”⁶⁹ Putting aside for a moment Jung’s particular interpretation of *karma*, his understanding actually reflects the Tibetan belief that the consciousness of the deceased will be attracted to the copulating partner that is the opposite gender of its future rebirth.⁷⁰

However, far from being a realm dominated by feelings of sexuality as Jung’s Freudian reading proposes, the *Sidpa bardo* is concerned with mitigating the overwhelming desire for existence. While this craving may be related to sexual excitement, it ultimately encompasses many more deeply seated feelings of desire. This is not strictly a matter of contending with sexual desire, as Jung suggests, but of eliminating feelings of craving altogether. However, Jung’s strictly psychoanalytic interpretation robs the *Sidpa Bardo* of this nuance.

Furthermore, Jung’s treatment of the encounter with a copulating couple as a manifestation of the Oedipus complex denies any biological component to the experience, considering it as nothing more than a representation the surfacing of deep-seated psychological desires.⁷¹ Following Freud, Jung’s reference to the Oedipus complex draws from Greek mythology, implicitly suggesting that the contents of the *TBOD* are as mythological as the tale of Oedipus and are therefore strictly metaphorical. However, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition views this as a very real encounter with the actual beings that will be one’s parents following rebirth. As the consciousness of the deceased comes upon the couple, it is filled with love for its future mother and hate for its father. Far from being a mere metaphor for psychological processes as Jung suggests, this encounter is a reminder of the biological elements of craving and aversion, as well as the dangerous potential of these strong emotions to thrust consciousness back into *samsaric* existence.

Following his consideration of the *Sidpa bardo*, Jung moves on to an interpretation of the *Chonyid bardo*. He notes that Freud was deterred from exploration beyond the *Sidpa bardo* due to his “fear of metaphysics.”⁷² However, if Jung’s previous mentor and colleague had been willing to cast off the materialism that plagues the West and penetrate further he would have found that, “the transition, then, from the *Sidpa* state

to the *Chonyid* state is a dangerous reversal of the aims and intentions of the conscious mind. It is a sacrifice of the ego's stability and a surrender to the extreme uncertainty of what must seem like a chaotic riot of phantasmal forms."⁷³ Jung relates this experience to the chaos of diving into the undifferentiated collective unconscious, in which estranged elements of one's mind burst forth as powerful and destructive forces, and he consequently describes it in language that explicitly parallels his own notions of individuation.⁷⁴ His analogy of the theories of analytical psychology to those present in the *TBOD* not only serves his agenda of promoting analytical psychology over Tibetan Buddhism, but of establishing it as superior to Freudian psychoanalysis as well. By praising the wisdom of the *TBOD* as part of a larger critique of Freud, Jung elevates analytical psychology above other forms of psychoanalysis due to its Romantic willingness to seriously engage with non-Western metaphysical propositions.

Jung attempts to strengthen the connections between analytical psychology and Eastern thought through his interpretation of the concept of *karma*. Given that the *Chonyid bardo* is commonly translated as a state of "karmic illusion,"⁷⁵ Jung is obliged to offer an explanation of *karma* to his Western readers that might be unfamiliar with the topic: "According to the Eastern view, *karma* implies a sort of psychic theory of heredity based on the hypothesis of reincarnation."⁷⁶ This interpretation of *karma* is simply incorrect, scarcely reflecting the Tibetan view of this cosmological law.

Jung, however, presses onward and engages in a series of sleights of hand in which he equates the existence of inherited psychic factors to universal dispositions of the mind, Plato's theory of forms, and, finally, to the Jungian concept of archetypes.⁷⁷ Upon establishing this identity, Jung then abandons any discussion of the *TBOD* in order to flesh out his theories of the archetypes. He relates the appearance of a deity-filled mandala in the *Chonyid bardo* to the presence of archetypal forms in dreams and waking fantasy. Given his understanding of *karma* as psychic heredity and the archetypes as psychic instincts ingrained into humankind over the course of generations, Jung's analogy neatly comes together. Having equated the appearance of Buddhas and bodhisattvas to archetypes, Jung denies them any sense of metaphysical reality or devotional legitimacy by painting them as nothing more than reflections of one's unconscious mind. Completing this reduction and misrepresentation of the *BTG*'s

description of the *Chonyid bardo*, Jung decidedly states that, “The *Chonyid* state is equivalent to a deliberately induced psychosis.”⁷⁸ In one decisive stroke, Jung dismisses the truth claims of the *Bardo Thodol* by assimilating them into his own psychological system, transforming the spiritual experiences of Tibetan mystics to little more than self-inflicted insanity. In light of the apparent abnormality of the *TBOD*’s claims and methods, analytical psychology is thus further advanced as a superior healing practice.

One further concern regarding Jung’s interpretation of the *Chonyid bardo* is his insistence on the impossibility of resisting the *karmic* winds that propel the deceased’s consciousness through the *bardos*.⁷⁹ While the *BTG* maintains that past *karma* has strongly conditioned one’s consciousness and deluded it into striving toward rebirth,⁸⁰ it also recognizes the possibility for agency and directed intention. In fact, the text points out a number of different methods that the deceased can employ in the *Chonyid bardo* to subvert the propulsion of the *karmic* winds and enable either liberation or directed rebirth, such as focusing on the compassion of the Buddhas, releasing attachment to one’s previous life, blocking the door to the womb, or choosing to be reborn in a higher realm.⁸¹ Recognizing neither these crucial opportunities nor the essential roles of agency and intention during this stage, Jung continues to misunderstand the *TBOD* as speaking metaphorically when it is describing events of real cosmological import.

Finally, we must consider Jung’s interpretation of the *Chikhai bardo*. It seems, however, that Jung could find little in this particular state to relate to his own theorizing, curtly concluding his interpretative summary of the three *bardo* realms, “Thus (reading backwards) the *Chikhai* state, which appeared at the moment of death, is reached.”⁸² At the point at which the text exhausts any possibility for instrumental application, Jung has nothing more to say.

However, Jung does note that this final stage marks the point at which “the soul” of the deceased is “restored to the divinity it lost at birth.”⁸³ While Jung’s ambiguous usage of the terms “soul” and “divinity” make it exceedingly difficult to parse through the origins of this idea, it is clear that the meaning Jung associates with these terms is not the same as their usage in the *BTG*. Even if we are generous with our interpretation of Jung’s use of the term “soul” and assume that he is speaking of consciousness rather than of the immutable human essence suggested by Christianity, Tibetan Buddhism does not

propose that our minds are stripped of their “divinity” through rebirth and embodiment. It is not a matter of recovering something that is lost, but of realizing the full potential of one’s Buddha-nature by eliminating ignorance.

This misguided assumption that Jung makes about the goal of the *TBOD* is only one of his numerous points of confusion regarding the purpose of the text. Jung initially asserts that the purpose of the text is to serve as a guide for the deceased through the *bardo* realms⁸⁴ and to “enlighten the dead on their journey.”⁸⁵ While this claim seems to be in line with the goal that the *BTG* expresses, it quickly becomes clear that Jung does not mean “enlighten” in the sense of *nirvana*, but as a synonym for “inform.” In the closing pages of his *Commentary*, he claims that, “life in the *Bardo* brings no eternal rewards or punishments, but merely a descent into a new life which shall bear the individual nearer to his final goal.”⁸⁶ This indicates that Jung clearly does not view *nirvana* as a legitimate possibility in the *bardos* but that the deceased must content themselves with attempts to redirect rebirth, after which they may then pursue liberation.

However, it seems that Jung does not actually take claims of directed rebirth or *nirvana* seriously either. He reflects that, “This cult of the dead is rationally based on the belief in the supratemporality of the soul, but its irrational basis is to be found in the psychological need of the living to do something for the departed.”⁸⁷ Rendered as such, the *TBOD* is no longer about the dead, but about the living. Yet this is not a text for the living as Tibetans propose, but, in Jung’s reading, serves a purpose similar to that of death ceremonies held in other cultures by helping the living feel as if they are doing something of substance for the dead. His belittling proposal therefore suggests that the *TBOD* is nothing more than an aid to manage grief.

To soften the blow, Jung concedes that the text is “unexpectedly original,”⁸⁸ but is only barely willing to entertain the idea that there is any truth to its contents. As an afterthought to his actual analysis, Jung suggests that, “every serious-minded reader must ask himself whether these wise old *lamas* might not, after all, have caught a glimpse of the fourth dimension and twitched the veil from the greatest of life’s secrets.”⁸⁹ Jung’s skepticism of the *TBOD*’s potential to actually describe the stages of the death process thus further justifies his psychological reading as the most reasonable interpretive lens for

the text. Successfully rendering the strange Eastern Other in familiar terms and capturing its true inner meaning, analytical psychology once again emerges as the superior system.

Completing this implicit comparison that runs throughout the rest of his analysis, Jung closes his reading by posing an analogy between the significance of the *TBOD* and his own system of analytical psychology. He refers to the *BTG* as an “initiation process” for the consciousness of the deceased, the goal of which is “preparation for a descent into physical being.”⁹⁰ He views this initiation process as essential to the conditioning and development of human consciousness. Yet, having already warned his readers of the dangers of adopting this Tibetan initiation practice,⁹¹ Jung seems to leave his European audience at a loss for any applicable techniques that could help them achieve psychological health.

Fortunately, he has a solution: “The only ‘initiation process’ that is still alive and practiced today in the West is the analysis of the unconscious as used by doctors for therapeutic purposes,”⁹² i.e. Jungian analytical psychology. This is the final move that cements not only the importance and validity of Jung’s metapsychology, but its necessity and superiority to Tibetan Buddhism. Jung thus vindicates his reading of the text, confirming for his readers that analytical psychology closely parallels the *TBOD* but, as a system native to the West, possesses none of the danger of adopting practices of the Eastern Other and is therefore the most promising path to redemption for Westerners.

Although Jung may have spent the better part of his analysis justifying his own interpretive approach, his psychologism clearly violates the limits of his authorial authority through its reductionism of the *TBOD*’s teachings. Even though he Romantically valorizes the text for its capacity to uplift the consciousnesses of his audience, Jung’s gaze to the East remains dominating, impoverishing his Tibetan object of study by denying its voice. This was not merely a single unfortunate incident but, rather, an act of an enduring misplaced emphasis that has impacted conceptions of the *TBOD* up to this day.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead After Jung: A Guide to Western Spirituality

While Jung’s psychological reading accurately captures certain elements of the text, his is merely one lens among many others, an insight that seems to have been lost on

many subsequent interpreters of the *TBOD*. Although Jung's voice does not resonate in all future interpretive endeavors,[§] several translations of the text echo both his specific terminology and his methodology for their interpretive liberties. Running alongside the other two dominant threads of interpretation, the scientific and the humanistic,⁹³ the psychologizing trend instigated by Jung is apparent throughout many attempts to interpret the text following his initial production of a psychological commentary. The psychologist's voice echoes in subsequent interpretations by Timothy Leary and his peers, Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa, and even the renowned Buddhistologist Robert Thurman.

Perhaps the most blatantly misguided of the successors to Jung is the interpretation offered by Timothy Leary (1920-1996), Ralph Metzner (1936-present), and Richard Alpert (later to become Baba Ram Dass) (1931-present), entitled *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*.⁹⁴ Taking their cue from Aldous Huxley's LSD-inspired musings on the use of *TBOD* as analogous to the work of psychiatrists,⁹⁵ Leary and his co-authors treat the text as a guide for navigating reality-altering experiences in general. Their interpretation has no relation to the Tibetan *BTG* whatsoever beyond offering cursory descriptions of each of the *bardos*, but, rather, following Jung, treats the text as a window into an initiation process, and a disassociative psychedelic experience at that. *The Psychedelic Experience* is not about Tibetan Buddhist religious experience at all, but instead concerns the phenomenology of consuming mind-altering substances clothed in spiritualistic language.

As the title suggests, this 1964 interpretation of the text offers a guide to the use of hallucinogenic drugs in which the three *bardo* realms are transposed upon the various stages of a psychedelic experience. The authors open their book with tributes to Huxley, Evans-Wentz, Lama Govinda, and Jung, who all espoused a strongly psychological view of the *TBOD* and were forerunners to Leary and his colleague's project. Their tribute to Jung is extensive and replete with quotations from the "Psychological Commentary" that are multiple paragraphs long, citing his ideas on the significance of mandalas, deities, and

[§] For example, Sogyal Rinpoche's *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002) admirably abstains entirely from employing psychologized language.

the overall purpose of the text. Although Leary believes that Jung was too caught up in the European mindset (as if Leary was not equally vulnerable to his biases as an American), his praise is ultimately quite high.

While Leary may not have adopted Jung's psychologism completely, favoring more psychedelic terminology instead, his method of deciphering the text is nearly identical to that of Jung. Leary briefly acknowledges the specific contents of the *TBOD* as the exoteric meaning of the text, before dismissing them in favor of his own esoteric interpretation. He notes that the *bardos* are considered as the realms in-between death and rebirth of the physical body, but claims that it is actually the ego that undergoes death and rebirth, not the body.⁹⁶ This explanation aligns with Jung's own interpretation of the text as a commentary on individuation, rather than death, and also conveniently aligns it with the experiences of a hallucinogenic acid trip.

Needless to say, this interpretation of the text finds little support in the *BTG* itself. In fact, the authors' liberties with the original text are so great that they neglect to include any direct translation of either the *BTG* or the *TBOD*, instead producing a work that is nothing but commentary. This particular incarnation thus marks a point at which the *TBOD* completely abandons its textual grounding and enters the popular imagination, resulting in a complete distortion of the original Tibetan text. Although their work does not claim to be an authentic translation of the *BTG*, the authors' decision to frame their project within the framework of the *TBOD* demonstrates the interpretive possibilities that Jung opened up through his initial psychological commentary.

However, even when interpretations return to an actual translation of the *BTG*, psychologism remains pervasive, as can be seen in the second English translation of the text. Published in 1975 by Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa (1939-1987), an influential incarnate Tibetan lama, this edition of the *TBOD*, appended with its proper title (*The Great Liberation Through Hearing in the Bardo*),⁹⁷ continues to render the text's concepts in highly psychological terms. This approach is even more explicit than in Jung's own commentary, replete with statements such as, "it is noticeable that several of the words which best express the teachings of Buddhism are part of the language of contemporary psychology, for the attributes of certain schools of Western psychology often come closer to Buddhism than do those of Western philosophy or religion."⁹⁸ While

Jung at least attempted to mitigate his blatant psychologism by continually referencing the contents of the Tibetan text, Fremantle appears far more comfortable eschewing subtlety and drawing the direction connection between “certain schools of Western psychology”⁹⁹ and Buddhism.

In his analysis of Fremantle and Trungpa’s text, Donald Lopez has traced this reductive psychologization of the concepts of the *TBOD*.¹⁰⁰ He notes that Tibetan texts on the dying process have traditionally described the early stages in which the elements that constitute an individual’s physical body dissipate as one enters the *bardo* state. Trungpa’s interpretation, however, refigures the dissolution of the elements as an analogy for psychological occurrences that we each experience every day,¹⁰¹ thus extending Jung’s metaphorical treatment of the text.

Even the more philologically accurate rendition of the *BTG* by the eminent Buddhologist Robert Thurman is not free of Jung’s influence. Although Thurman’s 1994 translation¹⁰² falls prey to scientific terminology far more frequently than psychologism,^h Jung’s specter is still apparent. We might expect better from a man that has been deemed by journalists as America’s leading Buddhist due to his scholarly credentials and (since lapsed) ordination as the first American to become a Tibetan Buddhist monk in 1965.¹⁰³ In line with this appraisal, he actively speaks out against previous translations that had employed psychologized terminology.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, he is still unable to fully rid himself of the same psychologically suggestive language that he denounces.

The point here is not to criticize Thurman but to draw attention to the remarkable degree to which Jung’s psychologizing voice has become assimilated into the discourse of the *TBOD*. Even the most respected scholars on the topic cannot fully escape it in their translations! As with the interpretations by Leary and Fremantle and Trungpa, Thurman struggles to establish his own voice and ends up incorporating Jungian psychological language even after attempting to distance himself from it. Rather than suggesting any particular shortcoming of Thurman in particular, a consideration of his use of psychologism reveals how deeply embedded Jung’s terminology has become in discussions of the *TBOD*. The psychoanalytic notions of the unconscious, the archetypes,

^h Thurman translates *karma* as “evolution” (1994, 127) and ‘knowledge-holding deity’ as “the Scientist Deity.” (1994, 145)

and repression that Jung first applied to the text have since become a normative interpretive lens for translating Buddhist ideas. Given Thurman's interest in reaching a broad Western audience with his translation,¹⁰⁵ there are clearly points at which he felt he had no other way of expressing himself than through the language of analytical psychology.

While psychologism is not evident throughout Thurman's entire translation, it tends to dominate his commentary on the ontological status of *bardo* occurrences. Just as Jung interpreted the appearance of a deity-filled mandala in the *Chonyid Bardo* as an outpouring of the archetypes, Thurman insists that, "encountering them is like encountering extremely deeply repressed elements of your own psyche, terrifying because they are denied,"¹⁰⁶ and even refers to them as "archetype deities." He further describes the accompanying terror of this *bardo* as arising from an inability to "incorporate all the repressed imagery of her unconscious."¹⁰⁷ While these instances serve as examples of the fact that psychoanalytic terminology pervades our linguistic conventions for Tibetan Buddhism, Thurman further demonstrates Jung's instrumental role in this normalization of psychologized discourse through his statement that, "the *Natural Liberation* consciously opens up the treasury of depth psychology of the Tantric tradition for the sake of ordinary people."¹⁰⁸ This explicit reference to depth psychology, an offshoot of psychoanalysis grounded in Jungian theory, reveals that not only has psychological terminology become naturalized into discourse on the *TBOD*, but that it is Jung's voice in particular that has resounded through contemporary accounts by introducing terms like "collective unconscious" and "archetypes" to the discourse.

This point highlights that Jung's categorization of the *TBOD* as psychological is not wholly inaccurate, but is rather a matter of misplaced emphasis. Given the importance of the consciousness of the deceased to creating the experiences of the *bardos* there is undoubtedly a psychological dimension to the text. However, Jung and his subsequent psychological interpreters allow this single aspect of the *TBOD* to overshadow all others, transforming physiological and cosmological occurrences into psychic data. Although this perspective is not outright false, it is, at the very least, a misrepresentation of the broader contents of the text as it is applied within Tibetan Buddhist practice. Hopefully our prior analysis of Jung's production of this misleading simulacrum of the *TBOD* has

contributed to recovering some of the larger meaning of the *BTG* text as a specific historical and cultural production.

¹ Jung, "Commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower,"" *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 13: Alchemical Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 74.

² Cuevas, *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 14.

³ *Ibid.* 108.

⁴ *Ibid.* 101.

⁵ Thurman, "Preparations for the Journey," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994) 18.

⁶ Cuevas, *Hidden History*, 18.

⁷ *Ibid.* 19.

⁸ Lopez, *TBOD: A Biography*, 61.

⁹ *Ibid.* 117.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 116.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 137.

¹² Dalai Lama, "Foreword," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994) xvii.

¹³ Thurman, "Preparations for the Journey," 53.

¹⁴ "The Natural Liberation Through Naked Vision," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994) 239.

¹⁵ Thurman, "Preparations," 48.

¹⁶ "Naked Vision," 234.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 229.

¹⁸ *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994) 132.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 99.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 187.

²¹ *Ibid.* 165.

²² Thurman, "Preparations," 38.

²³ *TBOD*, 1994, 122.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.* 123.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 110.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 149.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 167.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 180.

³⁰ Jung, "Psychological Commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) xxxvi.

³¹ Lopez, "Afterword," 245.

³² Lopez, *The TBOD: A Biography*, 7.

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- ³³ *Ibid.* 4
- ³⁴ Ellwood, *Eastern Spirituality in America* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987) 32.
- ³⁵ Lopez, *Prisoners*, 54-55.
- ³⁶ Evans-Wentz, "Preface to the First Edition," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) xix.
- ³⁷ Woodroffe, "Foreword: The Science of Death," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 78.
- ³⁸ Evans-Wentz to Edward Bing, October 25, 1936, Rascher archives, quoted in Shamdasani, *Biography in Books*, 163.
- ³⁹ Cuevas, *Hidden History*, 218.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 9.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.* 11.
- ⁴² Jung, "Psychological Commentary," xxxvi.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Meyer, "Romantic Orientalism," 667.
- ⁴⁵ hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992) 26.
- ⁴⁶ Jung, "Psychological Commentary," xlvi.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* xxxvii/ xlvi.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* xxxvii.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.* li.
- ⁵² *TBOD*, 1994, 122.
- ⁵³ Jung, "Psychological Commentary," xxxix.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* xxxv.
- ⁵⁵ Thurman, "Preparations," 49.
- ⁵⁶ *TBOD*, 1994, 142-143.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 126.
- ⁵⁸ Jung, "Psychological Commentary," xlv
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* li-*lii*.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* , *xlvi*iii.
- ⁶¹ *TBOD*, 1994, 133
- ⁶² *Ibid.* 135
- ⁶³ *Ibid.* 134-140.
- ⁶⁴ Jung, "Psychological Commentary," *xliii*.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* *xlix*.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* xxxvii.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* *xliii*.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.* *xli*.
- ⁷⁰ *TBOD*, 1994, 184.
- ⁷¹ Jung, "Psychological Commentary," *xli*
- ⁷² *Ibid.* *xliii*.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.* *xlvi*ii.
- ⁷⁴ Wulff, *Psychology of Religion*, 434.

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- 75 Lopez, *Prisoners*, 58.
- 76 Jung, "Psychological Commentary," xliii.
- 77 *Ibid.* xliv.
- 78 *Ibid.* xlvi.
- 79 *Ibid.* xlii.
- 80 *TBOD*, 1994, 184.
- 81 *Ibid.* 178-187.
- 82 Jung, "Psychological Commentary," xlix.
- 83 *Ibid.* xli.
- 84 *Ibid.* xxxv.
- 85 *Ibid.* xlix.
- 86 *Ibid.* li.
- 87 *Ibid.* l.
- 88 *Ibid.* li.
- 89 *Ibid.* l.
- 90 *Ibid.* xli/xlix.
- 91 *Ibid.* xlvi.
- 92 *Ibid.* xli.
- 93 Cuevas, *Hidden History*, 7.
- 94 Leary Metzner, and Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964).
- 95 Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2009) 57-58.
- 96 T. Leary, *The Psychedelic Experience*, 12.
- 97 *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Great Liberation Through Hearing in the Bardo* (London, Shambhala, 1975).
- 98 Fremantle and Trungpa, "Preface," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Great Liberation Through Hearing in the Bardo* (London: Shambhala, 1975) xvi.
- 99 *Ibid.*
- 100 D. Lopez, *Prisoners*, 77.
- 101 *TBOD*, 1975 4.
- 102 *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994).
- 103 Lopez, *Prisoners*, 83.
- 104 Thurman, "Preface," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994) xix.
- 105 *Ibid.* xxi.
- 106 *TBOD*, 1994 156.
- 107 *Ibid.* 162.
- 108 Thurman, "Glossary," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994) 256.

Chapter Three

Jung & the Mandala: **A New Vision of Psychological Unity**

The results [of mandala analysis] which I now lay before you are the unadulterated, conscientious, and exact self-observations of a man of unerring intellect, who had nothing suggested to him from outside and who would in any case not have been open to suggestion. Anyone at all familiar with psychic material will have no difficulty in recognizing the authentic character of the results.¹

-C.G. Jung

Aside from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, mandalas are perhaps the most recognizable symbol of Tibetan Buddhism in Europe and America. Their use ranges from implementation in art therapy, to features in museum exhibits, and even as a motif in advertising by businesses interested in projecting an image of Eastern exoticism. While this emergence of the mandala as a symbol of Tibetan Buddhist wisdom represents the convergence of numerous factors, Jung's psychological interpretations have been instrumental to the construction of mandalas as projections of internal processes and states.

Although the Tibetan tradition supports a psychological reading of mandalas, it contains cosmological, physiological, devotional, and soteriological elements as well. These many dimensions of mandala practice come together in detailed rituals and complex visualizations in which individuals seek to enact fundamental changes in their state of being, transforming themselves from deluded humans into enlightened Buddhas. Jung's psychologizing captures certain aspects of this process of transformation, yet often at the cost of supporting elements that are of immediate consequence to a full Tibetan-style reading, such as the material aspects of mandala rituals and the spatialization of abstract concepts that such practice allows. This chapter's focus on somaticization and spatialization of doctrine serves as a key vehicle to communicate the mechanism by which mandalas enlist Tibetan physiology and cosmology in the service of transforming consciousness, elements that Jung entirely overlooks. Ultimately, Jung found in mandalas

exactly what he was seeking, rather than allowing the symbol to reveal its culturally specific wisdom to him.

Jung's interpretive efforts have proven quite influential by providing future scholars and laypersons with psychological terminology that claims to align with Tibetan Buddhist evaluations of mandalas. This has skewed literature on mandalas away from its ritual use and towards its significance in meditation, absolutely internalizing a practice with obvious external dimensions. Although not every account of the mandala in Tibetan Buddhism occupies this stance, Jung's voice continues to resound in many contemporary interpretations and therefore deserves closer consideration.

The Tibetan Mandala: Awakening Enlightened Body, Speech, and Mind

Within Tibetan Tantric practice, mandalas hold tremendous power as sacraments capable of transforming practitioners at all levels of being from impurity and delusion to enlightened Awakening. This transformation is not strictly psychological, but involves physical and verbal elements as well, playing upon the esoteric threefold formula of body, speech, and mind as constitutive of all action and being.² By engaging the body through the performance of *mudras* (hand gestures) and speech by repeating *mantras* (sacred sounds,) mandalas use concrete, material forms to facilitate the non-material, mental aspect of cultivation that is visualization of the mandala as a sacred space. As a ritual tool and technology for producing Buddhas and bodhisattvas, mandalas unite these three aspects of action and being, thereby collapsing the boundary between mind and matter, and enabling Tantric practitioners to awaken their enlightened consciousness.³

The Tibetan term for mandala, *dkyil-khor*, translates literally to, "center and surrounding environment." Thus, on its most basic level, the mandala is a circle: it is "a strongly symmetrical diagram, concentrated about a center and generally divided into four quadrants of equal size; it is built up of concentric circles (*khor*) and squares possessing the same center (*dkyil*),"⁴ which often results in a rather aesthetically pleasing image. However, far from merely serving as a work of art, mandalas take on a wide variety of forms and serve a number of different purposes within Tibetan Buddhist practice.

Mandala usage in religious practice long predates historical Buddhism, appearing in the Vedic Brahmanas in reference to the creation of a sacred space dedicated to the performance of devotional ceremonies. The mandala is also at the heart of Shakyamuni Buddha's awakening as the site where he found enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree.⁵ Tibetan Buddhism adopted the mandala from its antecedent Indian religions and repurposed it for a variety of innovative uses. There are natural mandalas, which signify the five primary elements upon which the universe is built and represent a simple elementary cosmology. This cosmology is expanded with greater detail in offering mandalas employed during rituals, which depict the central axis of the universe as Mt. Meru and its surrounding planets and oceans. Buddhist Tantric texts also discuss mandalas in great detail, illustrating the human body as a mandala and unveiling the ritual practice of deity yoga in which initiates perform complex visualizations to transform their consciousness into an enlightened state,⁶ which will be our primary focus in the present context.

All of these Tibetan conceptions of the mandala as a sacred circle are supported by the alternative mandala world, a three-dimensional environment surrounding a magnificent divine palace that is replete with Buddhas and bodhisattvas. This mandala is believed to be a Pure Land, created through the infinite compassion and wisdom of the Buddhas as an ideal environment for spiritual development and achievement of enlightenment. This divine mandala is recapitulated and invoked in mandalas at various levels spanning from the macrocosm of the universe down to the microcosm of the body in order to tap into its transformative potential. Mandalas thus serve as a locus for the intersection of Buddhist cosmology, physiology, devotionism, and soteriology, all of which ultimately come together in the mandala's ritual use.

Due to the tremendous power and accompanying danger of mandala rituals for altering the physiology and consciousness of practitioners, there has been a great deal of secrecy surrounding the specifics of initiation practices. However, the Kalacakra mandala and the *Kalacakra Laghutantra* on which it is based have been among the most systematically researched by English-speaking scholars and have been further exposed by initiation ceremonies that His Holiness offers around the world. While many of the statements that follow are specific to the Kalacakra mandala, the general premises that

undergird its usage and transformative potential are common to mandalas used in Tibetan Buddhist Tantric practice in general and serve as a fair sketch of their meaning and significance, in contrast to that which is suggested by Jungian readings.

Although the term Kalacakra, which translates literally as “wheel of time,” is commonly used to describe a specific mandala, its wider use refers to the broad collection of philosophical doctrines and meditation practices that are contained within the *Kalacakra Laghutantra*, as well as the deity Kalacakra. While detailed consideration of this tantra may appear to be an unnecessary digression from the iconography with which it is associated, the Kalacakra mandala is a visual scripture that symbolically communicates the full contents of the *Kalacakra Laghutantra*,⁷ demonstrating the interdependence of the Kalacakra text and image. Once initiates are fully familiarized with the contents of the text, they prioritize its pictorial representation as a way of moving beyond discursive understanding of abstract concepts into the experiential knowledge that arises from direct sensory engagement with mandala iconography. As David McMahan has noted, the production of visual scriptures in the form of mandalas represents an important attempt to translate “abstract doctrine into the more immediately accessible language of gesture, symbol, and image,”⁸ which offers more direct understanding that is unencumbered by the linguistic barriers constructed between thought and experience.

Although McMahan’s comments on the somaticization of doctrine shed light on a unique function of mandala iconography, he stops short of a full consideration of the ways in which abstract ideas are concretized within mandala practice. Using mandalas as visual scripture not only somaticizes doctrine by mapping it onto specific aspects of the human body and its adornments, but also spacializes doctrine by linking concepts to a map of the cosmos and blueprints of a mandala palace in a Pure Land. These dual processes of somaticization and spacialization give conceptual ideals a sense of concrete reality by aligning them, respectively, with the human body and locations in physical space, thus offering initiates an additional angle from which they can approach their practice. Somaticizing and spacializing philosophical ideas allows initiates to take advantage of the human mind’s unique storage and processing mechanisms that have been honed by evolution. Our minds do not store and engage with all forms of

information equally well: visual imagery is far more easily encoded and recalled than language.⁹ Providing abstract concepts with a visual form, such as a mandala, as well as placing these images at distinct locations in space, such as on a map of the cosmos or the human body, serves to plant the ideas more firmly in our minds and circumvent cognitive processes, encouraging experiential realization that is grounded in material reality.

Furthermore, given the nonlinear associative nature of our minds, it is impossible to search the contents of our mind in an orderly fashion.¹⁰ Rather, we recall and work with concepts by cuing some other thought or perception that is linked to the material that we wish to recall. Consequently, the denser the web of conceptual correspondences, the greater the chance of coming across a thread that is linked to an idea we hope to activate. Hence, the remarkably complex logic of correspondences contained within mandala iconography that is laid out within the mandala's accompanying tantra.

The *Kalacakra Laghutantra* is traditionally subjected to a tripartite division that splits its contents into three distinct but interrelated dimensions: the outer, the inner, and the alternate.¹¹ These three aspects roughly correspond to the cosmological, the physiological, and the psycho-spiritual. Each of these facets is essential to understanding the place of the mandala within Tibetan Buddhism as a whole and offers insight into the vast network of correspondences between the physical, mental, and spiritual worlds in which we exist simultaneously. While the outer and inner dimensions emphasize materiality and lay the groundwork for transformation by spatializing doctrine within the cosmos and somaticizing it within the body, the alternate aspect focuses on mental actions and capitalizes on these pre-established correspondences to allow initiates to transform their own being.

The Kalacakra's descriptions of the outer and inner aspects capture the essential wisdom of the tradition that ordered structures are endlessly recapitulated in systems at various levels from the macrocosm of the cosmos at large down to the minute microcosm of individual human beings. This logic of correspondences is supported by the fundamental Buddhist ontological premise that reality is characterized by its emptiness of any inherent essence. Given that all things emerge from emptiness, they are ultimately of the same final nature, forming an inner kinship of all beings that enables transformation

from one into the other through the experiential realization of the emptiness of all phenomena.

The *Kalacakra Laghutantra* proposes the outer mandala as a cosmogram that details the layout of our present universe and the processes that govern its emergence, sustained existence, and dissolution. This cosmology depicts the universe as circular in structure, with Mount Meru resting in the center upon four ascending disks composed of air, fire, water, and earth.¹² Twelve continents, as well as twelve wind-tracks on which the planets glide, further surround Mount Meru. The space above Meru forms a head with neck, chin, nose, forehead, and a topknot,¹³ indicating the special relationship between the Kalacakra's conception of the universe and the human form.

The correspondences between the outer and the inner go far beyond this single analogy, revealing connections at nearly every possible point of contact between the cosmos and the individual. While there are parallels between the universe and the gross body, such as the coincidence of Mount Meru and the human spine, as well as between the human realm and one's arms,¹⁴ far more extensive analogies arise in consideration of the relationship between the cosmos and the subtle body. Not only are the winds that circulate Meru related to the lungs, but also to the energy-laden winds (Sanskrit: *prana*, Tibetan: *rlung*) that move throughout the human body by means energy channels. These channels intersect at various points along the central channel (Sanskrit: *sushumna*, Tibetan: *dbu ma*) that runs up the middle of the body from the genitals to the crown of the head, forming circular intersections called *cakras* that constitute smaller internal mandalas. The half of the central channel located above the navel is likened to the eclipse planet Rahu, and its lower part with the eclipse planet Kalagni. The primary channel that runs to the left of the *sushumna* corresponds to the feminine, wisdom, and the moon, while the right channel is analogized to the masculine, compassionate ability, and the sun.¹⁵ By maintaining awareness of these correspondences and envisioning one's self as a mandala, practitioners are able to draw a clear connection between the processes that govern the universe and those that govern their body, enabling conscious control of the forces at work in this integrated hierarchy of mandalas.¹⁶

These complementary inner and outer elements of mandala practice are united in its alternative aspect and invoked to transform consciousness during the Kalacakra

initiation ritual. By connecting mundane cosmology with the divine Pure Land mandala and mundane physiology with the Kalacakra deity, this ritual aims to bring about a transformation of being that cleanses individual consciousness of obscurations and dissolves it into emptiness, allowing it to reemerge in the form of the enlightened Kalacakra. This transformation takes place upon the physical and mental planes, playing upon the interdependence of these two categories and their interplay at various levels of the micro-macrocosmic system.

In its ritual context, the mandala is thus a sacred altar upon which initiates undergo a twofold transformation, which employs the four different kinds of Tantric rituals: Action, Performance, Yoga, and Unexcelled Yoga. During the initial two types, Action and Performance Tantras, mandalas are primarily directed towards external ritual performance, functioning as an implement that cordons off sacred space and invokes deities to descend via physical and verbal actions. This ritual usage is primarily concerned with the subsidiary goals of pacifying illness and danger, fostering prosperity and merit, and destroying illness and danger, rather than with achieving enlightenment.¹⁷ Furthermore, these preliminary stages of Tantric practice condition initiates for the later stages by familiarizing them with the processes of attainment through repeated ritual performance.¹⁸

Moving beyond these initial practices into those of Yoga and Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, mandala usage shifts towards the more complex mental processes and initiates adopt mandalas as a tool for radically transforming consciousness to achieve Awakening. However, it is only following the earlier, materially grounded stages that the more distinctly psychological elements become the primary focus of practice.¹⁹ Although the following description of initiation into the Kalacakra mandala is greatly simplified for the sake of succinctness,^a it illustrates the distinctly devotional and highly systematized ritualistic aspects of mandalas that appear prominently within Tibetan practice, as well as its distinctly spatial element, all of which go unrecognized by Jung.

^a For further detail regarding the specifics of the Kalacakra initiation rites and its intricate system of correspondences, please refer to the appendix.

The Kalacakra initiation process begins with a request to the earth goddess to provide a purified empowerment site^b where initiates can draw upon the intimate relationship between their ordinary phenomenological existences and fundamentally divine nature.²⁰ From the very beginning, mandala ritual practice aims to deconstruct the lines between mundane and enlightened, between matter and mind. The vajra master who confers the initiation further purifies the grounds by dispelling spirits that might hinder the ritual processes. These acts of invoking deities to purify the space and banishing negative spirits are not treated as empty gestures, but are devotional procedures that are essential to ensuring a successful initiation.

After purifying the grounds, the vajra master and his accompanying monks begin to lay out the gridlines that guide the construction of the physical Kalacakra sand mandala. Beginning with these lines, the monks systematically construct the mandala according to highly specific iconometric proportions. These gridlines ensure that the mandala does not reflect the momentary inclinations or artistic whimsy of the individuals responsible for its construction, but possesses an exact similitude to the ideal alternative mandala world. The physical mandala constructed in the ritual space is therefore a perfect reconstruction of the patterns recapitulated in the human body, the universe, and at all other levels of the micro-macrocosmic scheme.²¹ Drawing upon the implicit connection between image and presence, this similitude actively divinizes the space and, consequently, those that enter it as well.

Once the monks complete the mandala, initiates officially “enter” the mandala for the first time. “Entry” into the mandala occurs on two complementary levels. On the first, initiates physically enter the empowerment site. As they do so, they recite the *mantras* (sacred sounds) and make the *mudras* (hand gestures) associated with the Kalacakra deity. These verbal and embodied elements that accompany entry into the mandala demonstrate that initiates are not enacting a strictly internal self-transformation, but that these processes have distinct physical correlates that embody the enlightened deity that

^b “Empowerment site” is a technical term that designates a sacred space where innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas aid those that enter it in their pursuit of Awakening. (Powers, 1995, 111)

they aspire to become. It is only by imitating and embodying the enlightened body, speech, and mind of a Buddha that initiates can fully enact a transformation of being.

These embodied elements are accompanied by the second level of “entry” into the mandala, which entails mentally entering into a visualized mandala palace. According to Tantric ritual logic, aligning one’s mundane body (*mudras*), speech (*mantras*), and mind (visualization) with that of the deity establishes a direct conduit to the alternate mandala world, allowing the initiate to become one with all of the mandala’s deities and for those deities to enter the initiate as well. By fully integrating body (*mudras*), speech (*mantras*), and mind (visualization), mandalas thus function as sacraments that empower and transform the initiates that enter them.²² In other words, transformation of consciousness is impossible on solely the mental level, but depends upon its accompanying elements of body and speech as well.

The visualized mandala palace represents a realm in which the infinite wisdom and compassion of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are concretized and manifest in forms discernable to unenlightened beings.²³ By spacializing infinite wisdom and compassion and giving them a sense of physical reality, initiation into a mandala provides practitioners with a far more accessible sense of divinity and the qualities of enlightened beings. As they mentally travel through this space and encounter different objects and divine beings, initiates gradually become purified and transformed through their encounters. However, these transformations are not merely imaginative, but are instances in which the initiate’s mind actually becomes indistinguishable from the very forms that it visualizes and is thus divinized.²⁴

Each of these forms holds unique significance and transformative potential in the enormous web of correspondences that undergird and are encoded into mandala technology. In the words of Mattieu Ricard, “meditating upon the mandala is not a mere daydream musing through an enchanting paradise disconnected from reality, but the rediscovery of the very framework of our being and of the phenomenal world.”²⁵ For example, images of twelve animals are placed at equal intervals along the outer ring of the mandala, which correspond to the twelve months of the year. Each of these animals bears a 28-petaled lotus, upon which sit a pair of deities in union that represent the new and full moon. Together, these symbols embody the 30 lunar days in a month and, taken

alongside the eleven other animals in the mandala, constitute the total number of days in a lunar year. Furthermore, relocating this cosmology in the human body, the number 360 also corresponds to the sets of breath we take in cycles of 60 each day.²⁶ Thus, one set of symbols serves to illustrate multiple elements that are present within the systems of the microcosm and macrocosm alike. While Orientalizing scholars such as Jung have attempted to separate these elements from each other for the sake of simplifying analysis of mandalas, these diverse aspects are inextricably linked and separating them undermines the very power of correspondence from which the sacred circle derives its power.

In fact, while visualization is commonly highlighted as the cornerstone of mandala practice, it appears that this portrayal is not wholly accurate in actuality. As Stephen Breyer demonstrates in the following account, extensive visualization is often sacrificed to the more ritualistic elements of practice:

The ability to achieve single-minded concentration on a vividly appearing picture is the result of long and really rather frustrating practice. We must remember-and this point should be emphasized-that the visualization is performed during a ritual...The reading of the ritual text in the assembly hall often goes at breakneck speed, and the vast majority of monks are unable to visualize that quickly, if indeed they are able to visualize at all.²⁷

Given the necessity of conditioning one's mind before complex psychological transformation is possible, ritual action is therefore prioritized to adequately familiarize initiates with the processes of Awakening. Breyer's candid admission should not completely discount the importance of visualizations to mandala practice since they clearly play a role in the initiation ceremonies and are referenced in the tantras, but, at the very least, demonstrates that they are merely one part of a larger ritual rather than the central element of practice.

As initiates near the end of their visualized circumambulation of the mandala architecture, they come upon Kalacakra and his consort, Visvamatr, at the apex and center of the palace. Although Kalacakra is ultimately infinite and void of any essential identity, he takes on a human form in these initiation rites, enabling further

somaticization of the *Kalacakra Laghutantra*'s doctrines. For example, following McMahon's analysis,²⁸ the concept of "raising the *bodhicitta*", which refers to the aspiration toward enlightenment born from compassion for all sentient beings in Mahayana literature, is closely mapped onto Kalacakra's physical pose. Having achieved enlightenment, Kalacakra has correspondingly tamed the internal winds and is thereby able to prevent the white *bodhicitta* that resides in the left channel and the red *bodhicitta* of the right channel from leaving the body. This is iconographically represented by Kalacakra's outstretched right red leg, which indicates the downward flow of red *bodhicitta*, and his bent left white leg, which symbolizes the hooking up of the white *bodhicitta*.²⁹ Taken together, the positioning of Kalacakra's legs serves as an additional point of association to awaken the need to direct the winds into the central channel and gather them at one's heart, as well as the accompanying need to awaken compassion to enlighten all other living beings. As initiates come upon Kalacakra and Visvamatr, they do not consciously attend to these processes but they literally become them as the line between mind and matter disappears, producing a new Buddha in the process.³⁰

This process of transformation from unenlightened initiate into a fully awakened Buddha thus not only represents a psychological transformation, but a physical one as well. Indeed, without the physically embodied aspects of *mudras* and *mantras*, psychological transformation could not occur. Ritual mandala practice is not a process of self-discovery, but one of purification and dissolution that occurs in a physical space and requires devotional offerings to various deities. To bring about the awakening that the Kalacakra initiation is directed towards, initiates must achieve understanding not only of their own nature, but also of their relationship to the cosmos and the inner physiological workings of their being. In this context, mandalas are not merely psychograms as Jung will suggest, but are sacred altars, charts of the cosmos, maps of the human body, palaces of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and themselves the very processes of transformation and realization of one's ultimate Buddha-nature given spatial and somatic reality.

The Jungian Mandala: An Icon of Psychological Unity

As Jung turned his gaze to the East and caught sight of Tibetan Buddhist mandalas, he saw none of their ritual, cosmological, or physiological significance. In fact,

the mandalas that Jung saw were not the distinctly Tibetan sacred circles that have just been described but, quite literally, the product of his own imagination. While mandalas certainly appear prominently in Tibetan Buddhist iconography and practice, they are, in Jung's final analysis, a universal symbol, i.e. an archetype. Not only are mandalas an archetype, but they are the most important of all the archetypes, representing the process of individuation and the emergence of the Self. Jung placed deep personal and scholarly significance on mandalas, as seen with his engagement with them throughout the better part of his career. Yet, while Jung continued to come across new forms of the symbol in different places carrying varying meanings, he only became further entrenched in his conclusions designating the mandala as the fundamental representation of psychological unity. Jung quite adeptly manages to reconfigure mandalas so that his perspective aligns with the Tibetan Buddhist stance in regards to their function, the means by which they work, and the end goal of their practice, but these comparisons are ultimately superficial and are easily undermined by a simple consideration of Tibetan sources.

Jung first encountered mandalas not within Tibetan Buddhism, but during an exploration of his own mind. This discovery occurred between 1912-1917 when Jung, following his break with Freud, endured psychic trauma as he was overwhelmed by what he identified as the contents of his unconscious. Over this period, during which Jung produced what would ultimately become known as *The Red Book*, the psychologist became a psychonaut and ventured into the depths of his mind to discern the basic principles of human psychology. It was on this inward journey that Jung formalized his theories of archetypes, the collective unconscious, and individuation, as well as when he first encountered the sacred circle, which he regularly found manifested in his drawings with variations that accorded with his mental state at the time of production.³¹

Even following this period of psychic chaos, Jung continued to draw mandalas, sketching one every morning in a notebook. As he studied these images he concluded that they,

were cryptograms concerning the state of the Self... The Self, I thought, was like the monad which I am, and which is my world. The mandala represents this monad, and corresponds to the microcosmic nature of the psyche... The mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation.³²

Due to the circular nature of mandalas, they came to represent the movement in a circle around oneself so that all sides of the personality become involved, demonstrating the integration of the shadow archetype into one's conscious mind.³³ Jung believed that, although the conscious mind is unwilling to admit these elements into itself, the symbolism of the mandala awakens something within the unconscious, drawing these contents out and integrating them in the process of individuation. Thus, even before recognizing the mandala in any religious tradition, it seems Jung had already arrived at a conclusive meaning of the symbol, a meaning that he would retain even as he encountered contrary perspectives.

It was in 1929, in Richard Wilhelm's manuscript for the Daoist text, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, that Jung first encountered a mandala prominently featured in a thought system beside his own.³⁴ Although Jung's reminiscence on the spontaneous emergence of mandalas during the years in which he ventured through his unconscious is replete with references to "mandalas," his use of the term is anachronistic and was applied retrospectively to his experiences following his commentary on Wilhelm's text, which is the first published work in which Jung explicitly refers to "mandalas."^c This retrospective labeling disguises that Jung's speculations on mandalas were largely independent from his engagement with them in culturally specific settings and that he carried many pre-conceived notions about mandalas before he had even encountered the term.

After his initial recognition of mandalas within Daoism, Jung later found them again in Tibetan Buddhism,³⁵ Hermetic Philosophy, and Christian mysticism,³⁶ as well as in the absent minded drawings of many of his analysands.³⁷ Jung's continual bombardment by the symbol from disparate cultures spread across time and space only strengthened his conviction of the mandala as the central archetype of the Self and as one of "the oldest religious symbols of humanity and [one that] may even have existed in Paleolithic times (cf. the Rhodesian rock-paintings)."³⁸

^c Jung's commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower* suggests that he actually first encountered "mandalas" by reading Evans-Wentz's first, 1927 edition of the *TBOD*, but the term doesn't appear in his published corpus until his commentary on Wilhelm's text. (Jung, 1931, 25)

For Jung, then, new encounters with mandalas were not opportunities for expanding his understanding of the symbol, but, rather, only further concretized the foundation on which he confirmed his theory of individuation. In his analyses, Jung invokes the rhetoric of sameness by drawing comparisons between his own mandalas and Tibetan ones, using them as empirical evidence to advance his own claims regarding the universal significance of mandalas and archetypes in general. In Jung's writings, the mandala is a "symbol of the center, the goal, or the Self as psychic totality; self-representation of a psychic process of centering; production of a new center of personality."³⁹ When he first came across the mandala in Tibetan Buddhism in Evans-Wentz's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Jung projected his own preconceived conclusions onto the symbol and saw only one thing: its psychological dimension.

Yet, while mandalas undoubtedly play an important role in the transformation of consciousness, which might be identified as their psychological dimension, we have also explored their ritual, devotional, cosmological, and physiological significance. Jung, however, enthrones the psychological, eschewing the elements that are not as immediately or easily profitable to him, including mandalas' emphasis on embodiment through *mudras* and *mantras*. While these practices are ultimately integrated into the psychological end of personal transformation, Jung's omission of mandala rituals' physical and verbal elements obscures the very reasons that mandalas possess such potent transformative potential. Additionally, his psychological approach semiotizes mandalas by transmuting them into nothing more than symbols, as well as interiorizing them, thereby prioritizing inner experience over external practice and erasing vast swathes of what make Tibetan mandalas unique.

Although Jung's considerations of mandalas within the Tibetan context certainly reveal a high degree of general confusion regarding his source material, we would be mistaken to judge his conclusions as entirely nonsensical flights of fancy. They are quite internally consistent and enable him to forge widely applicable statements that are highly convincing, providing that the reader has no more than a cursory background in Tibetan Buddhism. The issue at hand here is not the relative correctness of his statements regarding the significance of mandalas in general, but how closely these conclusions actually align with Tibetan practices, the source of his inspiration. Although he ultimately

posits mandalas as an iconographic prototype beyond tradition, Jung's inclusion of Tibetan Buddhist mandalas in the construction of his universal theory of mandalas has consequently produced confusion as to the nature of specifically Tibetan mandalas.

Our task of comparing the Jungian interpretation of mandalas to their place within Tibetan Buddhism is further complicated by Jung's obvious confusion about exactly what should be included under the label of "Tibetan Buddhism." While this is admittedly a serious difficulty and not one that any scholar should deal with lightly when attempting to delineate the contents of any particular religious tradition, Jung does not attend to these difficulties in his equation of Tantric Shaivism and Kundalini yogic philosophy with Tibetan Buddhism. While there is historical evidence to suggest that these systems have influenced Tibetan Buddhism, Jung does not engage in a critical analysis of their developmental trajectory but simply conflates the three. By attempting to amalgamate multiple thought systems without recognizing that he is doing so, the inaccuracies in his interpretation are compounded even further, leaving his commentary on Buddhist mandalas replete with references to Shiva, Shakti, and the awakening of Kundalini energy.^d

In one of his rare considerations of mandalas within the specifically Buddhist context, Jung reflects on the purpose of the symbol by means of anecdote, recalling a conversation that he had with a monk while traveling in 1938. He cites his interlocutor's conclusion that,

the true mandala is always an inner image, which is gradually built up through (active) imagination, at such times when psychic equilibrium is disturbed or when a thought cannot be found and must be sought for, because not contained in holy doctrine.⁴⁰

While we are not in a position to outright dismiss the possibility that this statement originally came from the mouth of a practicing Buddhist monk, it is worth noting the remarkable similarity between this construction of mandalas and Jung's during his period

^d For example, in his discussion of "the lamaistic quadrangle," Jung refers to the common presence of "the God Shiva" as the "Holy of Holies [and] "the cosmic source of energy." (Jung, 1936, 124)

of psychosis and inner exploration; both cases envision mandalas as images that emerge from within the depths of an individual as evidence of psychological fragmentation.

While the Jungian conception renders mandalas as a barometer for the conditions of a troubled psyche and prescribes their construction as a balm for an ailing mind, their usage in Tibetan ritual practice treats them in the exact opposite manner. Mandalas are not projections of a deluded mind, but depictions of enlightened existence on both the cosmic and individual level. During the construction of a mandala for initiation rituals, participants are forbidden to incorporate elements from their current, subjective state of mind and are required to abide by the textually prescribed iconometric proportions. Far from serving as a space for the voice of the individual, mandalas are sites in which that voice is dissolved so that it may reemerge in a purified and enlightened form. Even though Jung's comparison is inaccurate, he still finds a way to further the universal legitimacy of analytical psychology by invoking a sense of false similarity between his own perspective and that of a Tibetan monk.

In further consideration of scenarios in which Tibetan Buddhism uses mandalas, Jung states with some degree of accuracy that mandalas are “instruments of meditation, concentration, and self-immersion, for the purpose of realizing inner experience.”⁴¹ While this characterization is accurate at its most basic level, it is also tremendously vague and hardly says anything about the significance or practical function of mandalas at all. Although Jung does not explicitly discount the ritual importance of mandalas, he does not affirm it either, thus leaving his readers in a state of uncertainty that parallels Jung's own.

However, it becomes increasingly evident just how widely Jung's perspective diverges from the stance maintained by Tibetan Buddhist texts and practice when he further elaborates on mandalas' functionality, rendering them as an aid to “concentration by narrowing down the psychic field of vision and restricting it to the centre...[Mandalas] are meant to shut out the outside and hold the inside together.”⁴² Although cultivation of one-pointed concentration is a necessary prerequisite for effectively engaging in mandala practice, concentration is essential to nearly all forms of meditation and this point does not shed any light on the uniqueness of mandalas. In fact, the capacity to maintain one-pointed concentration is assumed throughout textual

accounts of mandala practice and it is extremely unlikely that practitioners would seek initiation into a mandala simply for the sake of developing concentration. Additionally, his conclusion that mandalas are meant to “shut out the outside and hold the inside together” not only has no grounding in Buddhist practice, but does not even impart anything of substance at all.

Jung’s speculations on the means by which mandalas enact such substantial transformations in human psychology also suffer from his apparent confusion regarding Tibetan Buddhism and consequent projection of his own theories. He theorizes that mandalas possess transformative potential due to the primacy of the symbol and its unique capacity to awakening materials in the unconscious that would otherwise remain latent.⁴³ Within this speculation, we find a kernel of truth: mandalas do possess the possibility of awakening potentialities that lie latent within the individual’s mind, namely, the possibility of awakening one’s Buddha-nature.

Unfortunately, Jung’s framing of the mechanism by which this awakening occurs sharply differs from Tibetan accounts and suggests that any superficial similarity is merely coincidental. Whereas Jung asserts that individuals become awakened to their true selves by means of mandala symbolism sparking something that already exists but lies latent within their unconscious, Tibetan Tantric practice relies on the conscious and painstaking construction of a network of associations between mandala symbolism, abstract doctrinal concepts, cosmology, and the physiology of the subtle body. While these correspondences may ultimately leave initiates’ conscious minds and become ingrained in their unconscious memories, they are not inherent to one’s mind as Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious suggests, but are actively placed there for the purpose of later activation. Mandalas are not accidents that just happen to emerge from the unconscious mind and that have the potential to draw other elements up out from its depths, but are constructions with specific properties and highly detailed systems of correspondence that govern their usage.

Jung elaborates on the mandala’s mechanism of transformation by considering the role of circular movement when engaging with the symbol, yet his interpretation similarly suffers from a lack of textual grounding. At first glance, Jung correctly identifies circulation as essential to the process of working with a mandala. He further

identifies the act of circulation as equivalent to forging a union of opposites in which the peripheral elements of the mandala are subordinated to and, ultimately, united in its center.⁴⁴ He labels this circulation as, “the ‘movement in a circle around oneself,’ so that all sides of the personality become involved.”⁴⁵ Through this rendering, mandalas are configured as tools for dispelling the illusion of duality that enable integration of the disparate elements of the psyche.

Drawing from his own conceptions of individuation as an innate drive towards integration, Jung projects this inherent tendency towards unity onto the mandala’s encouragement of movement from the periphery to the center. In consideration of the *vajra* mandala, he comments that, “the four [*vajras*] in the gates of the inner courtyard are meant to indicate that life’s energy is streaming inwards; it has detached itself from objects and now returns to the center.”⁴⁶ His usage of “life’s energy” is vague to the point of meaninglessness and has no discernable relationship to the palace’s gates or ornamentation. Far from having any basis in doctrinal descriptions of mandala initiations, Jung’s assertion reflects his own pseudo-mystical leanings far more so than the Tibetan Buddhist stance.

In order to further illustrate the mandala’s natural drive towards unity, Jung also refers to the single *vajra* that is located at the center of the mandala. He relates this symbol, which is alternatively translated as diamond, adamantine, or thunderbolt, to a state of psychic wholeness in which masculine and feminine energies are united.⁴⁷ However, the *vajra* does not represent the unity of the masculine and feminine, but rather stands for exclusively male energy and is equated with compassionate method.⁴⁸ Even when Jung does manage to find a legitimate point of contact with Tibetan Buddhism, it seems that his erudition regarding its symbolism was not deep enough to prove that the accuracy of his comparison is anything more than coincidence. Although Tibetan Buddhist practice supports Jung’s notion that mandalas undermine dualistic appearances, their power to do so lies not in their encouragement of circular movement but in their foundation of emptiness. Dualism is not illusory due to the capacity of the circle to bring together its peripheral elements in a united center, but because all phenomena are ultimately of the same empty nature. Despite the fact that this ontological premise is fundamental to working with mandalas, Jung never addresses it.

Additionally, the Jungian perspective that moving in a circular motion through a mandala is essential to integrating the various archetypes of the Self is also completely absent from Buddhist texts and practice. Circulating from the periphery of the mandala towards its center does not constitute a continual process of amassing an ever-increasing number of elements of personhood onto one's conscious personality as Jung suggests, but, conversely, signifies the continual dissolution of one's identity. As initiates move through the mandala and encounter its various deities, they become increasingly purified and divinized. This process culminates at the elevated center of the mandala, at which point the initiate is believed to be capable of mastering control of the subtle levels of the mind-body complex. Given that Jung does not address the physiological elements of mandala practice, it seems impossible that he could have ever recognized this specific purpose of circulation.

This discrepancy between the Jungian and Tibetan Buddhist perspectives on the significance of circulating the mandala points to one final misinterpretation that Jung makes in his consideration of mandalas: the goal towards which their practice aims. In consideration of the *vajra* mandala, he comments that the goal of contemplation is the initiate's recognition of "himself as God again...thus returning from the illusion of individual existence into the universal totality of the divine state."⁴⁹ At first glance this appears to be quite astute insofar as it successfully recognizes the capacity of mandalas to divinize its practitioners by transforming them into deities. However, a closer look at exactly what Jung means by "God" reveals that the similarity is purely semantic.

As we have already seen, Jung views mandalas as representations of the Self, in which the many aspects of one's personality are integrated in the process of individuation. The end goal of mandala practice is thus the union of opposites and wholeness of psychological existence, which is, by Jung's estimation, to be Godly.⁵⁰ However, within Tibetan Buddhism this practice is not concerned with psychological unity per se, but with purification of all levels of one's being, dissolution of dualistic appearances, and cessation of submission to the *karmic* forces of *samsara*.⁵¹ This may entail achieving some high degree of psychological unity in which previously dualistic elements of one's mind are harmoniously reconciled, but this integration is a waypoint along the path to purity rather than the final goal. While Jung may conflate the

soteriological goal of mandala practice in analytical psychology and Tibetan Buddhism, they are ultimately quite different: the former is concerned with psychic integration, while the latter strives towards freedom from *samsara* through the development of enlightened wisdom and compassion. As such, the two systems are concerned with totally different realms of experience. In this case, the Jungian interpretation does not appear to be a complete inversion of the Tibetan Buddhist perspective, but is, rather, an act of reading in between the lines that discounts the Tibetan voice entirely.

Thus, although Jung appears to be in alignment with the Tibetan Buddhist perspective on the function of mandalas, the scenarios in which they are used, the mechanisms by which they work, and the goal toward which their practice strives, these points of contact are primarily superficial and crumble away upon closer inspection. While these artificial parallels misrepresent the tradition of which he speaks, the greater harm arises from Jung's vast overstatement of his authority to speak on such matters.

By stating his own perspective on mandalas as that of a Buddhist monastic, Jung, willingly or otherwise, denies agency to his object of inquiry and erases the presence of Tibetans from their own iconography. Given that Jung encountered mandalas most prominently in his own scattered psyche and in those of his analysands, it should be unsurprising that he viewed mandalas as devices that produce inner order following states of inner chaos and turmoil. However, this is merely Jung's perspective and certainly should not be imposed upon anyone else. Nevertheless, Jung's anecdote of his conversation with a Buddhist monk performs that exact imposition of interpretation. Not only does Jung substitute his own perspective for that of Tibetan Buddhists, but he hides that he is doing so by attributing the claims to someone from the tradition. By implicitly suggesting that his interpretation is authentic, Jung thus oversteps the reasonable boundary of his authority even further than he already had through his overt psychologization of mandala practice.

Furthermore, by relating the mandalas used in Tibetan initiation rites to those produced by the fragmented minds of his analysands, Jung tacitly draws a connection between these two groups of individuals, which effectively denigrates Tibetans as psychologically fragmented as well. His consideration of Tibetan mandalas as "free creations of fantasy" that "move within fairly narrow limits"⁵² further disparages the

Tibetan system as simultaneously fantastical and overly restrictive, thus limiting its effectiveness. Jungian mandalas produced through active imagination, on the other hand, are configured as essential windows into the process of analysands coming to terms with themselves. By allowing his analysands to freely express themselves, rather than limiting them as the Tibetan tradition does, Jung claims that he can help them reduce psychic confusion to order, which serves as a far more effective method of psychological aid.⁵³ After employing a rhetoric of sameness throughout the bulk of his prior commentaries on mandalas to support his theory of the archetypes, Jung switches to a rhetoric of difference that distances Jungian mandalas from Tibetan ones and highlights the superiority of analytical psychology's methods over those of the Tibetans. Not only do Jung's commentaries misrepresent the significance of mandalas within Tibetan Buddhism but, as with his treatment of the *TBOD*, they further advance Jungian analytical psychology as a thought system that is superior to Tibetan Buddhism.

While Jung's interpretation of the *TBOD* primarily misrepresented the text by overemphasizing certain elements at the exclusion of others, his treatment of Tibetan mandalas is even more reductive in its attempts to disguise such misrepresentation as an accurate portrayal. Had such a misrepresentation occurred in the work of a less prominent author, it might be considered little more than a regrettable occasion of a misplaced claim of authority. Unfortunately, Jung's ubiquity and reputation within academic and popular Orientalist discourse in the early to mid-twentieth century have enabled his authority to grow even greater, which now pervades modern interpretations of mandala symbolism and practice.

The Western Mandala: A Doorway to Our Own Divinity

Reflecting on the place of Tibetan Buddhist mandala's in the collective imagination of Europeans and Americans, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has remarked that, "many speculative and mistaken interpretations have circulated among people who viewed them simply as works of art or had no access to reliable explanations."⁵⁴ Although it is not quite ubiquitous and perhaps not even the most dominant form of misrepresentation, the Jungian psychological perspective is certainly one of the "mistaken" interpretations to which His Holiness refers. Such interpretations

follow Jung by either completely omitting any mention of the ritual elements of mandala practice, or by strongly prioritizing an explication of mandalas' psychological significance over its other facets. Even in cases that do not adopt psychologism as their primary interpretive lens, the availability of psychological terminology encourages a general interiorization of mandala practice that excludes or marginalizes its significance in ritual use. This section will consider a number of authors that have adopted Jung's interpretive methods and, more prominently, his psychological terminology, demonstrating the extent to which his perspective has seeped into many contemporary portrayals of mandalas and the pervasive linguistic conventions that support these depictions.

Contemporary adoptions of an explicitly Jungian stance have not solely been restricted to interpretations of the meaning of mandala iconography, but have also followed Jung's particular practice of using mandalas with his analysands during therapy. Okada Yasunobu is a Japanese psychoanalyst who has incorporated Sandplay therapy into his practice by asking his analysands to construct sand mandalas. Drawing directly from Jung's conclusions regarding the therapeutic potential of constructing mandalas, Yasunobu believes that mandalas can help diagnose and develop crucial qualities for mental health such as inner awareness, overall self-knowledge, and a balance of feminine and masculine.⁵⁵ This usage is entirely removed from any Tibetan context and, instead, derives exclusively from Jungian premises.

However, therapeutic use of Jungian mandalas, while existent, is admittedly relatively rare and is far less pervasive than the scholarly trend of adopting Jung's particular methodology for working mandalas by reducing them to nothing more than symbols. This act of semiotization serves three central purposes. First, it universalizes mandalas, stripping them of their culturally determined nuances and putting them to use for humanistic aims. Secondly, it facilitates and justifies the interiorization of mandala symbolism and practice, strictly psychologizing them and removing the other elements of practice. Finally, and most importantly to our critique of Orientalism, it allows European and American scholars to occupy a privileged position where they can divine the 'true' meaning of such symbols and their surrounding practices, thus muting or distorting any Tibetan voices that attempt to enter the conversation.

Donald Lopez has discussed this hermeneutic strategy of semiotization, finding that the study of mandalas has more often reflected a desire to unveil fundamental truths about Tibetans and, for more spiritual-inclined authors, the cosmos at large, than a genuine interest in the perspective of the actual Tibetan Buddhist tradition.⁵⁶ Just as Jung did not view mandalas as a strictly Tibetan symbol but as an innately human one, scholars that have adopted Jung's method of analysis have drawn from as many sources as possible in order to prove the ubiquity of mandalas.

This line of Jungian influence is particular apparent in José and Miriam Argüelles' *Mandala* (1972), which is effectively a New Age manual for personal transformation through mandala practice. Although Tibetan mandalas are explicitly mentioned a number of times throughout the text, such references are interspersed among references to sacred circles found in India, Java, France, Spain, Yucatan, and Australia,⁵⁷ as well as in Christian⁵⁸ and Daoist⁵⁹ religious contexts. While it is undeniable that specifically Tibetan Buddhist mandala practice emerged from its Indian antecedents, the Argüelles text is not concerned with the historical development of the concept and practice. They conflate the symbol and its ritual use in one culture with its use in all cultures, despite apparent differences in doctrine and practice. Instead of attempting to understand mandalas as unique artifacts of specific cultures, the authors are only concerned with them as a universal symbol that carries wisdom about the fundamental nature of the human mind and reality as a whole. The line between the mandalas of Tibet and those of other cultures is blurred to the point of irrelevance, revealing the Argüelles' work as psychological and humanistic speculation rather than legitimate scholarship that should have any bearing on popular conceptions of Tibetan mandalas whatsoever.

In addition to contemporary adoptions of Jungian methodology when working with mandalas, applying psychologized terminology for discussing them has been tremendously pervasive as well and is evident in many accounts of mandalas and their symbolic significance. As with Jung's treatment of the symbol, these interpretations have been severely reductionist, representing mandalas and their deities as nothing more than instantiations of psychological processes. By reducing mandalas to symbolic or metaphorical representations, they are thus transmuted into psychic data, furnishing the ground for detailed psychological analyses. Hence, statements such as the following,

which is from Robert Thurman and Marilyn Rhie's accompanying catalog to the 1992 *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet*⁶⁰ museum exhibition: "The erotic and terrific deities of Tibetan art and culture express the Tibetan mastery and further development of the sophisticated depth psychology inherited from Indian Buddhist civilization, anticipating discoveries in psychology made only recently in the West."⁶¹ The mandala thus becomes a symbol for a cache of ancient psychological wisdom protected within the confines of Tibet, only now being unearthed by academia.

Treating mandalas as treasures of psychological wisdom elevates Jung and his interpretive followers to a position of tremendous authority in which their conclusions about the significance of mandalas are prioritized over authentic Tibetan interpretations. Viewing mandalas and their resident bodhisattvas as instruments of a pre-modern depth psychology, contemporary interpreters either explicitly or implicitly credit Jung as the man capable of adequately domesticating these foreign ideas for safe consumption. These scholars play on the trope that "the elites knew that the images were symbols pointing to an unseen reality, while the unlettered masses were superstitious idolaters,"⁶² situating themselves within the ranks of the privileged that truly comprehend their objects of study, as opposed to the average Tibetan layperson who is figured as unable to understand his own practices. Although Jung may not have consciously asserted so, his participation in Orientalist discourse implicitly suggests that to have such knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism is to dominate it and to have authority over it, resulting in the production of material about Tibet that even Tibetans do not have.⁶³

Even renowned Tibetologists such as Giuseppe Tucci have fallen prey to assimilating the logic of Jung's voice without recognizing the distortions their subsequent interpretations perform on Tibetan Buddhist use of mandalas. Tucci's *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*⁶⁴ (1961), which is one of the first books on mandalas written for a general, English-speaking audience, praises Jung in its opening page and adopts his notion of mandalas as vehicles for reintegration.⁶⁵ While the text is not wholly problematic insofar as it presents specific details of the structure of mandalas and their symbolism, his analysis is pervaded by Jungian vocabulary and relies almost solely on a

psychological interpretive lens,^e demonstrating that even renowned Tibetologists are not safe from Jungian terminology and rhetoric.

Although Tucci adamantly expresses his desire to not misrepresent the stance of Tibetan Buddhist doctrine and practice,⁶⁶ his invocation of Jung does exactly that. He refers to mandala symbolism as essential to inducing a “liberating psychological experience,”⁶⁷ making no mention of the physiological element of liberation. He continues to downplay the non-psychological elements of the mandala by stating that, “the mandala is no longer a cosmogram, but a psychocosmogram, the scheme of disintegration from the One to the many and of reintegration from the many to the One.”⁶⁸ As with Jung’s interpretation, Tucci’s statements have a vague resemblance to the Buddhist doctrinal stance on dispelling duality, but are couched in strictly psychologized, pseudo-mystical language that disguises the broader role of mandalas in Tibetan Buddhism. While his words may be poetic and alluring, they obscure the actual significance and usage of mandalas and actively subvert the Tibetan voice.

Rob Preece’s *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra*⁶⁹ (2006) serves as another example in which the interpretive lens of analytical psychology is prioritized over all other possible explanations. The text is grounded almost entirely in the works of Jung and his primary disciples, essentially functioning as an expanded version of Jung’s brief musings on Tibetan Buddhism. Preece draws primarily from Jung’s conception of the mandala as an archetype of the Self that tends towards wholeness, following the psychologist’s line of thought so far as to conclude that, “the mandala, therefore, is the extraordinary power of homeostasis within each of us. It enables us to remain sane and relatively healthy in the most intolerable circumstances.”⁷⁰ While this is a beautiful sentiment, it has no grounding in Tibetan Buddhism and is connected to the tradition solely by way of Jung. This is a tenuous relationship at best, yet it still disguises that Preece is not really talking about Buddhist mandalas, but about Jungian ones. By

^e Tucci claims that, “I have not dwelt too much on details...since we are dealing with archetypes which are innate in the soul of Man.” (Tucci, 1961, vii) He later elaborates, “[mandalas] occur through some mysterious intrinsic necessity of the human spirit,” (Tucci, 1961, 37) and, “for this reason Buddhism never speaks of the ‘repression’ but of the ‘transfiguration’ of passions, since they are, in fact, essential elements of our psyche.” (Tucci, 1961, 53)

conflating these two forms, Preece writes the Tibetan voice off as relatively insignificant in light of Jung's conclusions.

Referring to Jung's interpretation of the mandala as "one of his gifts to the West," Preece clearly cannot see the inherently problematic nature of his reliance on Jung's voice at the expense of Tibetan ones. This is Orientalism and fallacious formalist interpretation at their finest: it ignores the actual tradition of which the author claims to speak and works with a distorted simulacrum instead, prioritizing the interpretive voice of the European scholar over that of the originators of the practice.

Romeo Shrestha's *Celestial Gallery* (2009) serves as another example of the extremes to which the Jungian perspective has developed and is one of the most overtly misleading manifestations among popular depictions of mandalas. Although Jung is not ever explicitly mentioned in this work, his influence could hardly be more apparent than in phrases such as, "as we gaze upon these extraordinary paintings, we are transported into the innermost reaches of the psyche—a place in which anything is possible,"⁷¹ and "[Buddhist deities and bodhisattvas] are not gods remote from our experience, but reflections of different states of awareness."⁷² Not only does *Celestial Gallery* use Jungian psychologism to universalize mandalas, as in the Argüelles' text, but it takes the process one step further by applying these conclusions to exclusively Tibetan mandalas. The result is a series of one-sided statements about mandalas in the specifically Tibetan context that, in actuality, are only loosely grounded in Tibetan Buddhism and have roots in a number of other cultures as well.^f The authors never actively address this methodological point, thus giving the impression that they are presenting an authentic view of Tibetan mandalas when they clearly are not.

When modern scholars of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture depict mandalas as "transports to the innermost reaches of the psyche" in which "the Buddhas, Taras, and

^f This author's unaddressed universalist stance is particularly apparent in conclusions such as, "...recognized as reflections of unexplored regions of the psyche, [the mind's deepest dimensions] offer complete liberation from our slavery to emotional and material attachments. Like the awakened heart of the Buddhas, the universe selflessly gives of itself," (Baker, 2005, 48) as well as their conclusion that, "fearless awareness [frees] its patrons from the unconscious forces of repression and suppression and boldly [brings] forth energies that, in their pure form, are expressions of enlightenment." (Baker, 2005, 44)

other peaceful divinities represent sublime states of consciousness” and “the wrathful or diabolical forms represent our inner tendencies for resentment, jealousy, greed, and guilt,”⁷³ they ignore that mandalas are considered to be palaces of Buddhas and bodhisattvas in which one enacts a transformation of selfhood from the mundane to the divine. They ignore that mandalas are visually encoded with highly specific doctrines and the rituals in which initiates engage with these symbols. They ignore the necessity of possessing an extensive background not only in meditation, but also in cosmology, physiology, and philosophy. In short, they ignore almost everything that makes Tibetan mandala practice uniquely powerful and not merely another form of one-pointed meditation.

By psychologizing mandala symbolism and transforming practice into phenomenology, European and American scholars following Jung have denied a voice to the Tibetans who enlist mandalas in their practice and elevated themselves to a position of authority and superiority. Consequently, these scholars have made it quite difficult to parse through fact and fiction regarding Tibetan mandalas, having woven together multiple interpretive threads without attempting to keep track of where the Tibetan voice ceases and the Jungian one begins.

¹ Jung, “The Symbolism of the Mandala,” *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 12: Psychology and Alchemy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966) 102.

² Orzech, Sorenson, and Payne, *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Boston: Brill, 2011) 83.

³ *Ibid.* 88.

⁴ Brauen, *The Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992) 11.

⁵ Leidy and Thurman, *Mandala: The Architecture of Enlightenment* (Boston: Shambhala, 1998) 49.

⁶ *Ibid.* 130.

⁷ Bryant, *The Wheel of Time Sand Mandala: Visual Scripture of Tibetan Buddhism* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992) 21.

⁸ McMahan, *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahayana Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2002) 175.

⁹ Foer, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011) 91.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 34.

¹¹ Bryant, *Sand Mandala*, 234.

¹² Brauen, *The Mandala*, 22.

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- ¹³ Gar-je K'am-trul Rinpoche, "A Geography and History of Shambhala," *The Tibet Journal* 3(3), 4.
- ¹⁴ *The Kalacakra Tantra: The Chapter on the Individual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) 44 (II.35).
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.* 51 (II.41)
- ¹⁶ Brauen, *The Mandala*, 61.
- ¹⁷ Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1995) 242-243.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* 241.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Brauen, *The Mandala*, 76.
- ²¹ McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 173.
- ²² Orzech, *Esoteric Buddhism*, 86.
- ²³ Leidy and Thurman, *Mandala*, 130.
- ²⁴ Powers, *Tibetan Buddhism*, 237.
- ²⁵ Ricard, "Appendix B," *Mandala: The Architecture of Enlightenment* (Boston: Shambhala, 1998) 159.
- ²⁶ "The Kalacakra Mandala," *International Kalacakra Network*, 2011, accessed on 21 March 2014 <http://kalachakranet.org/mandala_kalachakra.html>.
- ²⁷ Breyer, *The Cult of Tara: Magic and Ritual in Tibet*, 71, quoted in Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience" *NUMEN* 42 (1995), 245.
- ²⁸ McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 175.
- ²⁹ Brauen, *The Mandala*, 63.
- ³⁰ Orzech, *Esoteric Buddhism*, 86.
- ³¹ Wulff, *The Psychology of Religion*, 421.
- ³² Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Random House, 1961) 188/196.
- ³³ Jung, "Commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower,"" 25.
- ³⁴ Von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976) 140.
- ³⁵ Jung, "Psychological Commentary on the *TBOD*," xlviii.
- ³⁶ Jung, "The Symbolism of the Mandala," 95.
- ³⁷ Von Franz, *His Myth in Our Time*, 152.
- ³⁸ Jung, "The Symbolism of the Mandala," 92-93.
- ³⁹ Jung,, *MDR*, 384.
- ⁴⁰ Jung, "The Symbolism of the Mandala," 92.
- ⁴¹ Jung, "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 9 (Part 1): Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 383-384.
- ⁴² *Ibid.* 356.
- ⁴³ Jung, "The Symbolism of the Mandala," 28.
- ⁴⁴ Jung, "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 358.
- ⁴⁵ Jung, "Commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower,"" 25.
- ⁴⁶ Jung, "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 358.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Leidy and Thurman, *Mandala*, 170.

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- ⁴⁹ Jung, "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 357.
- ⁵⁰ Wulff, *Psychology of Religion*, 431.
- ⁵¹ *The Kalacakra Tantra: The Chapter on Sadhana* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) 71 (II.48).
- ⁵² Jung, "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," 360/358.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* 360-361.
- ⁵⁴ Dalai Lama, "Foreword," *The Wheel of Time Sand Mandala: Visual Scripture of Tibetan Buddhism* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992) xii.
- ⁵⁵ Unno, *Buddhism and Psychotherapy Across Cultures* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006) 134-135.
- ⁵⁶ Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 154.
- ⁵⁷ Argüelles and Argüelles, *Mandala* (Boston: Shambhala, 1972) 44.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 42.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 54.
- ⁶⁰ Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet* (New York: Abrams, 1991).
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.* 12.
- ⁶² Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 144.
- ⁶³ Said, *Orientalism*, 127.
- ⁶⁴ Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala: With Special Reference to the Modern Psychology of the Subconscious* (London: Rider & Company, 1961).
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.* vii.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.* viii.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 22.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 25.
- ⁶⁹ Preece, *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra* (New York: Snow Lion Publications).
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 238.
- ⁷¹ Chopra, "Foreword," *Celestial Gallery* (California: Mandala Publishing, 2005) 4.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*

Chapter Four

Jung's Echo:

Jung's Broader Influence on Modern Tibetan Buddhism

I have neither the desire nor the capacity to stand outside myself and observe my fate in a truly objective way...In the end, man is an event which cannot judge itself, but, for better or worse, is left to the judgment of others.¹

-C.G. Jung

Although Jung may not have intended so, his commentaries on Tibetan Buddhism have earned him an important place in the development of Western contemporary conceptions of the religion. His writings demonstrate a convergence of Romantic Orientalist assertions that take Tibetan Buddhism to be a source of redemption for ailing Westerners and a heavy reliance on psychologism that interiorizes religious practice, which come together to satisfy the interests of both scholarly and popular audiences. Not only were Jung's particular views adopted by many of his contemporaries and successors as his participation in the Eranos lectures demonstrates, but his methodological approach to domesticating Tibetan Buddhism for consumption in Europe and North America has persisted as well. The Jungian voice has not only echoed over the past century up to the present, but the implications of its authority have grown as well, no longer taking Jung at face value but for the meaning that his psychologism enables. Alongside the scientific and humanistic perspectives, Jungian psychologism has contributed to the formation of Tibetan Buddhist Modernism, a domesticated doppelganger of the religion it proposes to be, by introducing a distinctly psychological thread of interpretation to the discourse. Although contemporary specialists in Tibetan Buddhism have largely dismissed Jungian psychologism's applicability to the study of the religion, Jung's impact on scholars producing popular intellectual works has been substantial and thus figures him as a key player in the construction of Tibetan Buddhism in the larger Western imagination. Ultimately, these subsequent psychological commentaries commit a fatal epistemological fallacy in which the line between source material and its interpretation is either ignored or erased, resulting in distortions of Tibetan Buddhist theory and practice that still preponderate today.

The Eranos Conferences: Searching for a Religion After Religion

Beginning in 1933, the Eranos conferences served as a locus where scholars from a wide variety of fields could come together to meditate on the relationship between the East and the West. This multidisciplinary convergence drew scholars from philosophy, theology, ethnology, comparative religious studies, and philosophy. Although Eranos did not strictly adhere to Jungian theory or methodology, Jung was its single most influential member,² widely praised by his fellow participants and requested to contribute to the discussions a remarkable fourteen times.³ Even Frau Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, the primary patron of these conferences, commented that the “fruitful confrontation of East and West” with which the Eranos participants concerned themselves “is above all a psychological one,”⁴ demonstrating Jung’s centrality to these discussions. Aside from Jung, the Eranos conferences featured contributions from a number of other eminent scholars of comparative religion and theology at the time, including Giuseppe Tucci, Henry Corbin, Paul Tillich, Gershom Scholem, Martin Buber, Caroline Rhys Davids, and D.T. Suzuki, as well as Heinrich Zimmer, Joseph Campbell, and Mircea Eliade.⁵

Jung’s impact on Zimmer, Campbell, and Eliade was particularly pronounced, evidencing the creation of Jung as a prophetic figure capable of illuminating Tibetan Buddhism to new audiences. Zimmer, a professor of Indology at Berlin University, was the first person that Olga Fröbe invited to speak at an Eranos conference, taking on the subject of Indian Tantric yoga. In identifying the major influences that factored into his understanding of Indian Tantrism, Zimmer referred primarily to Indian sources, consisting primarily of early translations of yoga tantras and the *Puranas*. However, he also cites Jung’s *Psychology of the Unconscious* as a prominent formative force as well,⁶ grandiosely claiming that, “when I first met [Jung] he struck me as the most accomplished embodiment of the big medicine man, of the perfect wizard, the master of Zen initiations.”⁷ While Zimmer was well aware of the dangers of psychological reductionism,⁸ he was also optimistic about the potential for collaboration between modern psychology and Eastern philology and ethnology, in which he enthusiastically participated.⁹

Impressed as Zimmer was by Jung, it seems that the psychologist’s influence was even greater on Joseph Campbell. Both his central works, *The Hero with a Thousand*

Faces and the Masks of God, focus on the monomyth, a narrative template that is the foundation of all myths and has clear roots in Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes. His praise of psychoanalytic methodology for providing a coherent system by which we can decipher and systematize symbols from cultures separated by time and space is most clearly directed at Jung's cross-cultural explorations, rather than by Freud's endeavors.¹⁰ Although contemporary scholars in the field of comparative religion have largely dismissed Campbell's analyses, his work still remains significant to a large general audience outside of the discipline,¹¹ demonstrating how he has carried Jung's voice further into public consciousness.

Like Zimmer and Campbell, Mircea Eliade was also deeply influenced by Jung and enthralled by his presence, finding that, "After half an hour's conversation I felt I was listening to a Chinese sage or an East European peasant, still rooted in the Earth Mother yet close to Heaven at the same time."¹² The two men found common ground on a great deal of subjects, including mythological symbolism, esotericism, the mystical literature of the East, and its potential applications to remedying the pathologies of modern European and North American civilization. Eliade was so impressed by Jung's work that he even compares his explorations of the unconscious to the discoveries of oceanographers and speleologists, opening up new worlds of existence to human consideration.¹³ Given that Eliade has been treated as the single most influential figure in the academic study of religion over the second half of the twentieth century,¹⁴ his tremendous admiration for the psychologist is key to the expansion of Jung's authoritative voice as a valid lens for studying religion.

Collectively, this group of eminent scholars explicitly sought to develop a common ground between the East and the West, which was often found in the form of Jungian psychology. Through their praise and assimilation of aspects of Jung's ideas and method, they helped to popularize and legitimize the application of analytical psychoanalysis to religion. Furthermore, as a transcultural group of extremely erudite but non-practicing believers that prioritized the study of religion over its practice and dogmatic belief, Eranos' participants worked toward the development of a religion after religion.¹⁵ While these efforts parallel Jung's own attempts to position his analytical psychology as a superior substitute to traditional religions, they also complement the

development of ‘modern Tibetan Buddhism,’ an iteration of what is often called “Buddhist Modernism”¹⁶ that transcends cultural boundaries by romanticizing and psychologizing Tibetan Buddhism, domesticating it for consumption in Europe and North America.

Amplifying the Jungian Voice: The Direct Inheritors of Analytical Psychology

Turning now to scholars who have followed most directly in Jung’s footsteps, we find a considerable expansion of his authority and repurposing of Jungian psychologism toward new ends. For our present analysis, we will concern ourselves primarily not with the specific points of correspondence between analytical psychology and Tibetan Buddhism that authors draw from their position at the intersection of the two fields, but with the larger implications of each work. As publications for popular audiences, the following examples are quite instructive of the place that Tibetan Buddhism currently holds in the Western imagination following Jung. While we could examine a number of other works that consider the relationship between these two thought systems,^a the three present examples closely follow Jung’s technique of conflating Tibetan Buddhism and analytical psychology, thereby erasing the idiosyncrasies of both systems, while simultaneously prioritizing their ‘true’ esoteric interpretation over the literal meaning of the Tibetan texts. Although Jung was not the originator of this analytical technique of playing upon both sameness and difference, he was the first to assimilate that particular rhetoric into a unified psychological framework for evaluating Tibetan Buddhism and thus established a referent methodology that future scholars could conveniently adopt.

Additionally, each of these examples also draws a unique conclusion regarding the significance of the Jungian approach, demonstrating the multiple ways in which Jung’s voice has been repurposed without any serious consideration of the limitations on such claims. They reveal how Jung has not been read at face value, but for the meaning that his methods and interpretations have enabled, encouraging an amplification of Jung’s

^a For example, see H. Aronson’s *Buddhist Practice on Western Ground*, M. Unno’s *Buddhism and Psychotherapy Across Cultures*, and J.M. Spiegelman’s *Buddhism and Jungian Psychology*.

authoritative voice. Ultimately, the Jungian approach helped to lay the groundwork for the development of the psychological dimension of Modern Tibetan Buddhism.

We shall begin with Radmila Moacanin's *The Essence of Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism: Western and Eastern Paths to the Heart*,¹⁷ which Luis Gomez has already briefly considered in his impressive excavation of Jung's relationship to the Indian East.¹⁸ Although Moacanin warns her readers of the potential dangers of making cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary comparisons between Tibetan Buddhism and analytical psychology,¹⁹ she nevertheless proceeds to adopt Jung's technique of claiming access to Tibetan Buddhism's esoteric meaning by psychologizing its beliefs and practices. Her claim that, "despite its intricate complexity and esoteric nature, Tibetan Buddhism is essentially a psychological and ethical system,"²⁰ enables her to analogize the enlightened mind to the collective unconscious²¹ and Buddhist deities to archetypes,²² as well as liken the goal of enlightenment to the process of individuation.²³

Moacanin's analysis overly simplifies Tibetan Buddhism by stripping it of its nuances and fitting it into the schemas of analytical psychology. However, as Gomez has already pointed out, her stance goes further than Jung and "advocates a particular interpretation of Jung as a normative standard for Buddhist orthodoxy and praxis."²⁴ She thus authorizes Jung's statements on the religion, viewing his voice not as one particular way of making "the magnificent world of ideas [of Tibetan Buddhism]...a little more intelligible to the Western mind,"²⁵ but as the definitive one.

In his *Dreams of Power: Tibetan Buddhism and the Western Imagination*,²⁶ Peter Bishop furthers this expansion of Jung's authority by reversing the agency of attempts to fit Tibetan Buddhism into the framework of analytical psychology. Interestingly, Bishop, who identifies himself as a postcolonial theorist,²⁷ prefaces his work with concerns regarding cultural imperialism and the dubious possibility of drawing comparisons between Tibetan Buddhism and Jungian psychology,²⁸ concluding that his work is "a study of the Western imagination as revealed in the encounter with an Eastern spiritual system."²⁹ However, similar to Moacanin's qualifying statements, Bishop's claims are quickly superseded by his actual analysis.

Aside from his claims that Tibetan Buddhism describes psychological reality³⁰ and is concerned with establishing psychic order and integration,³¹ the primary issue at

hand in Bishop's text is his assertion of the relationship between the two thought systems. Whereas Jung clearly uses Tibetan Buddhism instrumentally as a baseline against which he can measure analytical psychology, Bishop blurs the direction of agency of this relationship in his claim that, "Buddhism has reached for depth psychology in its search for an effective Western language to use in translation and in an attempt to validate itself in the Western imagination."³² In this unreliable interpretation, reductionist psychologism is no longer an act of cognitive dominance or validation of analytical psychology, but an attempt of the Tibetan tradition to remain relevant in the modern world. Accordingly, Bishop treats analogies between Tibetan Buddhism and analytical psychology as a move towards modernization instigated by Tibetans rather than as a Western scholarly tactic for instrumentalizing the religion as such comparisons ultimately are. In doing so, he reverses the agency behind psychologizing Tibetan Buddhism, attempting to mask the dominating behavior of Jung and those that follow his methods of psychologism. Jung's authority is thus expanded even further than Moacanin's analysis allowed, transforming analytical psychology not only into a normative interpretive method for Westerners interested in learning more about Tibetan Buddhism, but as the definitive lens for Tibetans wishing to make themselves understood as well.

Robert Preece continues to expand Jung's authority on Tibetan Buddhism by enlisting it in the larger project of secularizing the religion for scholarly study and popular consumption. In his *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra*³³ (2006), the most recent of the texts under consideration, Preece adopts Bishop's perspective of psychologism as a viable mechanism for modernizing Tibetan Buddhism because it provides useful terminology for Westerners and Tibetans to meet on common discursive grounds.

As a trained Jungian psychoanalyst and a veteran of Tibetan Buddhist retreats,³⁴ we might expect Preece to demonstrate greater sensitivity to respectfully representing both thought systems. Indeed, he admirably includes brief considerations of Tibetan physiology, cosmology, and their union in Tantric practice through their connection in the micro-macrocosmic complex.³⁵ Unfortunately, his analysis is regrettably shallow and ultimately falls back on the practice of claiming access to the esoteric meaning of these concepts. Just like Jung, he reduces them to symbolic metaphors, allowing for far greater interpretive liberties.³⁶ His text primarily emphasizes opportunities to bring the lessons of

Tibetan Buddhism into daily life, transforming our day-to-day existence into a form of “living alchemy” in which we manipulate symbols to bring about personal transformations.³⁷ This particular interpretation represents a domestication of Tantrism that opens the practice not only to Buddhist laypeople, but to anyone at all interested in coping with fear, anger, frustration, and feelings of inadequacy.³⁸

The text’s interest in domesticating Tibetan Buddhism is highlighted by Preece’s inclusion of a foreword by Stephen Batchelor,³⁹ a well-known scholar and author on Buddhism for general audiences in his own right. Batchelor is best known for his vision of “Buddhism without beliefs”⁴⁰ that strips the religion of its overtly theistic and cosmological elements for atheistic Americans and Europeans. The presence of his voice in Preece’s work demonstrates the clear intent of the text to use psychologism to domesticate the religion for Westerners by rendering it in the terms of modern psychology. As with Preece, Batchelor’s primary concern is integrating Tibetan Tantric theory into daily life, which might help readers channel their negative and antisocial impulses into “creative expression, loving relationships, and wisely engaged forms of life.”⁴¹ Batchelor uses this stance to justify stripping Tibetan Buddhism of its ritual and devotional aspects, performing a wholesale reduction and transformation of the religion into an easily digestible philosophy for European and American audiences.

Following Jung’s authorial decision to sever ideas from their particular context by transforming them into psychic data, Moacanin, Bishop, and Preece all thereby contribute to the formation of a ‘Tibetan Buddhism’ that is not really Tibetan Buddhism at all. Their psychological interpretations reflect a concern to distill the religion’s supposed belief system into a form that is more easily assimilated into (fundamentally Westerner) modern lifestyles and scholarly practices for analyzing religion. While Jung undoubtedly set the stage for these applications of psychologism, we cannot place blame for the consequent distortions of Tibetan Buddhism entirely on his shoulders. Instead, we must consider the ways in which his distinctly psychological perspective enabled the larger intellectual project of Tibetan Buddhist Modernism.

Modern Tibetan Buddhist Psychology: The Creation of a Domesticated Doppelganger

Although the desire to domesticate Tibetan Buddhism is assuredly present in Jung's commentaries as well, Preece and Batchelor adopt his techniques of romanticizing and psychologizing their object of study toward a different end. While Jung's psychologism of Tibetan Buddhism is often a method of promotion for analytical psychology,⁴² subsequent interpreters have enlisted psychologism in the broader construction of Tibetan Buddhist Modernism, which secularizes the religion and directs it toward humanistic ends while simultaneously maintaining that it is an 'authentic' form of the religion. While many of the following methodological approaches have now been criticized and abandoned within formal academic inquiry on Tibetan Buddhism, their prominence in the early development of Tibetan Buddhist Studies has enabled them to perpetuate among non-specialists. Even though the field has now advanced to more complex and thoughtful forms of analysis, Jungian psychologism still echoes in the broader Western discourse on Tibetan Buddhism.

Our present analysis does not claim that psychologism is the sole methodological tool of scholars investigating Tibetan Buddhism, or even that it is the most dominant interpretive trend. Admittedly, the scientific and humanistic trends have been equally, if not more, prevalent and persuasive.⁴³ Nor does this argument suggest that the early hermeneutical tools of Tibetan Buddhist Studies originated with Jung and that he is solely responsible for their proliferation. Given that the European exploration of Tibetan Buddhism emerged from Indology, Sinology, philology, and archaeology, the field inevitably adopted analytical practices from these various disciplines.

Nevertheless, while Jung was heir to interpretive trends pre-established by other fields, he also elaborated on these practices and introduced a strictly psychological lens to the discourse. As works like those of Moacanin, Bishop, and Preece clearly demonstrate, Jung's particular interpretive technique and its terminology still persist in popular scholarly works on the religion. As such, we cannot deny Jung an important role in the creation and maintenance of Tibetan Buddhism as an object of scholarly study and popular interest. Moreover, due to Jung's insistence that he abides by empirical methodology and his romanticization of Tibetan Buddhism, Jungian psychologism

partially appeases interpreters with more scientific or humanistic aims and therefore serves as somewhat of a locus at which the three dominant strands of Buddhist Modernism can converge.

As a culturally specific form of Buddhism that adherents label as ‘authentic,’ Tibetan Buddhist Modernism is hardly unique, having occurred in every instance in which the religion was transmitted from one place to another. However, attempting to trace the forces that govern the emergence of a distorted double that claims to be ‘authentic’ is an engaging intellectual labor that can help us to parse through the many voices that claim to elucidate Tibetan Buddhism. We should not fall into the belief that sorting out these various voices will unveil Tibetan Buddhism’s ‘true’ form, as that would merely be a recapitulation of the Romantic Orientalist hungering for essences, but an analysis of modern Tibetan Buddhism can, at the very least, help us distinguish some of the ways in which the specific time and place of its transmission to the West renders it unique. In the end, there is no real ‘Buddhism’ separate from its traditions, so understanding the tradition as it has been transmitted to the West is now instrumental to understanding the religion as a whole.

Buddhist Modernism’s construction of a domesticated Tibetan Buddhism for European and American audiences has occurred within the spheres of academic scholarship and popular culture alike. However, these two spheres are far from discrete, having commingled throughout Western engagements with Tibet and continually informing each other on the basis of the confines of time, place, and cultural climate.⁴⁴ While contemporary academic specialists may wish to silence Jung’s voice, its presence in works directed to broader audiences ensures that Jungian psychologism persists.

Although chapter one offered an overview of ‘Buddhism’ and ‘mystic Tibet’ in the Western imagination during the nineteenth century, these constructions and their accompanying interpretive practices were not yet subsumed under a particular academic field at that time. In fact, while the discipline of Religious Studies did not formally exist prior to the 1960s,⁴⁵ the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism to these departments occurred even later. Although Brian Houghton Hodgson made a tremendous quantity of Sanskrit texts on Buddhism available to Europeans in 1837,⁴⁶ it was really only following the Tibetan diaspora in 1959 that the study of Tibetan Buddhism as a unique phenomenon

received acceptance as a valid field of inquiry.⁴⁷ Following the diaspora, however, there was tremendous interest in the religion itself, rather than just as a derivation of Indian or Chinese Buddhism, and study of Tibetan Buddhism flourished with the translation of vast archives of Tibetan texts between the 1960's and 1980's.⁴⁸ As these newly unearthed texts passed into the hands of academics, most of who were in America,⁴⁹ it was common for them to adopt psychological interpretations that had been popularized by Jung.

Although many of the following methodological approaches have now been criticized and abandoned within formal academic inquiry on Tibetan Buddhism, their prominence in the early development of Tibetan Buddhist Studies has enabled them to perpetuate among non-specialists. Even though the field has now advanced to more complex and thoughtful forms of analysis, Jungian psychologism still echoes in the broader Western discourse on Tibetan Buddhism.

According to Donald Lopez's analysis, the newly emergent field of Tibetan Buddhist Studies relied on psychologizing the foreign religion for a number of reasons. To begin with, focusing on the inner experience of Tibetan Buddhism enabled scholars to carve out a niche within the field of Religious Studies, which was actively seeking to add non-Christian religions to its curricula. By juxtaposing the religion's systematic meditations and penetrating philosophies against Christianity's greater emphasis on doctrine and belief, scholars of Tibetan Buddhism were able to justify their existence and necessary inclusion in departments of Religious Studies.⁵⁰

Furthermore, psychologism was easier than alternative hermeneutical methods. As many budding Buddhologists, particularly those studying under Edward Conze and Richard Robinson, came across tremendously arcane accounts of doctrines, institutions, and rituals, they directed their attention toward the presumed source of these other elements: meditative experience.⁵¹ Considering Tibetan Buddhism from the phenomenological standpoint rather than from the doctrinal, institutional, or ritual side of things seemed to get to the heart of the religion far more easily than examining its particular cultural instantiations, making academic analysis both easier and presumably more penetrating.

Psychologizing Tibetan Buddhism thus also served as a tool for scholars to claim that their object of inquiry is a 'pure' form of Buddhism, one that is separated from

complicating cultural influences. This assumption, which is a direct consequence of the Romantic Orientalists' quest for 'authentic' Buddhism, enabled the alluring idea that Buddhism had a "transhistorical and self-identical essence that had benevolently descended on various cultures over the course of history, its instantiations, however, always imperfect."⁵² Playing directly into this vision, psychologism satisfies the common scholarly desire to identify 'essences,' which greatly simplifies exploration of a complex historical phenomenon and more easily subjects it to classification.

Approaching Tibetan Buddhist teachings and practice psychologically in terms of mental constructs rather than as foreign cultural artifacts also makes them more accessible to popular audiences. Configuring Tibetan Buddhism as a cache of psychic data innate to each of us allows anyone to find solace in Tibetan Buddhist teachings. Paired with such psychologism, romanticization of Tibetan Buddhism is not only a valorization of the practices of another culture, but of the potential of our own minds. Tibetan Buddhism consequently becomes a path to inner freedom amidst our suffering at the hands of modern Western civilization.⁵³ Scholars played on the same Romantic Orientalist trope of the evils of materialism as Jung in order to appeal to popular audiences hoping to alleviate their own day-to-day struggles. This recapitulation of Romanticism created both a public interest in the religion and a market for publications on the topic, thus further establishing Tibetan Buddhist Studies as a legitimate discipline.⁵⁴ In this way, scholarly and popular interests reciprocally supported each other, the former providing new and alluring information about the religion that the latter then consumed, thereby encouraging the production of even more scholarly knowledge. Psychologism was thus a node around which Tibetan Buddhism was able to sustain itself on cultural grounds already saturated with various sources of proclaimed Eastern wisdom.

By psychologizing and romanticizing Tibetan Buddhism, methodological strategies first united in the study of Tibetan Buddhism by Jung, scholars and general audiences over the past half a decade have thereby contributed to the creation of a psychologized doppelganger within the broader construction of Modern Tibetan Buddhism. However, once psychologism was employed, it was no longer perpetuated solely by Westerners, but also implicated the very Tibetans about whom it claims to

speak. As Tibetans have made their way West following the diaspora, they have since come into contact with their own double and have often integrated into it seamlessly.⁵⁵ Influential lamas such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself have now joined in the development and propagation of Modern Tibetan Buddhism as well, evidenced by the tremendous number of popular works on the religion published under his name.⁵⁶

Jefferey Paine views this encounter as the

...greatest revolution in the history of the religion”⁵⁷ and thus: “In exile Tibetan Buddhism thus initiated its own novel experiment of a religion voluntarily surrendering its power to prescribe conduct and to dictate a cosmology of existence. It had little choice, for if it did not relocate at least partially to America and Europe, it would likely perish.”⁵⁸

Phrased as such, the assimilation of Tibetans into their Western mirage is not primarily an act of recognizing their own beliefs and practices properly rendered in new terms, but an act of necessity that allows Tibetans to adopt a somewhat distorted identity, rather than risking the loss of a unique identity altogether.

Tibetan teachers that heavily relied on psychological terminology, such as the late lamas Thubten Yeshe⁵⁹ and Chögyam Trungpa,⁶⁰ found a way to meet European and American practitioners on the grounds on which they are most comfortable.^b In this view, the adoption of the terms of analytical psychology provides Tibetan lamas the opportunity to help their audiences experience the psychological effects of the religion without elements that are objectionable to their Western sensibilities. These teachers employed techniques to keep their religion relevant at a time when it has been cast out from its homeland, consequently actualizing Bishop’s claim that Tibetan Buddhism has reached out to modern psychology for legitimacy in the modern world. While this statement would not likely have come true had scholars of Tibetan Buddhism refrained from integrating Jung’s methodology into their study, their reliance on psychologism has

^b Lama Yeshe’s domestication of Buddhism has been particularly popular and demonstrates a near universal appeal, evidenced through his claims that, “Buddhism isn’t some fanatical religious trip. It’s a philosophical way of living life. And also, to study Buddhism you don’t need to believe in something extreme. It’s a matter of investigating, examining, and experimenting on yourself.” (Yeshe and Zopa Rinpoche, 2009, 23)

helped make Bishop's assertion into a reality. In a sense then, the Tibetan voice and Jung's voice have now become one.

Against Interpretation: Concluding a Traditional Critique of Jung

Given that Jung's methodology for working with Tibetan Buddhism caused him to produce a misrepresentative simulacrum of the religion of which he claimed to speak, it is unsurprising that intellectuals who adopted his penchant for psychologism have produced a similarly perverted form of the religion. Their psychologized and redemptive Tibetan Buddhism falls prey to the same epistemological fallacy of formalist interpretation identified by Sontag that blurs the line between the religion as it is practiced in Tibet and its contemporary interpretations. Having seen the intellectually damaging consequences of echoing Jung's psychologizing voice, we might follow this fallacy to its logical conclusion that all interpretations are doomed to failure and decide to eliminate the psychological perspective on Tibetan Buddhism entirely. Indeed, there are a number of authors who have advocated this stance, claiming that Jungian psychologism desecrates the religion it proposes to explain. Such criticism has been incredible harsh, including assertions that, "one of the most insidious and destructive illusions is the belief that depth-psychology...has the slightest connection with spiritual life, which these teachings persistently falsify by confusing inferior elements [psychic] with superior [spiritual]." ⁶¹ While this critique may ring true, we should not take that as a call to outright dismiss psychological interpretations of religious and spiritual phenomena, but rather to reconsider them.

Luis Gomez can help us reevaluate such claims without moving to the opposite pole of total acceptance of psychological accounts of Tibetan Buddhism. He helpfully points out three different ways in which we encounter foreign cultures:

- (1) repeating, albeit respectfully, a tradition
- (2) viewing it critically and creatively
- (3) appropriating an 'alien' culture through a construct from one's own culture. ⁶²

Gomez confesses that the line between these three types of engagement is far less apparent than his discrete systematization suggests and adopting a stance that is simultaneously respectful and insightful can be quite difficult. The perplexities that

accompany encounters with a foreign Other have consequently led many interpreters to the extremes of complete acceptance of Jungian psychologism and outright rejection. While Moacanin, Bishop, and Preece demonstrate a commendable degree of self-awareness in their attempts to create an intermediate space by recognizing the difficulties inherent to such encounters, they all ultimately succumb to the pitfalls that they had pointed out.

I suggest that we reconsider interpretive applications of psychologism to Tibetan Buddhism by returning to the zeitgeist in which Jung wrote and by revisiting the words of the psychologist himself. Although he has proven an easy target for our earlier critique of him as an Orientalist that sacrifices the voice of his Tibetan objects of inquiry to the larger task of legitimizing analytical psychology, Jung's problematic commentaries also provide us with the tools to reconsider the significance of his voice. This reappraisal will allow us to reorient psychologism of Tibetan Buddhism in a way that does not unfairly skew perceptions of the religion and that might actually serve to teach us something about our own positionality as Westerners. As we look back on our previous criticism of Jung and now look ahead in an attempt to reframe both Jung and traditional critiques of him, we would do well to abide by the guiding words of Pierre Bourdieu:

Those who nowadays set themselves up as judges and distribute praise and blame among the sociologists and ethnologists of the colonial past would be better occupied in trying to understand what it was that prevented the most lucid and best intentioned of those that they condemn from understanding things which are now self-evident for even the least lucid and sometimes the least well-intentioned observers: in what is unthinkable at a given time, there is not only everything that cannot be thought for lack of ethical or political dispositions which tend to bring it into consideration, but also everything which cannot be thought for lack of instruments of thought such as problematics, concepts, methods, and techniques.⁶³

¹ Jung, *MDR*, 113.

² Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 102.

³ Gomez, "Jung and the Indian East," 206.

⁴ Wehr, *Jung: A Biography* (Boston: Shambhala, 2001) 263.

⁵ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 102.

⁶ Linda, *Zimmer and Coomaraswamy*, 131, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 103.

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- ⁷ Zimmer, "The Impress of Dr. Jung on My Profession," *Heinrich Zimmer: Coming into His Own* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 45.
- ⁸ Nette, *An Epitaph for Heinrich Zimmer*, 27, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 105.
- ⁹ Chapple, *Heinrich Zimmer and Henry R. Zimmer*, 71-72, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 103.
- ¹⁰ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 110.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* 112.
- ¹² Eliade, *Ordeal by Labyrinth*, 162, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 115.
- ¹³ Eliade, *Encounters at Ascona*, xviii-xix, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 116
- ¹⁴ Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 112.
- ¹⁵ Wasserstrom, *Religion after Religion*, 248, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 103.
- ¹⁶ King, "Critique, Complicity, and Reform: The Invention of Buddhism and Mongolia in Ikh Khüree (Urga), 1900-1937," Baltimore, Maryland. 23 November 2013. Keynote speech at *AAR 2013: Sacred Cities: Urban Buddhism in Modernizing Asia*, 3.
- ¹⁷ Moacanin, *The Essence of Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism: Western and Eastern Paths to the Heart* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1986).
- ¹⁸ Gomez, "Jung and the Indian East," 224-226.
- ¹⁹ Moacanin, *Jung and Tibetan Buddhism*, 77.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.* xii.
- ²¹ *Ibid.* 89.
- ²² *Ibid.* 98.
- ²³ *Ibid.* 79.
- ²⁴ Gomez, "Jung and the Indian East," 225.
- ²⁵ Jung, "Psychological Commentary on the *TBOD*," xxxvi.
- ²⁶ Bishop, *Dreams of Power: Tibetan Buddhism and the Western Imagination* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993).
- ²⁷ Bishop, "Associate Professor Peter Bishop: Qualifications." University of South Australia. Accessed on 11 April 2014. <<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/staff/homepage.asp?Name=peter.bishop>>.
- ²⁸ Bishop, *Dreams of Power*, 9.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.* 18.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.* 61.
- ³¹ *Ibid.* 127.
- ³² *Ibid.* 133.
- ³³ Preece, *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2006).
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* 2.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* 90/243.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.* 244.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.* 261.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.* 257.
- ³⁹ Batchelor, "Foreword," *The Psychology of Buddhist Tantra* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2006) xi-xii.

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- ⁴⁰ Batchelor, *Buddhism Without Beliefs: A Contemporary Guide to Awakening* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1997).
- ⁴¹ Batchelor, "Foreword," xi.
- ⁴² Schuon, "The Psychological Imposture," *Tomorrow* 14(2) (1966), 98.
- ⁴³ Cuevas, *Hidden History*, 7.
- ⁴⁴ Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 156.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 160.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 158.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 157.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 165.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 163.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 180.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.* 163.
- ⁵² *Ibid.* 7.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.* 202.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 175-177.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 200.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 186.
- ⁵⁷ Paine, *Re-Enchantment: Tibetan Buddhism Comes to the West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004) 16.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 15.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 67.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 108.
- ⁶¹ Schuon, *No Activity Without Truth*, 37 quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 316.
- ⁶² Gomez, "Jung and the Indian East," 230.
- ⁶³ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 5 quoted in Lopez, "Introduction," 10-11.

Chapter Five

Pursuing the Eastern Other: Jung's Attempts to Decipher Human Personality

At last I was where I had longed to be: in a non-European country where no European language was spoken and no Christian conceptions prevailed, where a different race lived and a different historical tradition and philosophy had set its stamp upon the face of the crowd. I had often wished to be able for once to see the European from outside, his image reflected back at him by an altogether foreign milieu¹.

C.G. Jung

Jung's resonance in contemporary appraisals of Tibetan Buddhism is most problematic in its advocacy for Jungian psychologism without qualification. Even when scholars warn of drawing cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary comparisons or attempt to situate Jung within a particular network of power relations, they often still fall into the trap of treating analytical psychology as a totalizing system. This stance leaves their interpretations one-sided and open to the invasion of unrestrained psychologism that obscures the Romantic Orientalist nature of their analyses. On the converse side of such approaches to Jung are those who immediately write him off as an Orientalist. However, given the zeitgeist in which Jung was writing and his professional agenda to establish and promote analytical psychology, it would have been impossible for him to express himself in any way other than as a cultural imperialist or an Orientalist. This is not an apology for Jung's treatment of Tibetan Buddhism or an attempt to fully exculpate him, but is intended to draw attention back to the forces that defined his context and informed his rhetoric so that we can reevaluate traditional critiques of his work.

Between the two extremes of either wholly accepting or absolutely dismissing Jungian psychologism there lies a middle way that we can uncover by performing an archaeology of his life and work, thereby revealing that Jung's journeys East were rooted in demands that emerged equally from his internal and external worlds. Dissatisfied with Western religious, philosophical, and scientific discourses, Jung sought out an Archimedean point outside of his European consciousness that could provide new modes of thought for making sense of the inner turmoil between his ego personality ("No. 1")

and its shadow side (“No. 2”). Furthermore, as Jung’s own field of psychiatry developed in Europe in the late nineteenth century, it became increasingly committed to positivistic science and empiricism for legitimacy. In order to establish the universal applicability of analytical psychology, Jung was consequently required to abide by these same methods to validate his work. He required empirical data from non-Western society to demonstrate that the archetypes are not just the result of socialization to a particular culture, but are innate to all of humankind. Taken together, these dual threads of inner curiosity and external professional ambition drove Jung East, hoping to find a remedy to the one-sidedness of his own personality and Western civilization as a whole. As he did so, Jung became implicated in the Orientalist discourse common to his time, as well as in the European scholarly trend of prioritizing inner experience in the study of religion. Jung’s place in this network of power relations therefore ensured his adoption of interpretive strategies that implicitly dominate his objects of study.

Many of the following accounts have been drawn from Jung’s autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections (MDR)*, which was dictated to his secretary, Aniela Jaffe, in the psychologist’s later years. As Ellenberger has pointed out in his comprehensive history of psychoanalysis, *MDR* leaves much to be desired insofar as it leaves wide gaps in Jung’s personal history and contradicts the accounts of many of Jung’s colleagues.² Nevertheless, the text is absolutely essential to gain a sense of how Jung viewed himself and how he framed his metapsychological project. *MDR* is filled with Jung’s self-analysis throughout his life, providing invaluable insight into the father of analytical psychology. While this inward focus was elaborated at the expense of cataloguing many of Jung’s external dealings, any discussion of his influences and encounters that appear in the following pages have been corroborated by outside sources to back up Jung’s own assertions.

Mapping the Architecture: Determining Jung’s Discursive Positionality

If “power is everywhere as the moving substrate of force relations, which constantly engenders stages of power,”³ as Foucault declares, making these relations visible will allow for an informed decision regarding how to treat Jungian psychological interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism. Although shedding light on the discursive

architecture in which Jung produced his commentaries will not render the relations of power transparent or allow us to objectively view Jung's stance, it can at the very least help us to change our perspective and reenvision the proper place of his commentaries within broader Western scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism.

As Eric Meyer has noted in his efforts to mitigate the intellectual damage that Romantic Orientalist accounts enact on their source material,

...the individual can only exert agency as a subject from within the cultural narratives that frame him or her...but by strategically utilizing the transformative capacity that is written into the cultural narratives... critical practice might open a space for agency in the cultural field that mobilizes subject-formation towards more positive social ends.⁴

In short, if we become aware of the ideological matrix, i.e. the discourse, in which we exist, it is possible to turn power back upon itself, allowing us to produce an interpretation less restrained by the dominant narrative of the time. If discourse necessarily shapes how we think and express ourselves, awareness of the narratives in which we are embedded opens up a space that can mediate between what we want to say and how the discursive forms available to us require us to articulate those sentiments.

In Jung we discover a psychologist who recognizes his existence within a particular culture at a particular period in history, but who remains unable to make explicit the implications of his positionality. In his *Commentary on The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, Jung notes that his statements are a “product of a certain personality living at a certain time and in a certain place...to that extent it is chiefly subjective.”⁵ However, this statement reveals nothing more than an awareness of subjectivism in the first place and, aside from his ambivalent musings on empirical science and speculations on the spiritually damaging nature of modern civilization, Jung drew few specific conclusions regarding the impact that his zeitgeist had on his writings.

The closest that we get to an overall appraisal of Jung's own positionality can be found in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. In the personal writings of his advanced old age, Jung recounts a vision that he had while recovering from a heart attack in which he imagines himself moving throughout the cosmos and coming upon a floating temple. He explains,

There I would at last understand-this too was a certainty-what historical nexus I or my life fitted into...I had the feeling that I was a historical fragment, an excerpt for which the preceding and succeeding text was missing. My life seemed to have been snipped out of a long chain of events, and many questions had remained unanswered.⁶

Unfortunately, these questions would remain unanswered as he awoke from his vision before entering the temple. Provided the apparent impossibility of ever coming to full awareness of our own subjectivity within a network of power relations, perhaps it is fitting that Jung believed he could only attain such knowledge through mystical experience, and it eludes him even then.

As we look back on Jung's corpus we find it easy to criticize the shortcomings of his scholarship because we are granted the gift of retrospection. Yet just as Jung struggled to make sense of his own subjectivity, we cannot fully grasp the discursive forces that dictate his or our own existences.

A Man Divided Against Himself: Jung's Contemplations on Internal Otherness

Jung's fascination with the human mind began and, as far as he was concerned, ended with himself. Much of his personal writings are concerned with discovering and making sense of the secret Other that lay within his own mind. In Jung's view, the shadow is not merely an academic theory but the key to human life and development as a whole. Jung constantly wrestled with the shadow side of human existence, catching inklings of it as a youth that continued to manifest throughout his life and career. He found the shadow not only through his self-reflexive tendencies, but evident in the cultural institutions in which he was enmeshed as well. Jung's desire for self-understanding fueled his religious and intellectual hungers, which constitute the two primary streams that carried Jung through his exploration of the human personality. To consider Jung's work without careful examination of these two intersecting threads is to take him for something that he did not intend to be, that is, a detached empirical psychologist.

Jung's explicit interest in Tibetan Buddhism as a treasure trove of ideas that might help Westerners broaden their experience of life⁷ is ultimately part of his larger life's

work, which he identified as the “one idea and one goal” that “permeated and held together” his entire life and works: “to penetrate into the secret of the personality.”⁸ However, as Jung himself was painfully aware, modern Western society is deeply conflicted about the meaning of individual personality and its asymmetrical pursuit of rationality actively impedes individuation and realization of the Self. In *The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man*,⁹ Jung contemplates the spiritual ennui of European moderns, which he views as a derivation of a general dearth of meaning and religious outlook.¹⁰ According to Jung, modern humans stand at the edge of the world, believing that they have outgrown tradition and have thus discarded history, only looking forward into the abyss of the future. They placed all their hopes in the advances of science and technology, replacing metaphysical speculations with the ideals of material security, general welfare, and humaneness.¹¹ Yet, as the atrocities of World War I demonstrated, these ideals are far from secure, leaving moderns both spiritually and materially impoverished. Rather than standing at the precipice of the teleological advancement of history, modern humans are actually “the disappointment of the hopes and expectations of the ages.”¹²

Beset with both the failure of material circumstances to meet their lofty expectations, as well as the denial of their inner, spiritual natures, European moderns are thus caught in a seemingly irresolvable tension. They have dammed up the unconscious world within them, preventing it from expressing itself in the world. As the pressure continues to build, “the current flows backward to its source; the inner man wants something which the visible man does not want, and we are at war with ourselves.”¹³ For Jung, this internal war was not merely a theoretical proposition, but a battle that waged within many of his patients, as well as within himself. It is ultimately this psychological turmoil that acted as the impetus behind much of his life’s work, constantly driving him onwards to make sense of how to reconcile his own divided personality.

In his autobiography, Jung expresses that, throughout his entire life, he experienced an internal and seemingly irresolvable tension of personalities within himself. Although he was not able to fully articulate this internal turmoil until his later years,¹⁴ Jung identified two aspects of himself that were diametrically opposed, which he came to label as his No. 1 and his No. 2. No. 1 was associated with the outward

personality that he would manifest in daily life, that of an aspiring scientist and empiricist.¹⁵ He was young, ambitious, and gifted, yet simultaneously plagued with a constant sense of self-doubt at his own disagreeableness and limitations.¹⁶ Consequently, No. 1 would often fall into depression in recognition of something more expansive lurking behind the surface, Jung's No. 2.

Jung identified his No. 2 as an old man with a strong affinity for the eighteenth century.¹⁷ He represented Jung's spiritual side, the aspect that sought meaning rather than facts. As his truly inner self, No. 2 was everything in one, a total vision of life that could never be fully defined but was always present.¹⁸ Whereas No. 1 regarded his counterpart with a sense of melancholy and dread, No. 2 viewed Jung's surface personality as a difficult and thankless moral task, a realm of darkness and confusion with no discernable purpose.¹⁹

Having arrived at a vague, yet nevertheless definite, sense of the inner contradiction of his conscious No. 1 and shadowy No. 2 as a young child, Jung sought to make sense of this conflict by means of the ideas most readily available to him, those of Christianity. Raised by a Protestant chaplain with minimal intellectual curiosity, Jung's upbringing was undoubtedly skewed towards Western religious inquiry.²⁰ Yet despite his deep immersion in the beliefs and practices of Christianity as a youth, Jung's relationship with the religion was highly ambivalent, caught between a deep sense of personal communion with the divine and a strong distaste for the institutional apparatus designed to guide these feelings. One of his earliest memories is that of a visceral antipathy toward Christianity's figure of Jesus, who Jung viewed as problematically ethereal, never fully acceptable, and, at his most extreme, a god of death.²¹

As he approached Christian teachings that he was supposed to accept as beautiful and good, Jung was plagued with the sense that something was missing, a secret to which he was not privy. He judged the religion as a solemn masquerade that presented concepts as being clear that, for Jung, were far from simple. Christianity refused to recognize its own shadow, a denial that both baffled and deeply frustrated Jung. He was particularly troubled with the notion of the will of God. While the church demanded him to unquestioningly follow the will of God, Jung could not possibly discern what that truly meant. By his estimation, the Church merely put their religious doctrines in the place of

God's will in order to spare people the trouble of deciphering it for themselves. By denying the need for actual discernment, Christianity disguised the unquestionable nature of its dogma by suggesting that adherents simply have faith. God's will, meanwhile, remained in the Church's institutional shadow. Ever curious, Jung could not accept this sleight of hand and became increasingly skeptical of the religion that surrounded him. Christianity, the contemporary incarnation of a traditionally Western religion, simply did not meet Jung's needs for self-discovery, driving him to find satisfaction elsewhere.

This aversion toward orthodoxy drove Jung to develop a highly personal sense of God by which he would decipher the secrets of the divine himself. Until his final years, Jung was highly reserved about displaying his personal thoughts on God in his public writings. He recognized that any of his statements regarding God would be just that, his own, and would consequently be subjectively influenced by the powerful feelings and emotions that governed his inner world. As Aniela Jaffe points out in her introduction to Jung's autobiography, "when Jung speaks of his religious experiences in this book he is assuming that his readers are willing to enter into his point of view."²² Jung believed that, in the most decisive matters of his life, he was no longer among men but was alone with God. Since he viewed himself as an empiricist, "deal[ing] with [religion] from a purely empirical point of view, that is, I restrict myself to the observation of phenomena and I eschew any metaphysical or philosophical considerations,"²³ Jung sought to restrict his claims to those that could be demonstrated and supported by evidence. Yet despite the fact that his academic writings do not feature extended meditations on God, Jung's naturally contemplative nature is never fully absent from his professional endeavors.

Due to the fact that orthodox Christianity as he experienced it in church scarcely advanced Jung's understanding of how to develop a personal relationship with God, he delved into the theological works that filled his father's library. But even after devouring volume after volume, Jung came away none the wiser.²⁴ He found that, like the Church, Christian theologians problematically prioritized belief, forcing Jung to conclude that the arch sin of faith was that it obstructed actual experience.²⁵ For Jung, neither belief nor logic could act as reasonable substitutes for a lived experience of the divine. Thus, he was forced to turn away from the contemporary Christian tradition with a sense of dissatisfaction.

Having found his hunger for self-knowledge unsatisfied by theology texts, Jung followed routes that might lead to more gratifying conclusions. Jung's intellectual influences were tremendously eclectic, drawing from the works of philosophers, novelists, mystics, and poets.²⁶ As a youth in the Swiss educational system, Jung received a classical education and was well read in the works of the Western canon, absorbing Homer, Schiller, Plato, Socrates, and Shakespeare. However, Greek philosophers left Jung just as irreverently skeptical as did theological texts due to his doubt of the "logical trickery" by which they reached their conclusions in lieu of actual experience.²⁷ It seemed, then, that the ancient philosophers were little better than the theologians.

Jung, however, did find a close kinship among Goethe (1749-1832) and Nietzsche (1844-1900). Goethe's *Faust* and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* both presented Jung with fictional versions of his own No. 2, the shadow sides of their creators and the aspect of himself that was intertwined in the workings of the cosmos and the transcendent.²⁸ The two figures of *Faust* and *Zarathustra* ultimately played a prominent role in his development of the concept of the Self and the creative power of the collective unconscious, serving as examples of the shadow side of the personality that had forced entry into the world clothed in the safety of literature. Although he did not fully agree with either Goethe or Nietzsche, Jung did believe that each of them had presented a vision of religion truer than the actual religion of his day, with which he had already formally dispensed. Consequently, they confirmed Jung's longing for a truly meaningful form of religion after religion grounded in one's own personal experience.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) also offered Jung a breath of fresh air through his direct acknowledgement of the suffering of the world, which the psychologist found was either reasoned away by other philosophers or forced into divine harmony by theologians. This candid appraisal of the darker sides of life struck a close chord with Jung's own search for the shadow side of human experience. Through each of these three philosophers Jung found support for many of the conclusions he had already independently arrived at, driving him ever deeper in his theorizing.

As Jung drew nearer to his graduation from *Gymnasium*, the Swiss equivalent of American high school, the matter of choosing a career path became increasingly pressing and he was forced to recognize the need to move onward in a pragmatic way. While

Jung's exploration of philosophy, history, and philology all satisfied No. 2's yearnings for meaning, his position as a child from a relatively poor background in the Swiss countryside forced Jung to choose a practical career path. Recognizing No. 1 as the light that allowed him to successfully operate in the world, Jung was determined to leave the shadow side of No. 2 behind. Jung, however, could never fully deny or forget No. 2, which he deemed an abhorrent act of self-mutilation.²⁹ Thus indulging No. 1's demand for concreteness and order, Jung opted for the practical and empirically grounded career path of medical science.³⁰

As with Christianity, Jung's feelings on science and the scientific method were highly ambivalent. Early on in his time at the University of Basel, Jung came to the realization that, although science offered up tremendous quantities of knowledge, it ultimately yielded few satisfactory insights, and those that it did were often unpalatably specialized for Jung's taste.³¹ Furthermore, science encouraged strict materialism that alienates humans from God's world, sucking meaning out of existence and contributing to the spiritual suffering of European moderns.³²

Ultimately, Jung's dominant feeling toward science was one of necessity. On its most basic level, this necessity was for professional legitimacy. As Jung puts it, "a new idea, or even just an unusual aspect of an old one, can be communicated only by facts. Facts remain and cannot be brushed aside... More than ever I found myself driven towards empiricism."³³ However, beyond Jung's professional concerns, his dependence on science was also closely connected to the continual conflict between his No. 1 and No. 2. Science's grounding in empirically verifiable data and results provided Jung with a tool for staying in contact with the outer world.³⁴ His communion with No. 2 may have offered Jung tremendous possibilities for self-knowledge, yet they drove him further away from the material and social worlds, leaving him in a state of extreme loneliness. Science was the lifeline that kept him anchored to something beyond himself.

Recognizing the need to appease No. 2, Jung attempted to strike a more satisfactory balance between his multiple personalities by exploring works on "spiritualistic phenomena."³⁵ After stumbling upon a book on spiritualism in the library of a classmate's father during his second semester at University,³⁶ Jung became completely enamored with the topic, which would occupy him for the duration of his

career and life. He further explored the topic within the work of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) and Carl du Prel (1839-1899), both of whom sought to uncover the philosophical and psychological meanings behind spiritual phenomena.³⁷ As with the philosophers, Swedenborg and du Prel offered Jung a vision of highly convincing alternatives to traditional explanations of the workings of the human mind, its neglected aspects, and its relation to the cosmos. Although these thinkers helped to satiate Jung, he remained caught between the two poles of scientism and spiritualism, and the conflict between No. 1 and No. 2 seeming destined to reemerge.

However, as he neared the state examinations, Jung came across a book on psychiatry that drew him “irretrievably under its spell” and illuminated his path forward:

[In psychiatry] alone the two currents of my interest could flow together and in a united stream dig their own bed. Here was the empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts, which I had everywhere sought and nowhere found. Here at last was the place where the collision of nature and spirit became a reality.³⁸

While psychiatrists may have their own personal biases and subjectivity, they stand behind the objectivity of their own experiences and those of their patients, using them as the raw data for constructing the theories that empirical science demands. Even if No. 1 and No. 2 could not be fully reconciled through this career choice, Jung could, at the very least, pursue both and allow them to coexist. Psychiatry thus afforded Jung a field in which his scientific aspirations could be yoked to his spiritual and philosophical yearnings, allowing him to produce works that were empirically grounded while simultaneously serving as a form of subjective confession. This field, which was still finding its footing as valid scientific discipline when Jung entered University in 1900, would ultimately play a huge role in shaping his universalist pretensions and subsequent empiricism over the course of his career.

Scientific Positivism in French Psychiatry: The Foundations for Jung’s Methodology

According to Foucault, “what we call psychiatric practice is a certain moral tactic contemporary with the end of the eighteenth century, preserved in the rites of asylum life,

and overlaid by the myths of positivism.”³⁹ During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, France was central to the fields of mainstream psychology and psychiatry in Europe as a whole.⁴⁰ Following the end of the French Revolution in 1799, the new regime pursued secularization in an attempt to dismantle the old social institutions that challenged the possibility of French citizens becoming fully engaged as participants in the emerging state. Divesting French society of its religious values became imperative to freedom from the authority of the Catholic Church and thus a cornerstone of the new social order. Consequently, there were tremendous developments in France in the social sciences over the nineteenth century, which many praised as the groundwork for the creation of a new, free man with autonomous and empowered selfhood. In particular, the work of psychologists at the Pitié-Salpêtrière teaching hospital, the Hôpital Bicêtre, and Collège de Sorbonne at the University of Paris played a substantial role in the emergence of a scientific psychiatry that could produce reliable and socially useful knowledge about man.⁴¹

Far from occurring within a vacuum, the emergence of scientific psychiatry was closely tied into the economic, social, and political currents of nineteenth century France.⁴² Of particular importance is the personal conviction of individual psychiatrists in the scientific method, the professional trajectory of the field, as well as developments in the French state. Considering each of these threads in turn sheds light on the development of psychiatry as a field committed to empiricism and estranged from the unverifiable speculations of philosophy. This commitment to demonstrability would prove extraordinarily important to Jung’s particular way of articulating his theories in his academic work, largely confining him to a scientific perspective. Furthermore, given that Bleuler, Janet, and Freud, all of who were great influences on Jung, studied under Charcot, a key figure in French psychiatry, it seems reasonable to suggest that Jung’s own trajectory was closely guided by the following developments.

In his 1865 *Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale* (Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine), Claude Bernard (1813-1878) laid forth the following proclamation on the importance of science:

the intellectual conquest of man consists in diminishing and pushing back indeterminism to the extent that he gains ground on determinism with the aid of the experimental

method. This alone should satisfy his ambition because it is through this that he extends and will extend his mastery over nature.⁴³

This hopeful statement reflects the general optimism of the time about the scientific method's potential to bring man into a prosperous utopian future. While Bernard recognized that absolute determinism was impossible, and would in fact undermine the basis of man's very existence, there was tremendous confidence in science to bring about both unprecedented technological advancement and social peace. Not only would humans achieve greater control of material circumstances as they furthered their understanding and consequent mastery of nature, but such methods could also yield a more systematic method for deciphering the human mind. Findings derived from the experimental method were believed to be more reliable than subjective speculations, offering tremendous promise for social stability. Thus, the very methods of science instilled individual psychologists and psychiatrists with great confidence in empiricism and the need to ground their emerging field in such practices.

Working alongside this personal conviction of psychiatrists in the scientific method was the practical need of the field of psychiatry to carve out a niche for itself in French society. Until the late 1870s and 1880s, care of the "insane" had been left primarily to the clergy. Prior to the rise of the French Third Republic, two-thirds of Paris public hospitals and hospices were employing religious sisters as nurses.⁴⁴ Consequently, there was little room for a class of laic, i.e. religiously unaffiliated, nurses such as psychiatrists aspired to be. However, in 1883, a complete hospital laicization was carried out on the grounds that, "public welfare is different from Christian charity and is a national service which must be carried out in the civil sector."⁴⁵ The French state, with the full support of a cadre of psychiatrists with professional aspirations, had deemed that the metaphysical spirit of the Church and its clergy could not be trusted with such a serious matter as the care of society's mentally unwell. As men armed with professional knowledge and the scientific method, psychiatrists were lauded as more capable of safely handling the "insane." Yet as religion was formally driven out of mental hospitals, it was only its social feeling that bonded patients together that was banished; asylums retained

the moral enterprise of religion that carried its power of consolation and confidence, powers that were ultimately placed in the hands of psychiatry.⁴⁶

This shift to laicize medical institutions should be understood as part of a larger movement of secularization occurring under the Third Republic. In order to consolidate its power, the new regime in France sought to wrest power away from the Catholic Church, a dominant force in French society. The leaders of the Third Republic increasingly relied on science to legitimize their efforts to reorganize the social order and optimize the rational and productive forces of society.⁴⁷ Given that religion represented the height of irrationality for many of these men, science was viewed as instrumental to usurping the hold of the Church on many members of French society and establishing a rational and scientific basis for a newly secularized society.

Positivistic science in particular played a key role in this move towards secularization. According to Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the founder of sociology, society, like matter, is governed by certain general laws. He proposed a tripartite development of history in which the initial two stages of theology and metaphysics would be replaced by positivistic science as the human species progressed in its understanding of the world.⁴⁸ By his estimation, knowledge and truth are attainable solely by means of conclusions drawn from observational evidence of experimental science, enabling the construction of discernable laws that govern social bodies.⁴⁹ Given that positivistic science was proposed to supersede the theological explanations of the Church, it was integral to the secularization movement and the fields of psychology and psychiatry provided important battlegrounds for the state to conquer territory previously governed by religion.⁵⁰

Aspiring psychologists and psychiatrists at this time were quick to get behind this move towards positivism as a way of aligning themselves with the Third Republic and gaining favor with the new ruling class. By supporting empirical science grounded in observation, psychiatry established legitimacy in the eyes of the political elite, an important move toward carving out a place in French society for itself. This strong support for positivism in psychiatry is especially evident in the work of Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), regarded as the father of modern neuroscience. In the early 1880s he engaged in a project of retrospective medicine by pouring over paintings and

engravings from the fifth through eighteenth centuries that purported to depict cases of ecstatic religious experience and demonic possession.⁵¹ Having previously developed a system by which he could diagnose individuals with hysteria on the basis of external behaviors and mannerisms, Charcot proceeded to label these so-called religious experiences as nothing more than the outbursts of undiagnosed hysterics, consequently redefining the supernatural as the natural and backing up the state's move towards secularization. Charcot's retrospective application of modern psychological theories to religious phenomena closely parallels Jung's own imposition of analytical psychology upon Tibetan Buddhism, marking a clear antecedent for cross-cultural psychological comparisons. Charcot's use of psychologism to serve secularizing ends also prefaces later scholarly attempts such as those of Preece and Batchelor that employ psychological terminology for similar purposes.

However, while Charcot and many of his contemporaries demonstrated a strong affinity for positivism, there were also a number of eminent psychiatrists that could not wholly support the transformation of their field into a strictly objective science. Among those seeking to return an element of subjectivity to psychiatry were Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939), Pierre Janet (1859-1947), and Théodore Flournoy (1854-1920).⁵² Even though Jung appears rather dismissive of these men in his personal letters, his own interest in preserving an element of subjective confession in psychiatry necessarily encouraged him to support their work.

Among his contemporaries, Jung was also especially influenced by the work of Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Despite the frequent mythologization of his relationship with Freud, Jung adamantly protested the popular view that his own views derived largely from his temporary mentor, insisting that, "I in no way exclusively stem from Freud. I had my scientific attitude and the theory of complexes before I met Freud."⁵³ Although these retrospective protests may seem exaggerated and likely reflect Jung's desire to distance himself from his ex-mentor, there is also strong evidence that Freud really was merely one influence among Jung's many, rather than the cardinal figure that he is often supposed to be. Particularly in the case of the concept of the collective unconscious, one of Jung's most well developed ideas, it

seems that the psychologist's ideas derived far more directly from the work of Carl Gustav Carus and Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann than from Freud.

Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Carus (1789-1869) was one of the first people in Western academia to point out the existence of the unconscious as the space that contained the darker, shadow elements of the human mind.⁵⁴ Von Hartmann (1842-1906), a German philosopher, further developed this idea by subdividing the unconscious mind into a number of different sections, one of which was the metaphysical unconscious, which was transpersonal and collective,⁵⁵ clearly laying the groundwork for Jung's own theory of the collective unconscious that would guide his work with foreign cultures and traditions.

While Jung and Freud may have initially been in close agreement on many of the central ideas of psychoanalysis, the founder of analytical psychology ultimately believed that his once-mentor was too clouded by his own biases, causing him to perform drastic revisions on a psychoanalytic map of the human mind. Furthermore, Jung was deeply frustrated by Freud's refusal to take spiritualistic or religious phenomena seriously. As he delved further into these topics and began to incorporate them into his academic writings, Jung's deliberate inclusion of religious phenomena was another means through which he could distinguish himself from Freud and move analytical psychology further away from its father tradition.

Even if we trust Jung's claims that his views derived largely from thinkers other than Freud, he did, at the very least, owe the founder of psychoanalysis an enormous debt for his expansion of what constitutes valid data in the positivist empirical method. Prior to Freud, observation of external phenomena was considered to be the sole valid method of scientific inquiry and affirmed that only the body is worthy of investigation for empirical data. Although observation of physical phenomena is still prioritized by the scientific method, Freud made a fundamental break with the modern scientific tradition by introducing the psychological products of patients as deserving serious consideration as well.⁵⁶ The body was no longer the sole indicator of human psychology, but the subjective experiences of patients were treated as valid as well. Thus treated as forms of internal observation, thoughts and feelings became empirical data in their own right,⁵⁷ imposing positivism's myth of scientific objectivity on subjective experiences. Given that

Jung's metapsychology draws not only from the verbal confessions of his analysands but also from the texts and iconography that emerged from individuals' subjective experiences, his entire project would have been impossible had Freud not enabled such a groundbreaking shift in empiricism.

This possibility of objectifying subjective experience and treating products of the psyche such as words and images empirically enabled Jung to participate in the positivism that dominated contemporary psychiatry, helping to validate his field as a legitimate professional discipline with potentially universal applicability. Problematic as Jung might have deemed positivism due to its role in Charcot's negation of spiritualism, he clearly saw its instrumental necessity. Positivism enables universality, allowing for the possibility of making general statements about humankind as a whole, which Jung required in order for an overarching metapsychology of humanity to have any validity at all.

However, it seems that Jung also recognized the limitations of Western Universalist pretensions, which positioned white European men as humans in general. This perspective renders Europeans as Subject, forcing all others into the status of Other and, therefore, figures them as aberrations to proper humanity. According to the tenets of psychoanalysis, Subjects from a single culture cannot be representative of all of humankind since the shadow Other in one culture might appear as Subject in another. Without addressing the shadow forced into repression by socialization, European Universalist accounts therefore remained forever incomplete. Universalism is thus problematic in the same way as Christianity: it denies the validity of the experiences of the shadow Other. In order to construct a truly universal metapsychology, Jung required the psychological products of individuals in non-Western cultures as empirical data to expand upon his findings from analyzing himself and his analysands. Without this data, Jung could never fully discern the West's shadow and confidently produce a psychological system that truly encompassed every aspect of the human mind. Although Jung claims that his interest in the East is primarily to expose his Western audience to new forms of knowledge,⁵⁸ the stakes are far greater: if Jung was unable to find corroborating evidence to his theorizing in the psychological products of Asian religion, his entire metapsychology would have lost its foundation of universality and crumble.

In light of Jung's inner turmoil and the professional demands laid upon him by historical circumstances, the apparent necessity of his Eastern endeavors is clear. On the one hand, his constant need for self-discovery and uncovering the shadow side of himself and Western society required some kind of Archimedean point outside of his European experiences. Even though Jung had an inkling of his inner shadow, Jung needed a truly "foreign" point from which he could survey himself and more clearly distinguish his two selves: only by encountering and digesting the Eastern Other could Jung gain a sense of who he truly was with any certainty. On the other hand, developments in French psychiatry that spread throughout the field in Europe necessitated acquiring data from non-European cultures that could validate the objective existence of the collective unconscious and its collection of archetypes as universal phenomena. As the personal and professional tied together, it seems Jung felt he had no choice but to travel East.

Interiorizing the Buddha: Rendering the East Readable

Although the prior archeology uncovers the factors that drove Jung East to analyze Tibetan Buddhism, it does not fully explain why he adopted the prevalent Orientalist discourse of his time and psychologism's reductive methodology. Chapter one has already demonstrated that the widespread application of Orientalist discourse to all Western conversations on the East all but ensured that Jung would adopt its dominating rhetoric for his psychological commentaries. However, his psychologism is more troubling insofar as it seems to have far fewer precedents and appears more blatantly self-serving than Jung's ambiguous Romantic Orientalist stance toward Tibetan Buddhism.

However, further consideration of common scholarly methodology for analyzing religion at the time and its ontological grounding in Cartesian dualism reveals that Jung's intellectually dominating psychologism is not as much of an anomaly as it first appears, but is actually the logical extension of interpretive practices already in place. These interpretive strategies, the most pressing of which are linguocentrism and interiorization, reflect the general inability of American and European scholars to engage with Eastern religions on non-Western terms, resulting in distortions that are largely the result of misplaced emphasis. Combined with the inescapability of dominating Orientalist rhetoric in the twentieth century that pervaded all accounts of Asia, the trends of linguocentrism

and interiorization almost guaranteed that Jung would misrepresent Tibetan Buddhism by imposing his own understanding on the religion.

In this context, linguocentrism refers to the interpretive strategy common among scholars of relying almost exclusively on textual accounts of doctrines and practices in their constructions of Asian religions in the Western imagination. However, this hermeneutical approach dehistoricized and decontextualized the texts it claims to explain, which contemporary literary theorists have labeled as ‘intertextuality.’⁵⁹ As authorial context is torn away, new meanings emerge in the interplay between the reader and the dehistoricized text. Consequently, Romantic Orientalist philologists were convinced that they could discern the ‘essence’ of Buddhism through its observable signs, i.e. its texts. This fallacious belief in the possibility of locating Buddhism’s ‘essence’ was furthered by the prioritization of the original text, one that had not been corrupted by superstition or the practical considerations of cultural context. It was within these original texts that scholars believed they could locate ‘authentic Buddhism,’ as opposed to its socially conditioned and therefore deviant forms, recalling the very reasons why Western scholars were initially attracted to Tibet.

However, due to the fact that there was rarely an actual Asian voice to contradict their opinions, European and American intellectuals were able to find exactly what they were looking for in the Sanskrit and Pali texts that they encountered, never minding the fact that these are liturgical languages of the elites and would have had little bearing on the lives of the average practitioner.⁶⁰ This resulted in a sense of textualized Asian religions in which canonical doctrines are prioritized over the actual beliefs and practices that guide practitioners’ lives.

As with the concept of the Orient, this is not to say that ‘textual Buddhism’ is a complete fabrication but, rather, that it requires contextualization, a task that Romantic Orientalists largely neglected. The philological endeavors of these scholars certainly yielded information about Buddhism, but it is information that must be framed within the cultures in which the texts were written rather than by Western linguocentrism.

Furthermore, the pervasiveness and implicit acceptance of Cartesian dualism exacerbated the already problematic nature of linguocentrism. Although dualistic ontology, which distinguishes between physical and non-physical phenomena, extends

back in history far beyond this particular construction, René Descartes (1596-1650) was the first to formulate the systematic account of the mind-body relationship that defines dualism in its current form.

Descartes distinguished between material substance, which has the attribute of spatial extension, and mental substance, which is non-spatial.⁶¹ Although the material substance of the body and the mental substance of the mind are intimately related and are capable of influencing each other, they are, in the final analysis, independent and distinct. This sharp contrast that Descartes draws between mind and body also corresponds to the distinction between observing Subject and observed Object, which further reinforces Orientalism's division of sovereign West and subjugated East. While these ontological distinctions frequently go unaddressed, Cartesian dualism is implicit in most Western forms of thought following Descartes and has exerted considerable influence on consequent ideas on the nature of reality and experience.

As European and American scholars approached Asian religious texts, their specifically Cartesian assumptions guided their reading, producing the Western rhetoric of religious experience.⁶² This particular approach divides religion into its undiluted, universal, and experiential aspect, and its culturally conditioned manifestations, recapitulating the Cartesian bifurcation of mind and matter. From this perspective, Buddhism in Asia is largely distorted by the cultural biases of its practitioners, obscuring the 'authentic Buddhism' that lies under the surface in the minds of highly realized practitioners, a Buddhism that philologists claimed they could access through textual analysis. Buddhism thus became located not in action, but in thought, not in the material world, but in the mind.

However, by adopting this perspective, European and American scholars committed the methodological error of treating religious texts as descriptive accounts of inner experiences rather than as ritualistic prescriptions. Their representations of Asian religions are therefore distorted by prioritizing inner experience over outer practice,⁶³ subjugating Eastern voices to distinctly Western forms of knowledge in the process. Robert Sharf has detailed this pervasive trend of interiorization, finding that this phenomenological hermeneutic satisfied a number of Western scholarly needs when

attempting to make sense of Buddhism and is ultimately more reflective of Western perspectives on the religion than of historical Buddhism in Asia.⁶⁴

This Western scholarly penchant for interiorizing religion suited Jung's purposes for a number of reasons. For one, his experience with Christian theology as a youth impelled him to prioritize experience as the most direct route to psychological truth,⁶⁵ following the Cartesian assumption that "the phenomenological transparency of consciousness is reproduced in the conceptual transparency of the category 'experience.'"⁶⁶ This encouraged him to look to texts and images, which he viewed as more intimately related to the inner experience of practitioners than ritual behavior shaped by institutional forces, and are consequently better indicators of the contents of the mind.

Furthermore, and far more pressing to Jung's project of establishing and promoting his analytical psychology, was the fact that the term "experience" is so incredibly ambiguous. Although one cannot ever truly verify the experience of another, it is also impossible to ever conclusively demonstrate its falsity. While it seems that this would immediately disqualify experience as valid empirical data, Freud's development of psychoanalysis helped to bring subjective experience into the realm of scientific inquiry.⁶⁷ Following Jung's opinion of himself as an empiricist that adhered to the phenomenological standpoint,⁶⁸ he was thus able to use the experiences of his Tibetan Buddhist objects of study, in the form of texts and images, as unfalsifiable support for the findings of analytical psychology.

However, much as we have already criticized Jung's acts of psychologism, it seems that they are ultimately just the logical extension of the already common practice of interiorization. Scholars had already determined that 'authentic Tibetan Buddhism' could be located in texts; it was thus but a small step for Jung to conclude that these texts were windows into the psyche and that, therefore, Tibetan Buddhism provided a similar glimpse into the human mind. In this light, deriding Jung's psychologizing methodology merely uses him as a scapegoat for larger problematic trends in the nineteenth-century European intellectual milieu.

Furthermore, given the ubiquity of Orientalist rhetoric, empirical positivism, interiorizing methodology, we might raise the pressing question: how else could Jung

have written his commentaries? If these intellectual trends are really as pervasive as the previous analysis has demonstrated, it appears that Jung was caught in the movement of a zeitgeist that he could not possibly resist. Indeed, his interest in legitimizing his universal metapsychology seems to require that he adopt empirical positivism, Orientalist rhetoric and interiorization, thus damning him in the retrospective gaze of contemporary scholars that now regard themselves as more politically correct.

Having arrived at this awareness of the intellectual currents of the twentieth century that impelled Jung to participate in the Orientalist endeavor as he analyzed Tibetan Buddhism, we can now reassess the significance of his project. Although he undoubtedly commits the epistemological fallacy of formalist interpretation by prioritizing his own meaning over the actual cultural material with which he works, we have nothing to gain from wholly dismissing Jung's commentaries. Rather, we must now reengage with Jung's writings with new hermeneutics developed in light of his social and intellectual context, allowing us to deconstruct Jung's texts and expose the broader potential of his writings that traditional critiques commonly overlook.

¹ Jung, *MDR*, 238.

² Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970) 663.

³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980) 93.

⁴ Meyer, "Romantic Orientalism," 684.

⁵ Jung, "Psychological Commentary on *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*," *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 11: Psychology and Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 478.

⁶ Jung, *MDR*, 291.

⁷ Jung, *Psychological Commentary on the TBOD*, xxxvi.

⁸ Jung, *MDR*, 206.

⁹ Jung, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1933), 196-221.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 259

¹¹ *Ibid.* 235

¹² *Ibid.* 230

¹³ *Ibid.* 233

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 45

¹⁵ Jung, *MDR*, 72

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 86

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 34

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- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* 90
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.* 87
- ²⁰ Brome, *Jung* (New York: Atheneum, 1978) 25.
- ²¹ Jung, *MDR*, 13
- ²² *Ibid.* xi
- ²³ Jung, "Psychology and Religion," *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 11: Psychology and Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 6.
- ²⁴ Jung, *MDR*, 42
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* 94
- ²⁶ Brome, *Jung*, 289
- ²⁷ *Ibid.* 55
- ²⁸ Shamdasani, *Biography in Books*, 29
- ²⁹ Jung, *MDR*, 89
- ³⁰ *Ibid.* 86
- ³¹ *Ibid.* 98
- ³² *Ibid.* 104, 67.
- ³³ *Ibid.* 104
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* 192
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* 98.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ Shamdasani, *Biography in Books*, 29.
- ³⁸ Jung, *MDR*, 109
- ³⁹ Foucault, *Madness & Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965) 276.
- ⁴⁰ Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 323.
- ⁴¹ Brower, *Unruly Spirits: The Science of Psychic Phenomena in Modern France* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2010) xx.
- ⁴² Goldstein, *Console and Classify*
- ⁴³ Bernard, *Introduction à l'étude de la Médecine Expérimentale*, 223, quoted in Brower, *Unruly Spirits*, xxiii.
- ⁴⁴ Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, 363.
- ⁴⁵ Capéran, *Histoire de la laïcité républicaine: La laïcité en marche*, 86, quoted in Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, 364.
- ⁴⁶ Foucault, *Madness & Civilization*, 257.
- ⁴⁷ Brower, *Unruly Spirits*, 18.
- ⁴⁸ Comte, *A General View of Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- ⁴⁹ Egan, *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 115.
- ⁵⁰ Goldstein, *Console and Classify*, 361
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.* 370
- ⁵² Brome, *Jung*, 287.
- ⁵³ Shamdasani, *Biography in Books*, 44.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 27

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 44

⁵⁶ Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 10-11.

⁵⁷ Foucault, *Madness & Civilization*, 250.

⁵⁸ Jung, *Psychological Commentary on The TBOD*, xxxvi.

⁵⁹ King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 65.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 66.

⁶¹ Robinson, "Dualism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2003. Accessed 4 April 2014. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2003/entries/dualism/>>.

⁶² Sharf, "The Rhetoric of Experience and the Study of Religion," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7(11) (2000.)

⁶³ Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism," 244.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Jung, *MDR*, 94.

⁶⁶ Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism," 229.

⁶⁷ Rieff, *Mind of the Moralist*, 10-11.

⁶⁸ Jung, "Psychology and Religion," 5.

Chapter Six

What's Right With Jung: Reconsidering Psychologism and Deconstructing Orientalism

You will say that I too am a dreamer; I admit it, but I do what others fail to do, I give my dreams as dreams, and leave the reader to discover whether there is anything in them which may prove useful to those who are awake.¹

-Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Just as Jung ended up relying on Orientalist rhetoric without seriously considering its consequences, many interpreters of Tibetan Buddhism for popular audiences following Jung have similarly viewed the religion psychologically without actively addressing the implications of their positionality. Even when scholars warn of drawing cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary comparisons, they soon fall into the trap of treating analytical psychology as a totalizing system, leaving their interpretations one-sided and open to the invasion of unrestrained romanticism and psychologism.

Although our analysis has thus far focused on the dominant thread of Jung's rhetoric that treats his Tibetan source material ambiguously and instrumentally, there is a second voice that has gone unaddressed. While Jung's dominant voice speaks of Tibetan Buddhism with remarkable lucidity and certainty, the second voice has the potential to undermine all that Jung has constructed and is thus far more timid and less vocal in his commentaries. This voice qualifies Jung's authority and the legitimacy of his statements on Tibetan Buddhism, ultimately demonstrating that we should not look through the lens of Jungian psychologism to more clearly discern Tibetan Buddhism, but that we can peer through psychologized Tibetan Buddhism to achieve a better understanding of Jung and his analytical psychology. Moreover, Jung's marginalized voice reveals that, while his dominant rhetoric may appear to solidify and advance Orientalism, Jung's very theories ultimately throw the entire discourse into doubt. Just as Jung's own statements about Tibetan Buddhism are better treated as statements about his self and theories, Orientalist descriptions of the East and their accompanying conclusions are ultimately more revealing of the Western Subject than the Eastern Other they claim to expose.

Scouring the Margins: Putting Jung Back in Jungian Psychology

If we scour Jung's commentaries on Tibetan Buddhism for his marginalized doubting voice, as well as the personal writings from his later years, we find that his project and its underlying epistemological premise is quite different from what successive scholars have assumed. By considering Jungian psychology on its own terms and borrowing psychoanalysis' subversive ideas, we will use the foundational premises of analytical psychology that Jung provides to undermine the contemporary tendency to treat it as a normative interpretive lens.

Derridean deconstruction relies on locating the moments where the establishment of meaning is refused, using them as fulcrums for unraveling the text.² Jung's writings on Tibetan Buddhism largely abide by the laws of scientific positivism and Orientalist rhetoric that demand him to occupy an authoritative position as he makes objective statements about Tibetan Buddhism. This stance, however, is in direct conflict with the qualifying frame that Jung establishes for his larger corpus, which reconfigures his work as subjective confessions and as speaking solely of the psyche. Exposing this conflict enables us to reframe Jung's commentaries in light of the laws that he himself proposes. Just as language carries the possibility of critique of its ability to fix or reflect meaning, so too Jung provides us with the tools to reappraise the significance of his work and reimagine a more profitable and less damaging manner of treating psychological accounts of Tibetan Buddhism.

While Jung and his psychologizing followers often end up falling into dominating rhetoric by presuming to speak for Tibetans about their religion, we need not succumb to the same authoritative readings. Recognizing that the form of Tibetan Buddhism he presents us with is not the Other as such, but is rather the specularly inverted and effaced image of analytical psychology, allows us to refract the Jungian gaze back on observing interpreters. In doing so, we distance the text from the ideological matrix from which it emerged and can reorient it within the field of power. While such an inversion can hardly undo the harmful impact of Orientalizing psychology on Tibetan Buddhism, it can, at the very least, lessen the damage moving forward by recontextualizing and decolonizing hegemonic interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism.

For Jung, the 'East' seems to refer to two distinct, yet interrelated, sights/sites of knowledge. On the one hand, his use reflects typical Orientalist usage, referring to Asia and its cultural productions. As we have just seen, psychiatric practices in the twentieth century demanded that Jung demonstrate the ubiquity of certain thought forms across both Western and Eastern cultures if he truly sought to establish his metapsychology as universal.

On the other hand, the 'East' represents something of far greater personal importance to Jung, serving as the seat of the unconscious. According to his theory of the collective unconscious, our conscious egos are largely conditioned by the culture into which we are socialized, dictating which elements of personality are acceptable to express and those that are reprehensible and must be repressed. When Jung posits fundamental differences in the psychologies of 'Easterners' and 'Westerners' in works such as his "Psychological Commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*," he refers not to the ultimate nature of their minds, but to their differing phenomenological experiences. For Jung, the unconscious thus represents the 'East' as the shadow within. Conversely, the 'East' as Asia is the external Other to the European Subject and represents the 'Western' shadow expressed as ego consciousness in a different cultural context. Consequently, Jung's travels 'East' to Tibet were simultaneously a process of turning outward to cultures with different developmental trajectories to find supporting evidence for analytical psychology, as well as an act of turning inward to plumb the depths of his unconscious mind.

This realization returns us to a consideration of the aspect of psychiatry that most appealed to Jung: its unique position as an empirical science that nevertheless allows for an element of the psychiatrist's own subjectivities. Jung's analytical psychology was not merely a set of scientific hypotheses, but a collection of lived experiences that he himself had undergone and for which he sought confirmation through his exploration of his theological, philosophical, and scientific predecessors and contemporaries. Referring to his life's works, Jung admits that, "All my writings may be considered tasks imposed from within; their source was a fateful compulsion. What I wrote were things that assailed me from within myself. I permitted the spirit that moved me to speak out."³ The

subjective element was thus of the utmost importance to the psychologist and should be a key determinant in evaluations of his psychological interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism.

In addition to this qualifying frame that Jung viewed his writings as a form of subjective confession that was imposed on him from within, we must now also take into account the essential epistemological premise that underlies his entire corpus: all knowledge and experience are filtered through the psyche, which is consequently the only thing that we can truly claim to know. Jung is entirely unambiguous on this matter, asserting that, “all conceivable statements are made by the psyche,” and “the psyche cannot leap beyond itself. It cannot set up any absolute truths, for its own polarity determines the relativity of its statements.”⁴ On the one hand, these claims further demonstrate the psychologist’s recognition of the inescapable nature of subjectivity, while, on the other, they further demonstrate that Jung is never talking about anything other than the psyche. This does not imply that *only* the psyche exists, but that, as far as our experience of reality goes, “we cannot see anything beyond the psyche,”⁵ thus recognizing that he cannot make metaphysical statements with any authority.⁶

Having admitted that he can only speak of the psyche, Jung questions whether “psychology” is even a valid theoretical framework for considering Tibetan Buddhism. Given his belief that the mind cannot establish or assert anything beyond itself, he worries that treating phenomena with clear metaphysical, religious, and philosophical significances from a psychological point of view serves to reduce them to an impoverished form. For Jung, this reductionism highlights the “dubious applicability” of using modern psychology as a lens to analyze anything other than human subjectivity and the psyche itself, particularly cultural phenomena with religious pretensions.⁷

Combined with Jung’s admission that the entirety of his writings are concerned with deciphering the secrets of the human personality, we may now finally see what Jung actually intended to talk about in his commentaries on Tibetan Buddhism. While subsequent scholars have taken Jung’s psychologizing interpretation of Tibetan Buddhism at face value, it seems that he did not intend to make any definitive statements about the religion but, rather, to learn something about himself.

In fact, Jung openly admits that anything he says about Asian religions is not intended as a faithful reflection of them as they exist within the cultures in which they are

practiced. Instead, his statements on foreign religions are “truth[s] particular to myself,” a sentiment that is further echoed in his claim that, “I studiously avoided all so-called ‘holy men’...because I had to make do with my own truth, not accept from others what I could not attain on my own.”⁸ His works are thus subjective confessions, mirroring the aspect of psychiatric writings that initially drew Jung to that particular field.⁹ In reading Jung, then, we must attempt to enter his subjective view as best we can. Although his commentaries are often read as an attempt to illuminate a facet of Tibetan Buddhism, Jung’s framing of his work as personal truths and subjective confessions reveals that he is not really discussing the religion at all but rather what it evokes within himself and illuminates about his psyche. Recognizing his active agency in the creation of the texts’ meaning, Jung willfully transforms Tibetan Buddhism from a phenomenon with culturally specific significance into a product of the psyche that is open to analysis.

From this position of a new subjectivity that is less fettered by discursive forces than the currently dominant stance on the applicability of Jungian psychology to Tibetan Buddhism we find that we should not use analytical psychology as a prism through which we can view a faithful image of Tibetan Buddhism, but should rather treat Tibetan Buddhism as a lens that illuminates Jungian psychology. This lens affords us alternative conceptualizations of analytical psychology’s theories of the collective unconscious, the archetypes, and individuation clothed in the language of Tibetan Buddhism. To treat his writings on the religion as having anything substantive to say about Tibetan Buddhism as it exists and is practiced in Tibet is therefore a misreading of Jung’s texts. While a far broader and more detailed analysis would be required to conclusively do so, we might further extend this conclusion by saying that we must reconsider all attempts of bringing modern psychology to bear on religion, treating them not as insights into the religious object that they examine, but into modern psychology itself. That so many subsequent psychologizing scholars of Tibetan Buddhism have failed to note Jung’s active imposition of new meanings onto the religion demonstrates just how greatly Jung’s authority has expanded beyond his control and the present need to reintroduce his voice into the discourse.

The Anxiety of Authority: Unraveling Jung's Authorial Tensions

By returning to Jung's "Psychological Commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*" we discover a point at which we can pry open the text and his statements on Tibetan Buddhism in general and thus allow for the possibility of reevaluation. A closer look at Jung's reflections on his authority to draw conclusions about Tibetan Buddhism reveals that the authoritative rhetoric required by Orientalist discourse that pervades his commentary is far from stable. As we consider this particular example of direct conflict between the voice of Jung's ambitious No. 1 that speaks authoritatively on Tibetan Buddhism and No. 2, which recognizes the fact that Jung is totally unqualified to do so, we will notice a clear tension between these two rhetorical threads. These difficulties of Jung's authorial presence are best brought to light through a comparison of the psychologist's claims to that of the *TBOD*'s original translator and interpreter, Evans-Wentz.

Although both Evans-Wentz and Jung have both played an integral role in the transmission of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, they each occupy markedly different positions in relation to the religion. As the first translator of the *TBOD* and other Tibetan texts, Evans-Wentz performs an author-driven interpretation through which he believes he can determine the factual reality of Tibetan Buddhism and his statements are therefore intended to reflect the religion as it is practiced in Tibet. Jung, on the other hand, merely offers prefatory commentaries and consciously recognizes his active role in producing interpretive meaning that differs from the Tibetan perspective. Jung's rhetoric and empirical methodology, however, enable and require Jung to occupy an assertive position that bestows him with authority far greater than what his reader-driven interpretations should carry. This expansion of authority has thereby produced the pervasive and problematic trend of Modern Tibetan Buddhist psychology as explored earlier. Returning to the explicit claims of both Evans-Wentz and Jung regarding their relationship to the *TBOD* sharpens our awareness of the limits to Jung's authority and can further remind future scholars of the need to qualify Jung's conclusions differently from those of Evans-Wentz as they approach the Tibetan text.

Evans-Wentz did not hold any reservations regarding the possibility of producing conclusive statements about a Tibetan text from a European perspective. This confidence

in his interpretive capacity was bolstered by his relationship with his Tibetan translator, Kazi Dawa Samdup. Evans-Wentz opens the “Preface to the First Edition of the *TBOD*” with the claim that, “in this book I am seeking-so far as possible-to suppress my own views and to act simply as the mouthpiece of a Tibetan sage, of whom I was a recognized disciple.”¹⁰ On first glance, this appears to be an admirable admission: Evans-Wentz is actively recognizing the importance of his Tibetan collaborator in the production of the *TBOD*. Yet this admission also has the function of validating Evans-Wentz’s translation by citing a Tibetan as its source.

Evans-Wentz takes these claims of authority even further in the proclamation that, “I have been really little more than a compiler and editor of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. To the deceased translator...the chief credit for its production very naturally belongs.”¹¹ Through this act of superficial humility, Evans-Wentz places his translated text on the side of the Tibetan tradition, derived from the insights of a learned Tibetan rather than his own Theosophical background. Elsewhere, in a footnote of his “Introduction” to the text, Evans-Wentz comments on Samdup’s desire to include exegetical comments in order to clarify certain points “in accordance with the wishes of his late guru.”¹² Evans-Wentz thus attempts to cement the authority of his translation of the *BTG* even further, claiming that it was not only the product of a Tibetan sage, but of his guru as well. Evans-Wentz’s text thus appears to have the authorization of Tibetans, invoking the power of lineage in which teachings have been passed down in a direct line of gurus to disciples, a process of transmission that is completed in Evans-Wentz’s edition of the *TBOD*.¹³ Given that the European presents himself as nothing more than a “mouthpiece,” his Western audience is left with the impression that the *TBOD* is indicative of the knowledge of actual Tibetans.

Yet a closer examination of Evans-Wentz and Samdup’s relationship immediately reveals the difficulties of the European’s alignment with the Tibetan tradition. In his biography of Evans-Wentz, Ken Winkler remarks,

The few letters that have survived that they [Evans-Wentz and Samdup] exchanged show a surprisingly distant and formal tone. Even in Dawa Samdup’s diaries there is no word to suggest otherwise. There is nothing at all foreshadowing the later declarations that the Lama was the

guru of Walter Evans-Wentz, nothing about the ‘teachings’ the American was supposed to have received.¹⁴

It seems, then, that the power of lineage that Evans-Wentz invoked to support his liberal translation was imagined in order to lend greater weight to his message. Yet this fabrication exploits his relationship with Samdup by transforming it into something that it clearly was not: “In Dawa Samdup’s silence, Evans-Wentz speaks in the Tibetan’s voice, in a language he never learned.”¹⁵ This unjust co-opting of his Tibetan translator’s authority enables Evans-Wentz to take unjustified liberties with the Tibetan text while simultaneously disguising the very fact that these interpretations are invalid from the Tibetan perspective. Appearing quite comfortable with his mastery of the *TBOD*, Evans-Wentz’s exploits Samdup and enacts severe intellectual dominance on the Tibetan tradition by not merely ignoring the voice of Tibetans, but by actively claiming that his voice and the Tibetans’ are the same.

Jung is far more cautious in his claims of interpretive authority, recognizing that he is actively introducing new meaning to the text. Toward the end of his “Psychological Commentary,” Jung adopts a metanarrative position to examine his own project, in which he admits,

The reversal of the order of the chapters, which I have suggested here as an aid to understanding, in no way accords with the original intention of the *Bardo Thodol*. Nor is the psychological use we make of it anything but a secondary intention, though one that is possibly sanctioned by lamaist custom.¹⁶

This statement clearly draws out the tension between Jung’s professional desire for mastery of his Tibetan material and his awareness that he is wholly unable to have it. While Jung continues to grope for Tibetan authority by suggesting that “lamaist custom” might sanction his reading, he simultaneously recognizes that his reductive psychological lens is merely “a secondary intention” and is not the ‘true’ or ‘authentic’ meaning of the text.

Although we have already seen that Jung is clearly capable of occupying a metanarrative position of self-awareness from which he admits that he cannot accurately speak about Tibetan Buddhism as a religious or metaphysical system, he is unable to

occupy it throughout the entirety of his commentaries on Tibetan Buddhism and his self-aware second voice is marginalized almost to the point of nonexistence. As we have already seen through statements such as “According to the Eastern view”¹⁷ and his adoption of Tibetan authority in his analysis of mandalas, Jung clearly views himself as capable of speaking for his objects of study to some degree. Indeed, if Jung’s claims are to be persuasive, he must take up a certain degree of authority regarding the content that he explicates and silence his awareness of the subjective nature of his statements. As an eminent psychologist of his time attempting to develop a universal theory of the mind, Jung is required to speak with a sense of mastery of his material in order to validate its inclusion in the foundations of analytical psychology as empirical data.

Yet, at the same time, Jung’s acknowledgement that his own reading is “but a secondary intention,” reflects the reader-driven nature of his interpretation. This claim, however, has the potential to undermine the persuasive power of his interpretation and its validity as evidence for analytical psychology, and is therefore marginalized within the text as a whole. Even Jung’s understanding of the psyche could not fully extricate him from the intellectual milieu in which he was writing and he was thus unable to fully abstain from attempts to produce definitive statements about the cultural text of Tibetan Buddhism. Caught up in Orientalist and positivist discourse, Jung could not confidently claim that his statements are not actually about Tibetan Buddhism and instead produced a commentary that has been taken as a reflection of the religion.

Consequently, it would seem that these moments of tension that subvert Jung’s authoritative voice are not neatly rectified. While it would be easy to reduce the issue of Jung’s violations of his foundational laws to a practical appeal to a distant authority for corroboration of the theories of analytical psychology as universal human truths, there is something more significant at work here. Caught in the tension of needing authority while simultaneously recognizing that the very authority he requires will always remain out of reach, Jung and his analytical psychology thus provide us with the tools to deconstruct the Orientalist episteme from within.

The Paradox of Position: Deconstructing Orientalism

Aside from this possibility of reconsidering psychologism in relation to religion, Jung further allows us to penetrate even deeper to the question of what sort of knowledge Orientalist discourse really imparts. Unraveling Jung's psychological commentaries reveals that their contradictory elements are not merely a matter of Jung attempting to shore up the foundations of analytical psychology and overstepping the bounds of his authority by bringing Jungian psychology to bear on a realm to which it is not applicable, but are points that raise larger questions regarding the nature of the relationship between Self and Other. The conflict of voices that appears in Jung's commentaries represents the tension and ambiguity that is inherent in all encounters between Self and Other in which we seek to fully understand that which is different from us while being forced to recognize that we can never fully do so. In Nietzsche's estimation, this desire to make sense of the Other is a manifestation of the human will to power in which we seek to "fit new material into old schemas...*making* equal what is new."¹⁸

However, these very means by which we make sense of the Other render it no longer as Other, but as a reflection of our own Self. Because all of our knowledge is necessarily conditioned by our unique subjectivity, to understand an Other requires drawing upon the past experiences and perceptions that are the basis of our Self. As we turn our gaze to the Other, then, we obtain insight not into the object of inquiry, but into our own positionality. Given that Jung was a great admirer of Nietzsche, it seems likely that he was well acquainted with these difficulties of engaging with Otherness. Indeed, his admission that, "I had often wished to be able for once to see the European from outside, his image reflected back at him by an altogether foreign milieu,"¹⁹ demonstrates a tenuous yet undoubtedly existent comprehension of subject-formation, allowing for the possibility of treating the Other as a refraction of the observing Self.

More to the point, Jung's own theory of the collective unconscious is the germ for annihilating the duality between 'Western' Subject/Self and 'Eastern' Object/Other on which Orientalism rests. As we will recall, the collective unconscious, as the psychic substrate to the minds of all humans, contains many elements of the personality that are not expressed in our ego personalities. Those that do come to light are largely conditioned by cultural circumstances, meaning that the archetypes that rise to the surface

in the 'West' are different from those that emerge in the 'East.' Within psychoanalytic thought, consciousness is considered to be only the elements of personality that are permitted to emerge, created at the limits of social convention. It is not as autonomous as we might often like to think, but only exists as such by virtue of repressing the other manifold elements of personality. Consciousness is inscribed within these limits, standing at the border of what society allows and what must be repressed, dependent on both of these forces for its existence. By Jung's estimation, the repressed elements of personality, which are the Otherized counterpart to our conscious Subject ego, "had become invisible under the influence and the pressure of being European...stand[ing] in unconscious opposition to myself."²⁰ The shadow Other that lays latent within the psyche thus represents the 'East' within, that which is undoubtedly constitutive of our being and yet goes unrecognized as such.

However, this consideration of subject-formation in psychoanalysis reveals a paradox inherent to Jung's position. On the one hand, analytical psychology is grounded in the belief of a reciprocal relationship between the conscious Self and the repressed Other and thus maintains that it is impossible for an individual's conscious ego to have full mastery of all the contents of the mind. This framework therefore denies any possibility for perfect objectivity, autonomy, or sovereignty. However, in order to validate these ideas, Jung needed to gather empirical evidence in support of the existence of the collective unconscious and was thereby required to occupy an authoritative position of mastery of materials belonging to foreign cultures. The system that he seeks to validate thus undermines the means of its own legitimacy by revealing the impossibility of objectivity (an ideal of empirical positivism) and of holding a position of authority (a foundational premise of Orientalism.) In short, the methods that Jung adopted to validate analytical psychology are necessarily and inherently subverted by the very ideas he employs them to prove.

Recognizing this paradox of Jung's position provides us with the tools to undermine the fictitious authority and autonomy of the 'Western' Subject. As a discourse of the Master,²¹ Orientalism not only places the 'West' in a position of sovereignty from which it is capable of instrumentalizing the 'East,' but paradoxically complicates the very idea of sovereignty in the act of subject-formation. Although the 'Western' Subject may

set the 'East' in its gaze and thus intellectually dominate it, this position of power is not secure. The 'West' requires the 'East' as a baseline against which it can compare and thus define itself in a process of specular identification-in-difference.²² The 'West' is further reliant on the 'East' to satisfy its need for recognition as an acting Subject in its own right. While the 'Eastern' Other may thus appear to be subjugated by the 'Western' Subject, it is ultimately constitutive of it.²³ Due to this definition by relationality, the distinctions between the two become blurred, revealing the deconstructive aporia over which the ideology of Orientalism is built. The 'West' as such is wholly dependent on the 'East,' destroying the sovereignty of the Subject and the Orientalist episteme that it supports.

In summation, even as Jung perpetuates Orientalist discourse through his intellectually dominating treatment of Tibetan Buddhism, he simultaneously allows for the possibility of deconstructing it. Interpreters of Jung have not previously actualized this possibility and his writings have thus had a detrimental impact on popular intellectual perspectives of the religion in the West. Reintroducing Jung's own voice to discussions on the application of his psychologism has enabled us to realize the deconstructive potential of his psychoanalytic lens and thereby reevaluate scholars that claim to offer a valid psychological perspective on Tibetan Buddhism.

Concluding Comments: Repurposing the Jungian Lens

Having completed our journey we may now raise the question once more: what should we do with Jung and his psychological interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism? Following traditional critiques, we could decry him for his dominating rhetoric and instrumentalization of Tibetan Buddhism that have ultimately contributed to long-standing misrepresentative accounts of the religion. We might echo Frithjof Schuon who labels psychoanalysis as an imposture, "firstly because it pretends to have discovered facts which have always been known...and secondly and chiefly because it attributes to itself functions that in reality are spiritual, and thus in practice puts itself in the place of religion."²⁴ If we agree with this condemnation of psychoanalysis as an imposture and the current state of affairs in the wake of Jung is really as bleak as critics contend then we might cast psychologism aside entirely.

However, as our archeology has demonstrated, the situation is not quite so simple and discounting psychologism entirely is hardly profitable. Jung's position as a Swiss psychologist writing in the early twentieth century shaped his personality, his academic works, and the resonance of his voice in contemporary portrayals of Tibetan Buddhism. Yet although Jung spoke from within this particular ideological matrix, his own system of beliefs is fundamentally at odds with its underlying assumptions regarding the possibility of sovereignty and objectivity. This tension between belief and the methods that are required to validate that belief is ultimately what is of greatest interest about Jung and discarding both the man and his psychologism ensures that the fruits of that tension will never ripen.

Therefore, we should not treat Jung strictly as a man with a misguided agenda to instrumentalize Tibetan Buddhism, but also as a lens into larger issues concerning the nature of discourse and subject formation. This lens has helped us bring psychologism's applicability to religion into focus as merely one strategy among many to discern the multiplicity of meanings contained within Tibetan Buddhism, as well as a lens that shines light back on Jung and analytical psychology. Furthermore, it is a lens into the (im)possibility of making statements about a foreign Other without simultaneously implicating ourselves in such statements. As such, it is also a lens that illuminates the contradictions of Orientalist epistemology as an inherently unstable system that claims to dominate an Otherized Object through the attainment of knowledge that the Other necessarily provides.

Far from silencing Jung's voice in conversations on Tibetan Buddhism, then, we must attempt to hear it in new ways. This thesis does not contend that it has offered all of the possibilities for repurposing Jung's voice, nor does it even suggest that it has provided sufficient analysis of the two new applications that we have managed to cover. Analysis of each repurposing could undoubtedly be the subject of an entire thesis in and of itself. Nevertheless, we have opened up a space for conversation that scholars have previously tried to close off, prompting a Jungian-inspired vision for the future. This is not a vision in which unfamiliar thought systems are domesticated into our usual, comfortable schemas, but one in which difference challenges each of us as observing Subjects to draw out a new form of understanding from within ourselves. In the spirit of

Jungian individuation, these encounters with Otherness strive not towards a concrete, teleological goal of being, but are catalysts for a process of indeterminate sublation that respects and, ultimately, loves the difference of the Other both for its uniqueness and for its potential to construct a broader and better informed Self.

¹ Rousseau, *Emile*, 76, quoted in Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 316.

² Spivak, "Translator's Preface," xlvii.

³ Jung, *MDR*, 222.

⁴ *Ibid.* 350.

⁵ *Ibid.* 351.

⁶ *Ibid.* 217; Jung, "Foreword to "Introduction to Zen Buddhism,"" *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 11: Psychology and Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 543.

⁷ Jung, "Commentary on The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation," 475.

⁸ *Ibid.* 275.

⁹ *Ibid.* 109.

¹⁰ Evans-Wentz, "Preface to the First Edition," xix.

¹¹ *Ibid.* xx.

¹² Evans-Wentz, "Introduction," *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 1.

¹³ Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 64.

¹⁴ Winkler, *Pilgrim of the Clear Light*, 44, quoted in Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 53.

¹⁵ Lopez, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: A Biography*, 149.

¹⁶ C.G. Jung, "Psychological Commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*," xlix.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* xliii.

¹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 20 quoted in Spivak, "Translator's Preface," xxii.

¹⁹ Jung, *MDR*, 238.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 244.

²¹ Bracher, "Functions of Language," 117.

²² M. Foucault, "Introduction," xxix.

²³ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998) 111.

²⁴ Schuon, "The Psychological Imposture," 98, quoted in Oldsmeadow, *Journeys East*, 313.

Appendix

The Tibetan Mandala in Practice: Entering a Space for Transformation

The Kalacakra initiation ritual brings together a multitude of elements of Tibetan Buddhist practice, drawing upon connections between devotionism, cosmology, physiology, and consciousness-altering soteriology. This in-depth exploration of these rites sheds light on the ways in which these elements are united, spacialized, and somaticized. These processes of spacialization and somaticization occur not only onto the cosmos and the human body, but within the sacred ritual space and visualized mandala palace as well. The initiation ceremony projects these four levels of the mandala onto each other and thereby creates an environment in which the mundane cosmos, body, and initiation grounds are divinized, presenting a unique opportunity for transforming consciousness.

In order to adequately undergo the Kalacakra initiation, practitioners are expected to have already attained a detailed conceptual understanding of emptiness, which enables them to adopt a non-dual-from-the-beginning approach.¹ This approach allows initiates to theoretically move between mandalas at different levels of existence, freed from the illusion of having a discrete self that is bound to a gross form. Once the initiate has entered the mandala, they can transmute this conceptual understanding into an experimental one, thus allowing them to perform the necessary purifications that lead to awakening.

The initiation process starts with the purification of the ritual space in order to transform the empowerment site into the Kalacakra mandala itself. Initiation is conferred by a vajra master, who sets up a square mandala table in the center of the space upon which the actual sand mandala will be constructed. He performs the “purification of grounds” in which monks plant ritual daggers in the ten directions of the mandala in order to bind hindering spirits that might interfere with the initiation. Additionally, the *vajra* master must then persuade the earth goddess to consent to release the ground for the construction of the mandala.² The master and monks each make devotional offerings to the twelve offering goddesses of the mandala, following which they populate the space with a number of vases and ritual implements, which are understood to each represent a

different deity in the mandala that will help initiates along the path to enlightenment and guard the sacred space from malevolent influences.³

Upon completion of purification of the grounds, the *vajra* master “claims the ground” by visualizing a transformation of his being into Kalacakra, creating a protective circle and mentally constructing the entire Kalacakra mandala in the air above the purified space. He then envisions that this meditated mandala is lowered and dissolved into the physical, spatially-bound conception of the mandala plotted out on earth, forging a union between mundane reality and the ideal of enlightened reality toward which practitioners strive. By dissolving the visualized mandala onto that of the sacred space of initiation, the mandala becomes a physical place in which the ideal teaching situation presented in the *Kalacakra Laghutantra* is created in ordinary space. It is within this space that all of the homologies described in the inner and outer aspects of the mandala come together, creating a Buddha Pure land in which initiates may be transformed.

Having completed the preparation and purification of the space, monks begin to draw the grid of lines from which the Kalacakra mandala will emerge. This grid is essential to aligning the specific mandala constructed within the space with its manifestation in the cosmos and within the individual. By creating a perfect similitude between the physical mandala created within the ritual space and those that exist within the cosmos and the human body, the *vajra* master invokes the divine forces of the mandala’s deities and invites them into the gross form that he has constructed.⁴

Having laid out the grid lines that form the foundation of the mandala, the *vajra* master and monks begin to apply the grains of colored sand that will ultimately form the image of the Kalacakra mandala. Over the following four days, monks painstakingly place each grain in its appropriate place as the mandala gradually comes to light. Upon its completion, a curtain is lowered on all four sides of the base to shield it from the uninitiated and a celebratory dance is performed as an offering to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the mandala.⁵



A completed Kalacakra sand mandala.⁶

On the ninth day, initiates officially enter the mandala site for the first time and recite *mantras* (sacred sounds) and make a *mudra* (hand gesture) in an act referred to as the “mandala offering.”⁷ As initiates enter the sacred space, they offer up not only the entirety their being, but also offer the entire mandala as the universe, which are united in this reciprocal relationship. Through this act of devotion, the offering is purified, transforming the space into a Pure Land for the initiate and cleansing their consciousness of cognitive obscurations.

Entering the mandala marks the beginning of the generation stage of deity yoga, during which initiates develop a clear image of the Kalacakra mandala and its 722 resident deities. This stage allows practitioners to familiarize themselves with the space and become accustomed to the final state at which their practice aims, as well as conditioned to the means by which they will enact the requisite changes. This entails achieving awareness of the innumerable homologies between their own being, the universe, and the mandala, which lays the foundation for conscious control of the forces operating within this holistic system. Having attained experiential awareness of these correspondences, initiates can free themselves from any illusions of ordinariness and

perceive their own being and the palace environment as composed of wholly pure and divine substances.⁸

The mandala palace is a square, multi-tiered structure composed of limitless quantities of various jewel substances that have been shaped by enlightened beings. An elaborate gateway that is intricately decorated with diamonds, gold, rubies, emeralds, and garlands of flowers faces each of the four cardinal directions.⁹ The Pure Land surrounding the palace is replete with gardens, lakes, charnel grounds, and mountains and is contained within protective rings composed of the five elements.¹⁰ Each floor of the palace itself represents a mandala in its own right, with the lowest level serving as the gross body mandala gradually ascending to the speech mandala, the mind mandala, the wisdom mandala, and, finally, the great bliss mandala.¹¹ At the center and apex of the mandala resides the central deity, often with a consort, and represents the culmination of the initiates' journey through the palace. There is not a single element of the mandala that is fortuitous: every aspect of its being has a symbolic meaning that the meditator must consciously attend to. During the visualization of the mandala palace, initiates must use the one-pointed concentration developed through meditation to imagine all the details of the Pure Land and the palace in perfect detail, so much so that the structure becomes like a holograph that can be viewed from all possible directions without obstruction. This visualization must be so precise that the initiate can visualize the entire palace and all of its occupants within a single drop of seed on the tip of the genitals and be able to maintain such a degree of vividness for hours on end as the initiation progresses.¹² The product of this visualization is not viewed as an intellectual construction, but as primordially true and as emergent from one's own wisdom nature.¹³ Recognizing the purity of the mandala palace is thus not an artificial imposition upon the space, but an unclouding of perception that allows initiates to see things as they truly are:

Perceiving the entire three worlds as illusory, and
expanding his shining and pure emblem, the *vajri* creates
[the mandala]...Moreover, O king, the entire generation of
the mandala is by means of the wisdom and method
beings.¹⁴

Similarly, once the image of the mandala palace is precisely fixed in the initiates' mind, that very same structure is consciously remapped onto their bodies, identifying parts of

the body, including the skeletal structure and internal organs, with various parts of the building and its resident deities¹⁵, thus reestablishing the human form as an ideal space for purification and enlightenment.

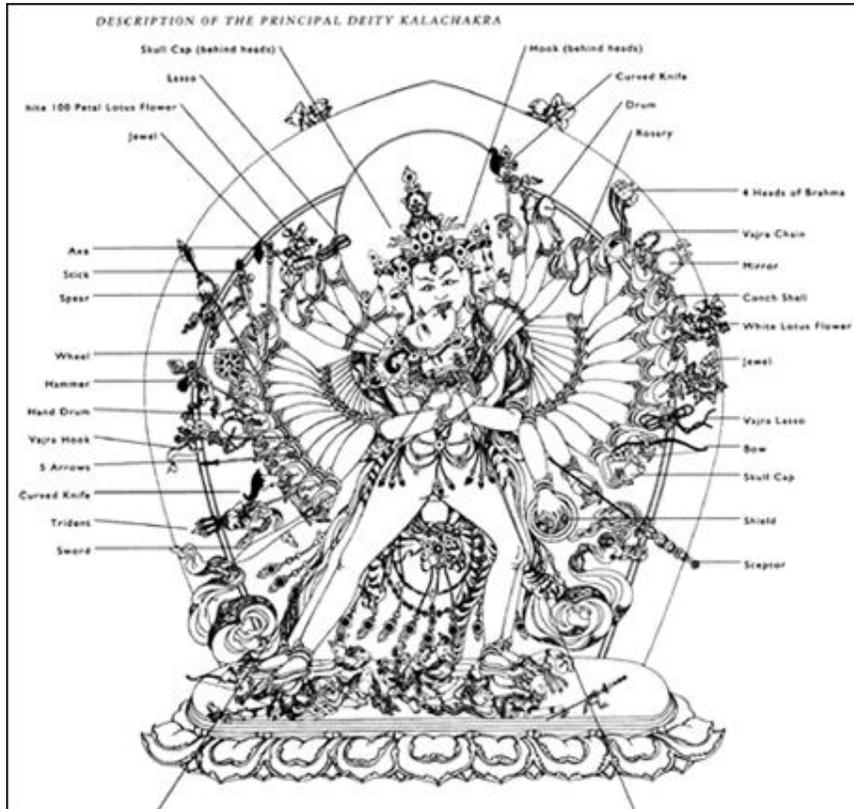
Once the mandala palace is perfectly fixed in the mind of initiates, they begin the process of mentally moving through the space, gradually spiraling from the periphery of the mandala on the lower levels toward its elevated center. On this journey, they visualize encounters with various divine, legendary, and historical enlightened beings that dwell in the palace. These deities are not viewed as having gross material bodies, but are composed of bodies of clear light to indicate their inherent emptiness. They are not treated as *nothing but* archetypes present in the human mind as a Jungian reading suggests but, rather, are representative of both cosmological and psychological relationships that come together in the psychophysical aggregates of sentient beings.

As initiates encounter these deities, they dissolve their own selfhood into emptiness, the foundation of all being, and reemerge as the deity, which is not viewed as different in kind from the initiate, but merely as another variation of emptiness and thus different only in degree. These encounters therefore serve as a way of familiarizing initiates with the possibility for self-transformation that arises from the fundamental emptiness of all phenomena. Different families of deities represent different phases of the development of a human fetus, which progresses from conception to birth as the initiate draws nearer to the center of the palace.¹⁶ This analogizing draws a strong parallel between the physical birth of a new human being and the emergence of a new conception of selfhood within an already-developed body. Each of the 722 deities that populate the Kalacakra mandala also corresponds to a different part of the gross human body, as well as to an energy center in the subtle body, forging further links between the Kalacakra mandala palace and the multiple dimensions in which the human body exists.

The apex and center of the palace is the dwelling place of the mandala's eponymous deity, Kalacakra, and his consort, Visvamatr. While larger sand mandalas may offer a pictorial representation of these two deities in union, they are more frequently represented as two grains of sand in the interest of economy of space.¹⁷ As initiates come upon Kalacakra, they are directed to meditate directly upon him:

He consists of wisdom and method. At the end of darkness, he brings forth immutable bliss due to the obstruction of the moon and the sun in the channels...He is empty and unique. Kalacakra is meditated upon as being without beginning, end, and middle, and as the sense object that is without sense objects.¹⁸

In this description, he is thus the final end towards which the *Kalacakra* path aims.



Kalacakra in union with his consort, Visvamatr¹⁹

Kalacakra is concretely visualized as having “one body, two feet, three throats, four splendid faces of diverse colors, six shoulders, twelve upper arms, twenty four lotus hands, and 360 knuckles.”²⁰ Each of Kalacakra’s hands wields a different ritual instrument. Not only do each of these ritual implements carry their own individual significance²¹, but Kalacakra’s body does as well, all the way down to the minute details such as the number of fingers and their distinct colors. As a brief illustration of these correspondences, Kalacakra’s six collarbones correspond to the six seasons of the year; his twenty-four arms symbolize the dark and light phases in a year; and his 360 phalanges

are analogous to the 360 days of the year and 360 units of the day, drawing a further parallel to the animals that occupy the lowest and outermost level of the mandala palace.

Kalacakra's union with his consort, Visvamatr, serves as a symbol of *unio mystica*, the union of the wisdom of emptiness (in the form of the female deity) and compassionate method (represented by the male deity). As with the metaphors of conception and gestation posed by the other deities of the mandala, this *unio mystica* draws attention to the importance of the human body and sexuality within the *Kalacakra* initiation and Buddhist Tantric practice in general. These elements of life must not be denied, but accepted, loved, and treated as the foundation of the energetic movements that occur within the body and bring about drastic changes in consciousness. As such, Kalacakra and Visvamatr's location at the center of the mandala is analogized to their positioning in relationship to human heart, which is the seat of the subtle mind and the space in which the individual will enact the final physiological changes corresponding to awakening enlightenment.²²

Following the generation stage, initiates move onto the completion stage, which is the period during which they actually make use of the embodied and spacialized homologies between their body, the universe, and the mandala palace. Having successfully visualized their own bodies as mandala palaces, initiates move beyond reliance on the architectural structure and enter a form of body isolation in which their bodies are perceived as wholly divine.²³ The coarse imaginings of the mandala palace and deity body that occurred in the generation stage allow practitioners to move beyond solely perceiving their bodies' gross form and onto its more subtle energetic level. Playing on both the correspondences established in the *Kalacakra Laghutantra* and within the generation stage, initiates capitalize on this awareness of the subtle body to actively direct their internal forces and bring about the physiological changes in the subtle body that Tibetan Tantrism correlates with enlightened existence. This consists of harnessing one's internal winds, arresting them within the body and directing them into the central channel. The winds then gather at the extremely subtle indestructible drop at the heart center,²⁴ which is the Clear Light of Buddha-nature, marking the moment at which the initiate becomes fully divinized as Kalacakra. This divinization endows initiates with enlightened wisdom and allows them to experience the emptiness of all

phenomena and escape cyclical existence of *samsara*, as well as with enlightened compassion, which impels them not to exit *samsara* altogether but to remain for the sake of alleviating the suffering of other sentient beings.

¹ Rhie and Thurman, *Mandala*, 130.

² Brauen, *The Mandala*, 76.

³ *Ibid.* 103.

⁴ McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 173.

⁵ Bryant, *Sand Mandala*, 145.

⁶ Image taken from <http://kalachakranet.org/mandala_kalachakra.html>, accessed 18 April 2014.

⁷ McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 167.

⁸ Rhie and Thurman, *Mandala*, 132.

⁹ *The Kalacakra Tantra: The Chapter on Sadhana*, 31-34.

¹⁰ Rhie and Thurman, *Mandala: The Architecture of Enlightenment*, 131.

¹¹ "The Kalacakra Mandala," *International Kalacakra Network*, 2011, accessed on 21 March 2014 <http://kalachakranet.org/mandala_kalachakra.html>.

¹² Rhie and Thurman, *Mandala*, 139.

¹³ Ricard, "Appendix B", 158.

¹⁴ *The Kalacakra Tantra: The Chapter on Sadhana*, 82 (III.51).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 125 (III.102).

¹⁶ Brauen, *The Mandala*, 111-112.

¹⁷ Bryant, *Sand Mandala*, 157.

¹⁸ *The Kalacakra Tantra: The Chapter on Sadhana*, 180 (IV.133).

¹⁹ Image taken from <<http://www.trimondi.de/SDLE/Part-1-04.htm>>, accessed on 18 April 2014.

²⁰ *The Kalacakra Tantra: The Chapter on Sadhana*, 14 (I.2).

²¹ *Ibid.* 40 (II.13-14).

²² Bryant, *Sand Mandala*, 155-157.

²³ Rhie and Thurman, *Mandala*, 132.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 140.

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