

# Review of: "First Days after Death - A Jungian Comparison between the Beliefs of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Post-mortem Experiences in the Tibetan Bardo Plan"

Yolanda Dreyer<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Pretoria

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

## Review Report

**Title:** First Days after Death – A Jungian Comparison between the Beliefs of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Post-mortem Experiences in the Tibetan Bardo Plan

**Article number:** 3RAJJ0

**Reviewer :** Prof Dr Yolanda Dreyer, University of Pretoria, South Africa

### *Academic contribution and quality*

The contribution of this interesting article is an innovative exploration and bringing together of three diverse strands namely Orthodox Christianity, the Buddhist Bardo Thodol and Jungian psychology as they intersect on matters regarding death. The article makes a convincing case for the constructive role of the study of comparative religions for communicating about the invisible. From the perspective of my context, I recognise some similarities with African cultural and religious traditions with regard to death, the period after death and the afterlife. This underscores the hypothesis of the article that cultural and spiritual views and practices from different traditions in conversation with psychological insights with regard to archetypal patterns can deepen the understanding of “human experience and the quest for spiritual fulfilment”. A future exploration of African perspectives in a similar vein as this article, will be equally fascinating.

The explanation of the second Bardo that involves “Peaceful Deities that personify emotions and Wrathful Deities emanating from the centre of the brain, representing reasoning” (p 11) seemingly contradicts insights from neuroscience and psychology regarding emotions as the domain of the limbic system or “primitive brain” (the more “dangerous” one) and the prefrontal cortex or “thinking brain” associated with reasoning and rational thought (the more “reliable” one, capable of good judgement and insight into long-term consequences). Engagement with this aspect and a psychological explanation of why in this tradition emotions are associated with “Peaceful Deities”, would be interesting.

### *Language and presentation*

The language is generally clear and of a high standard.

At the bottom of p 10 there is a reference to what will be described “in the following lines”, which sounds somewhat strange in English.

On p 15 there is a reference to “the previous chapter” and in the Conclusion section it is called “this paper”. Is this then a chapter in an edited book, a paper to be presented at a conference, of an article in a scholarly journal?

The bibliography is presented not in alphabetical order, but with what seems to indicate numbered footnotes in the text. However, the text does not contain footnotes.