

# 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"

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This article innovatively seeks to trace overarching themes through the writings of Carl Jung, the Bardo Thodol, and the theology of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In each corpus of ideas, the author notes certain similarities in how the passage of the soul is imagined after physical death. Such a broad and bold exercise has the potential to be extremely illuminating. However, I think that – beyond tentatively pointing to the potential connections between these philosophies – the article could drive home its central argument more forcefully. What, exactly, is the core message, apart from noting the very interesting ways in which these three approaches tessellate? Could the article be more assertive about the archetypal patterns it promises to reveal? As it stands, the conclusion only really reiterates the observations made in the main body of the text and points to the promise of further explorations in the future.

Some smaller points:

- I understand that the author has a personal connection to Serbian Orthodoxy – and I also recognise the importance of localised national traditions within the Orthodox Christian world. However, I wonder whether the argument would be strengthened by framing it in terms of broader claims about Orthodox Christian theology more generally? If the horizon of the piece is indeed universal archetypes, then a more encompassing purview of Orthodoxy might be more fitting.
- The author might think about clarifying how they use the terms 'Western' and 'Eastern'. Presumably the author evokes the 'Western' spiritual landscape to distinguish it from the 'Eastern' tradition of the Bardo Thodol. But there is a risk of confusion as Orthodoxy is often referred to as 'Eastern Christianity'. It might be worth making such distinctions clear. To my ears, at least, evoking the 'Western spiritual landscape' would imply Roman Catholicism, less so the Orthodox world.
- In the 'Religion' subsection, the author evokes 'we', presumably assuming a shared perspective with the readership. But who is implied here? Clinicians? Critically-minded scholars of religion? The lay public?
- This sentence caught my attention: 'publications about the Orthodox Church still remain somewhat hidden on the lowest shelves of bookstores'. This claim needs much more context. The author is surely not referring to contemporary Serbia, where bookshops often have very well-stocked sections about Orthodox practice and tradition. Is the claim actually about non Orthodox countries in Western Europe?

The author may also find it useful to consult:

Bandić, D. 2004. *Narodna religija Srba u 100 pojmova*. Belgrade: Nolit.

Bandić, D. 2008. *Carstvo zemaljsko i carstvo nebesko*. Belgrade: XX Vek.

Bandić, D. 2010. *Narodno pravoslavlje*. Belgrade: XX Vek.

I would also recommend looking at the work of the anthropologist Aleksandra Pavićević who has written widely on thanatology within the Serbian context.