



Ancient Indian Thought in the Formation of Jung's Psychology

(1896-1912)

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Abstract:

Eastern religion played a crucial role in the development of Jung's psychology. Jung's psychological interpretations of Eastern spiritual traditions were, in turn, among the most significant chapters in the psychologization of Eastern religions, one of the key features of their encounter with modernity. Most studies on Jung and Eastern thought, however, have concentrated on the period of his major interest, between 1921-1939, ignoring his earlier interpretations which established the foundations of his later interpretations. Jung's first discussions concern Indian religion, particularly the *Upanisads* and the *Vedas*, appear in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* (1912) and, later, in *Psychological Types* (1921). Indian references are also amongst the most frequent in *Liber Novus*, except for Christian ones. Prior to 1912, however, there are few references to Eastern thought in any of Jung's published works or correspondences. In this article, I aim to show that, nevertheless, a particular notion of 'Indian thought' entered implicitly into Jung's developing psychological notions prior to 1912, particularly his libido theory, mediated primarily by Schopenhauer's philosophy. Schopenhauer's understanding of Indian thought was, in turn, shaped by his reading of the *Oupnek'hat*, a text whose history reveals a complex conflation of European and Asian sources.

Key Word: Jung, history of psychology, eastern religion, the Upanisads

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1. *Introduction*

In 1909, having resigned from his position at the Burghölzli, Jung retired to his home in Küsnacht to devote himself to private practice and research. Having distanced himself from institutional psychiatry, he thought it necessary to develop a new attitude towards his patients and to the study of psychology in general. He immersed himself in mythological and religious texts from a diverse range of ancient cultures, including Egypt, Persia, India and Greece. The parallels he observed between the symbology of these texts seemed to suggest a phylogenetic layer to the unconscious, a universal psychological architecture that could not be reduced to Freud's exclusively sexual conception of libido.

Jung presented his insights in his 1911/12 publication, *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*, which was heavily revised and re-published in 1952 and represented his first mention of Indological sources in his published work. The *Upanishads* and the *Rig Veda*, both of which had been subject to a profusion of contemporary scholarship, featured prominently, constituting the most common religious references, apart from Christian ones. Initially, he used Indological materials to substantiate his argument against Freud's literal interpretation of the incest motif, which, both argued, played a decisive role in almost all world mythologies. Passages from the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas* were presented as evidence that the libido could be sublimated, or channelled, in a way that stimulated higher cultural development (Jung, 1916, pp. 388-400). In the 1952 revised edition, Jung argued that the incest theme might also symbolize the psyche's religious function. In other words, as he recounted to Aniela Jaffè years later, it could be considered suggestive of a 'highly religious aspect' of the psyche (Jung, 2019, p. 199). Originally, however, Jung considered *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* as an anti-religious text, insofar as his attitude to religion was reductive. Religious symbols simply depicted the typical movements of the libido.

Despite Jung's engagement in many projects during this period, it was also a time, as he conceded himself, of 'inner uncertainty' (Jung, 2019, p. 205). In 1913, he had a succession of apocalyptic visions, sparking a period of self-exploration in which he allowed spontaneous visions to emerge in his consciousness. Entering into his waking visions, he engaged and conversed with characters that he encountered, noting down his

conversations and interactions with them in what came to be known as the *Black Books*. This proved to be a crucial juncture in Jung's engagement with his Indological sources. Fragments of his Indological studies entered into his visions, becoming part of his personal cosmology, such as the figures of the Buddha and the goddess Kali, who appear in his early visions (Jung, 2009, p. 189).

Jung soon became dissatisfied with what he considered his own overly reductive approach to religion and mythology in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*. The primary data for his later scientific conceptualizations of his signature concepts were his experiences represented in the *Black Books*. The preponderance of Indological motifs therein suggests that, during this period of self-experimentation, Jung was intensely interested in Buddhist and Upanisadic notions, especially those that seemed to resonate with his own inner experiences. Jung's later interpretations of Eastern texts, such as his 1938/39 ETH lectures and his 1932 seminars on *Kundalini Yoga*, were later conceptualisations of his experiences in the *Black Books*. Eastern texts served as a cross-cultural point of reference to amplify the symbolic content of his own visions. Moreover, they suggested that his experiences had not been idiosyncratic. Rather, he became convinced that they enabled him to represent them as instances of universal and archetypal psychological processes (Shamdasani, 1996, p. xvii). Thus, for Jung, the East was not only an outward discovery made by philologists and historians, but an inner discovery that involved a recognition of one's phylogenetic inheritance.

It is helpful to distinguish three periods of Jung's encounter with 'Eastern religion', each marked by significant changes in his approach and engagement with Asian spiritual traditions. First, the period before the publication of *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* in 1912, in which Eastern philosophy entered his psychology indirectly, through figures such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, whom he had read during his years as a student. The second period, which spanned from 1912 until the mid-1920s, can be characterised by Jung's use of primary texts, including those published in contemporary sourcebooks on Indian philosophy, including Max Müller's fifty volume series, *The Sacred Books of the East* (1879-1910) and Paul Deussen's *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* (1914-1919), particularly the second volume, entitled *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (1908). During this period, Jung published *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* and *Psychological Types* (1921). In both works, he drew from the *Upanishads*

and the *Vedas* in order to amplify and corroborate his arguments for the endogenous origin of mythology. The third period, from the mid-1920s onwards, was characterized by a broader interest and a more nuanced understanding of Eastern thought, including Buddhism and Taoism, catalysed by personal acquaintances and collaboration with some of the world's most renowned orientalist, for instance, Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930), Heinrich Zimmer (1890-1943) and Caroline Rhys-Davids (1857-1942), amongst others, who took part in the Eranos conferences in Ascona.¹

In what follows, I shall concentrate on the first period, prior to the publication of *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* in 1912. I aim to demonstrate the role played by nineteenth and early twentieth-century representations of Indian philosophy, particularly the *Upanisads*, in the formation of Jung's developing psychological notions, particularly his theory of libido. As we shall see, the extent to which such representations in fact reflect Indian thought at all is more ambiguous than one might first imagine. Furthermore, Jung's early engagement with Indian thought was significant in the formation of his basic assumptions about Eastern religion, which remained relatively consistent throughout his career, and that later came to underlie his engagement with Eastern religion more generally.

Despite the increasing recognition that Jung's interpretations were key to the psychologization of Eastern religions (Buddhism in particular), this crucial early period has, until now, received relatively little scholarly attention. As I aim to show, it laid the foundations for Jung's more mature and nuanced interpretations of Eastern religions. In the 1930s, Jung's research focused on cross-cultural comparative studies on the individuation process, in which Eastern texts played a key role. His notion that Eastern religious texts and meditative practices were methods of engendering and systematizing the individuation process were adopted and developed by many eminent and contemporary Indologists, Sinologists and Buddhologists over the decades that followed (Knox, 2021). His hermeneutic, however, continued to be based on assumptions borne from his more generalised understanding of Eastern religion developed earlier in his career, which I will discuss in what follows.

¹ For the history of the extensive "third period" of Jung's engagement with contemporary Indologists, from the mid-1920s until 1939, see Bernardini (2011) and Knox (2021).

In Jung's early excavations on Eastern religion, there is little differentiation between Eastern religious traditions – rather, one finds a more generalised understanding of 'Eastern' soteriology. He assumed, from his reading of Schopenhauer, as well as the scholarship of contemporary Indologists such as Max Müller and Paul Deussen, that there existed an unbroken historical connection that ran throughout Indian religious traditions, culminating in the soteriology of the *Upanishads*. Buddhist teaching was, for example, merely a restatement, albeit in a different form, of the same universal and fundamental truth of the human soul found therein. This insight provided Jung, in his later works, such as those on Buddhist meditation and the psychology of Yoga, a uniting framework with which to compare Eastern soteriologies with one another. Crucially, this would allow him to draw parallels between Eastern religious ideas and his notion of individuation. Based on his reading of Schopenhauer, Müller and Deussen, Jung privileged the soteriology of the *Upanishads*. To put it succinctly, according to these authors, whatever could be said about the essential soteriology of the *Upanishads* applied equally to Buddhism, Jainism, and indeed more historically distinct religious systems such as Taoism. Later, for Jung, the *Upanishads*' (or what he took to be the 'Eastern') focus on the Self as the as a fundamental soteriological principle seemed to parallel his notion of individuation, which, in turn, developed from his self-experimentations recorded in *Liber Novus*. For instance, in *Psychological Types*, published in 1921, Jung devoted a chapter to the *Upanishads*, entitled 'The Brahmanic Conception of the Problem of Opposites', which foreshadows his later conceptualisations of the individuation process. In this chapter, *Brahman* is considered to be a psychological condition, in which a state of deliverance from the opposites is achieved. Indeed, the same assumption underlay Jung's later conceptualisation of the Buddha as a symbol of the cross-cultural archetype of the Self, which he discussed for instance, in his lectures on the 'Psychology of Yoga and Meditation' at the Eigenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH), delivered in Zürich between 1938 and 1939. A thorough, historical study of Jung's early interpretations of the *Upanishads* is, therefore, crucial in contextualising his later conceptualisations of Eastern thought.

2. Arthur Schopenhauer

Between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, while he was still at school, Jung read widely in the history of philosophy. As he recalled in his semi-autobiographical memoir, he soon gained 'a bird's eye view of everything that had been thought in this field' (Jung, 2019, pp. 88-89). He was attracted to philosophies of the ancient Greeks - Heraclitus, Plato, Pythagoras and Empedocles, but disliked the intellectualism of St. Thomas and the critical philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries following Hegel. The 'great find', however, resulting from his researches was Schopenhauer. Jung remarked:

He was the first to speak of the suffering of the world ... which the others hardly seemed to notice and always tried to resolve into an all-embracing harmony and comprehensibility ... He spoke neither of the all-good or the all-wise providence of a Creator, nor of the harmony of the cosmos, but stated bluntly that a fundamental flaw underlay the sorrowful course of human history and the cruelty of nature: the blindness of the world-creating Will (Jung, 2019, p. 312).

In the first book of *World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer argued that, for centuries, most of western philosophy had only concerned itself with the world of appearances, the world as it is represented to consciousness. This constituted merely the superficial dimension of reality, beneath which lay hidden a deeper nature, the world as 'Will' (Schopenhauer, 1969, 1:1-9). Since, following Kant, Schopenhauer considered the world as Idea to be mediated by the a priori conditions of experience, namely time, space and causality, which the mind superimposes onto experience, appearances could never yield knowledge of the true nature of reality as it is in itself (Kant's 'noumenal world'). Yet it was precisely knowledge of the essential nature of reality, rather than that of appearances, which philosophers were tasked with seeking. The world as 'Will', rather, was an indivisible whole whose division into particulars (the *principium individuationis*) produced the phenomenal world. Although the thing-in-itself might seem at first inaccessible to experience, Schopenhauer argued that some access to it could be gained through the body, which can be experienced both mediately, as an object encountered in the world, and immediately, in other words, as Will. Introspection reveals the Will to be a blind, directionless striving that constitutes the inner essence of all beings (Schopenhauer, 1969, pp. 112-119)

In the fourth book of *World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer argued that it followed from his notion of the Will that suffering was built into the nature of the

phenomenal world as such. Human nature was condemned to perpetual willing, from which there could only be temporary relief through achievement of the object of such willing. Only insight into the Will as such beyond the world of appearances could grant a chance of escape from suffering. The aim of the ascetic, therefore, was the eclipse of the self by extinguishing desire.

3. Die Methode der Inder

Schopenhauer recognised that these two fundamental insights, the Will as the unitary ground of the phenomenal world and its essence as suffering, were inspired by his reading of Indian philosophy. Not only his conclusions, but also his phenomenological methodology, were reflected in the verses of the ancient Indian *Upanisads* (App, 2014). Implicit in them was the claim, paralleling Schopenhauer's own view, that insight into the nature of the whole universe could be gained by inquiring into the subject of experience. Such methodology seems to be expressed clearly in the copy of the *Upanisads* that Schopenhauer consulted, called the *Oupnek'hat*, about which more shall we said in due course, in passages such as the following:

Whoever knows this link that is firmly tying together everything and the essence found inside: he knows *Brahm*, knows the worlds, knows the *fereschtehha* [angels], knows the books of the Veda, knows the sacrifices, knows the elements, knows himself, knows everything (Duperron 1801, p. 196, as cited in App, 2014, p. 212).

Schopenhauer wrote a note in his copy of the *Oupnek'hat*, in the margins of one of the first passages that specifically addresses Indian doctrines, that this methodological starting point was a general expression of a more ancient philosophy. He called this 'die Methode der Inder', 'The Indian Method' (App, 2014, p. 211). Followed to its natural conclusion, the Indian Method revealed the Will as the underlying essence of the phenomenal universe. Although Schopenhauer regarded Kant's doctrine that experience is filtered through the *a priori* conditions of space and time to be one of the few proven metaphysical doctrines, he also considered the doctrine itself to be more ancient than Kant's formulation of it. Rather, it constituted, he argued, a central and underlying premise of the *Upanisads*. '[This] constitutes', wrote Schopenhauer, 'a principal and

fundamental doctrine of the world's oldest book, the sacred *Vedas*, whose dogmatic part, or rather the esoteric teaching, we possess in the *Upanisads*. There we find that great doctrine [of the Will] on almost every page. It is unflaggingly repeated in countless formulations and expounded by means of various metaphors and similes' (Schopenhauer, 1988, p. 268).

According to Schopenhauer, the web of *Maya*, the 'veil of deception' (Schopenhauer, 1969, p. 31) espoused in the *Upanisads*, was equivalent to the world of appearances, that is, 'phenomena', as opposed to the 'thing-in-itself'. In the first book of *The World as Will and Idea*, he wrote:

Lastly, the ancient wisdom of the Indian philosophers declares, "It is Mâyâ, the veil of deception, which blinds the eyes of mortals, and makes them behold a world of which they cannot say either that it is or that it is not: for it is like a dream; it is like the sunshine on the sand which the traveller takes from afar for water, or the stray piece of rope he mistakes for a snake." (These similes are repeated in innumerable passages of the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*.) But what all these mean, and that of which they all speak, is nothing more than what we have just considered—the world as idea subject to the principle of sufficient reason (Schopenhauer, 1969, p. 199).

Indian philosophy had, Schopenhauer argued, probed more profoundly into the nature of the 'thing-in-itself' than western philosophy ever had, formulating a soteriology that aimed at achieving freedom from the fetters of perpetual striving of the Will. Liberation was to be found not through attrition of willing as such, but rather through the development of the intellect, so that consciousness was enhanced to the contemplation of the 'pure, will-less, timeless subject of knowledge' (Schopenhauer, 1969, p. 195). This state of contemplation had been represented in Indian philosophy by the image of the Buddha, who, Schopenhauer believed, epitomised the achievement of the ascetic ideal, that is to say, the eclipse of the self through the extinction of desire. In the *World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer quotes Spence Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*:

'Buddha says 'My followers reject the thought, this am I, or this is mine.' On the whole, provided that one disregards the forms conditioned by external influences and is probing the essence of the matter, one will find that Shakyamuni (Buddha) and Meister Eckhart teach the same thing – with the difference that the former was able to express matters

without encumbrance, whereas the latter had to wrap them in the robe of the Christian myth and was obliged to adapt his utterance to it' (Schopenhauer, 1969, 2:48).

In a notebook called 'Senilia', he wrote that in Buddhism 'one finds the same thought [as Meister Eckhart], unimpaired by such mythology and therefore simple and clear, as far as a religion can be clear. With me there is full clarity' (Schopenhauer, 1985, 4:28). In the margins, he added, 'Buddha, Eckhart and I teach essentially the same thing; Eckhart in the fetters of his Christian mythology' (Schopenhauer, 1985, 4:28). It should be remembered, however, that the association that Schopenhauer inherited, namely of the Buddha as a symbol of the culmination of the doctrines of the *Upanisads* was a common yet erroneous trope among nineteenth and early-twentieth century Indologists.²

4. *The Zofingia Lectures*

Jung's library in Küsnacht contains various editions of Schopenhauer's works, published between 1891 and 1895. Jung borrowed Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena* on the 4th of May 1897 from Basel university library. The same text was soon after bought for him by his mother in the Raphael von Koeber edition, with a dedication inscribed 'd.d.d. [dedit, dedicavit et dat] mater carissima benevolentissima optime filio' (Liebscher, 2014, pp. 312-316). Between 1896 and 1899, when he was between twenty-one and twenty-three years old, Jung delivered five lectures to the Basler Burschenschaft Zofingia. Schopenhauer's *Parerga* featured prominently. Over the course of his lectures, he criticised the contemporary climate of scientific positivism, citing Kant and Schopenhauer in defence of his thesis. Scientific discoveries, he argued, always advanced towards an unknown and transcendental postulate, which he equated with Kant's *Ding-an-sich*. Science, therefore, belonged essentially to 'a world of the invisible and incomprehensible, a continuation of material nature into the incalculable, the immeasurable, and the inscrutable' (Jung, 1983, p. 72).

Schopenhauer's philosophy had a lasting effect on Jung. In his 1925 seminar, he remarked that his understanding of the unconscious had first become 'enlightened through Schopenhauer and von Hartmann'. Von Hartmann, whom he called 'Schopenhauer's heir', added, he believed, the 'absolutely essential element of purposeful intention' to

² For more on the conflation between Vedanta and Buddhist soteriology see J. Bronkhorst (2009).

Schopenhauer's Will (Jung, 1983, p. 71). This was a significant point of departure from Schopenhauer's characterisation of the action of the Will as 'blind'. We can infer, Jung argued, according to the principle of sufficient reason, that all deliberate actions are performed with an intention in mind. Moreover, so-called instinctual actions, which Schopenhauer had described as early stages of objectifications of the Will, were, Jung continued, simply those actions whose 'true motivation is a purposeful idea which is unknown to us' (Jung, 1983, p. 68).

The impact of Schopenhauer's philosophy on the development of Jung's thought is evident as early as 1896, when he delivered a series of lectures before the Zofingia Society between 1896 and 1899. In his 1898 lecture, 'Thoughts on the value and nature of speculative inquiry', he remarked that it was Schopenhauer's notion of the Will that made Kant's 'thing-in-itself' a useful philosophical concept. The Zofingia lectures represent one of Jung's earliest attempts at integrating his esoteric interests and his scientific career into a unified worldview. He critiqued the contemporary climate of scientific positivism and materialism, defending the possibility of empirical verification of the unconscious, clairvoyance and telepathic phenomena by invoking Kant's and Schopenhauer's arguments on the idealism of space and time as an explanatory framework. Over the course of the lectures, and particularly in his fourth lecture entitled 'Thoughts on the Nature and Value of Speculative Inquiry', Jung posited a precursor to his broadened notion of libido; a 'vital principle' that constituted the underlying essence of phenomena. As he put it in the Zofingia Lectures this was an 'equivalent [concept] to the "life-force" of the ancient physiologists' (Jung, 1983, p. 29). He explicitly identified the notion of the vital principle with Schopenhauer's Will, arguing that only knowledge of it, responsible for maintaining 'an accord between the organism and its environment,' would enable a 'glimpse [into] nature's abyss' and could expand our knowledge of organic life (Jung, 1983). Crucially, in accordance with Schopenhauer's epistemology, the vital principle could not be grasped reductively, nor materialistically, but only indirectly through phenomenological introspection, as Schopenhauer named it, 'die Methode der Inder'.³ As late as 1952, Jung acknowledged his enduring indebtedness to Schopenhauer when he

³ For a discussion of the significance of Schopenhauer's philosophy for Jung's psychology in a more general sense, see Jarrett (1999)

claimed that 'to Schopenhauer I owe the dynamic view of the psyche; the 'Will' is the libido that is back of everything' (Jung, 1977, p. 207).

5. Schopenhauer's Buddha

In his 1897 Zofingia lecture, Jung celebrated Schopenhauer's 'sharp eye for the inner strife of the human heart' (Jung, 1983, p. 78). Unlike most philosophers who adhered to monism, he argued, Schopenhauer's philosophy was not merely an attempt to escape life's suffering. Instead, he understood 'the profound significance, for philosophy, of human suffering'⁴ and, therefore, assigned to it a central place' in his thought (Jung, 1983, p. 78). Suffering, Jung claimed, 'is the first element that Schopenhauer derives from the blindness of his primal Will. Hartmann regards it as the ground of all existence' (Jung, 1983, p. 78). As mentioned above, Schopenhauer developed his views on suffering after having read the first nine volumes of the *Journal Asiatique* between 1825 and 1826, which contained, among other texts, 'exceedingly beautiful portrayals of the life and esoteric teaching of "Fo"',⁵ whom Schopenhauer identified as Buddha, by the French orientalist Michel Deshautes de La Moignon (1724-95). He found in the Buddhist texts 'wonderful agreement with [his] system' (Schopenhauer, 1985, p. 3015). The Buddha, he believed, taught that suffering could only be overcome through the achievement of *Niebam* (*nirvana*), which he conceived as a kind of annihilation, resulting in an absence of suffering. It was a religion which taught a system of morality, yet was profoundly atheistic, pessimistic and conformed to philosophical idealism. Buddhism, therefore, became for Schopenhauer the paradigmatic 'religion of truth' (Schopenhauer, 1969, 2:19). 'If I wished to take the results of my philosophy as the standard of truth', Schopenhauer wrote, 'I should have to concede to Buddhism pre-eminence over the others' (Schopenhauer, 1969, 2:19). The Buddha, in other words, came to symbolise the individual's overcoming of the Will. In fact, Schopenhauer's personal interest in Buddhism predated any knowledge of the *Upanisads* or, indeed, his scholarly or theoretical interest in Buddhism. At seventeen years old, during his travels in Europe,

⁴ Jung, C. G. (1983). *Zofingia lectures* (J. van Heurck, Trans.). Princeton University Press.

⁵ "Fo" was the name given to one of the idols that came to be identified with the Buddha by European scholars in the late seventeenth century. The name derives from the Chinese character *fō* that was pronounced *budh*. See Lopez (2016, pp- 80_93)..

Schopenhauer expressed the affinity of his own experience of suffering with those described by the Buddha. He wrote in his travel diary, 'In my seventeenth year, I was seized by the misery of life as Buddha was in his youth, when he saw sickness, old age, pain and death' (Schopenhauer, 1985, p. 96). This experience was a transformative moment in his worldview, one that eventually led him to reject Christianity, or, as he put it, the 'Jewish dogmas that had been impressed upon [him]' (Schopenhauer, 1985, p. 96). His early sympathy for Buddhist philosophy, coupled with his later reading of Buddhist texts, led to his conviction that he and Buddha shared an identical *Weltanschauung*, although his was filtered through a modern European conceptual framework.⁶ Although, at this time, Jung was yet to study Indian philosophy with reference to primary sources, Schopenhauer's was among the first presentations of Buddhism Jung encountered.

6. *The Oupnek'hat*

So far, we have established that Schopenhauer's notion of the Will was a central precursor to Jung's early conceptualisation of the vital principle in the Zofingia lectures. Jung's psychological re-configuration of Schopenhauer's philosophy resulted in a broadened notion of libido, proposed in the second section of *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*, whose formulation signalled his departure from Freud's libido theory. He argued that the concept should be general enough 'to cover all the diverse manifestations of the will in Schopenhauer's sense' (Jung, 1916, p. 122). Significantly, this is when Jung first uses Indian sources in support of his theory. This fact is not surprising considering that Schopenhauer's philosophy of Will was, in turn, inspired by his reading of Indian philosophy. Jung would have been aware of the affinity that Schopenhauer believed existed between his own thought and the ancient Indian philosophy of the *Upanisads*, a fact about which Schopenhauer himself made no secret. The apparent connection between the *Upanisads*, Schopenhauer's philosophy and its significance in the development of Jung's libido theory, however, becomes more intricate when we consider the history of Schopenhauer's primary sourcebook on what he supposed to be this ancient 'Indian philosophy'.

⁶ For further discussion of this theme, see Lüktehaus (1988, pp. 615–626).

Schopenhauer first encountered Indian philosophy in December 1813, when he borrowed two volumes of the *Asiatisches Magazin* containing Frederic Majer's translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* from the Weimar Ducal library. Yet it wasn't until a year later, when he was sent a copy of a Latin translation of the *Upanisads*, entitled '*Oupnek'hat, id est, segretum tremendum*' ('secret to be safeguarded'), that he became captivated. Schopenhauer supposedly kept the *Oupnek'hat* constantly by his bedside and, according to his friend, Wilhelm Gwinner, would routinely read it 'before going to bed ... in order to perform his prayers' (Gwinner, 1862, p. 215). Gwinner also remarked that the book remained his solace until the final hours of his life (Gwinner, 1862, p. 215). Schopenhauer himself wrote:

Everyone who has become familiar with that incomparable book [the *Oupnek'hat*] is stirred by that spirit to the very depths of his soul. How does every line display its firm, definite and harmonious meaning. From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit (Schopenhauer, 1974, 2:437).

The *Oupnek'hat* stimulated Schopenhauer's metaphysics of Will.⁷ He proclaimed it the greatest influence on his metaphysics, eclipsing that of his two predecessors, Kant and Plato. He envisaged his own philosophy of Will as communicating the teachings of the *Oupnek'hat* in the rational language of modern philosophy. 'If the reader ... has shared in the benefits of the Vedas', he wrote, 'access to which is granted by the *Upanisads* ... then he is best of all prepared to hear what I have to say to him' (Schopenhauer, 1969, 1:p. xv). His metaphysics resembled its teachings so closely, he argued, that he considered himself to be in a better position to interpret its meaning than contemporary Sanskritists and philologists. Without a firm grounding in Kant's transcendental idealism, he remarked, they were in no better position to understand the meaning of their texts 'than the higher class of schoolboys their Greek' (Schopenhauer, 1969, 1: p. XV)

Yet Schopenhauer, like many of his contemporaries, was unaware of the idiosyncratic history of the *Oupnek'hat*. Its translator, the French philologist and expert in Persian language, Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), was convinced that he

⁷ For more on how the *Oupnek'hat* inspired some of Schopenhauer's signature concepts, see App (2014, pp. 199_301).

had found manuscripts of original Sanskrit texts, translated into Persian, which espoused the 'complete system of Indian theology' (Anquetil-Duperron, 1778, p. 21). The Persian title of the text was the *Sirr-i Akbar* ['The Great Secret']. Duperron's initial philological interest was in Sanskrit and the *Vedas*. Years earlier, between 1755 and 1761, he had travelled to India, intending to identify the basis of the religious institutions of all of Asia, which he believed would be found in the *Vedas*.⁸ His attempt failed, in part because his Sanskrit studies did not progress as he had intended, and in part due to difficulties purchasing the appropriate Veda manuscripts. Instead, he focused his studies on the Zoroastrian texts from Surat, in India, written in Persian. When the *Sirr-i-Akbar* fell into his hands, however, he embarked on a translation, hoping that his work would be the first translation of the Sanskrit *Upanisads* (albeit redacted from Persian), into a European language. His translation was first published in French in 1787, under the title *The Basis of Indian Theology, Drawn from the Vedas*.

The *Sirr-i-akbar*, he believed, was Duperron's long sought-for quintessence of the *Vedas*. It was, in his view, mankind's earliest record of what he believed to be the *theologia perennis*, an assumption that may be attributed to his Christian background and theology.⁹ The first translation of the *Sirr-i-akbar* was accompanied by Duperron's commentary, in which he argued that the *Upanishads* presented the same truths as the works of the Platonics; and speculated that these philosophers have received them from ancient Indian sources. He proceeded to demonstrate resonances with Christian doctrine. His translation of the word 'Oum', for example, with which the Upanishad texts begins, renders it as 'Dieu'. Rather than invalidating Christian doctrine, the monism of the Upanishads could serve to reveal God's original message to humankind. In the commentary to the French edition, he wrote that 'the publication of these sources is useful to her [viz, the Christian religion] as it furnishes the testimony of two great nations in favour of the existence, attributes and actions of the supreme Being as well as the duty and destiny of man' (App, 2014, p. 286). The fundamental message, he continued, of the *Sirr-i Akbar* does 'not differ from the Logos of God of the sublime Evangelist (John I, 1-3)' (Duperron, 1802, 2:730).

⁸ For more the intellectual and biographical context of Duperron's perennialist interpretation of Indian religion, see Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat (2005, pp. 1261–1280).

⁹ Duperron had initially enrolled in theological study at university with the intention of becoming a priest, like his elder brother.

Both expressed, in Duperron's view, the secret doctrine common to all sacred texts, including the Books of Solomon, the classic texts of Confucianism, the Zoroastrian Avesta and the Neoplatonists (Duperron, 1802, 2:730).

Duperron soon became dissatisfied with his French translation of the *Sirr-i Akbar*. Moreover, his translation gained little traction among contemporary scholars. He decided, therefore, to re-translate the Persian text into Latin, supposing a greater confluence with Persian. He entitled his second translation *Oupnek'hat, id est, Secretum tegendum*, reflecting what he believed to be the perennial theology it espoused. His translation, however, was expensive, rare, unintelligible to most readers unversed in Latin, and soon fell out of print. Soon, however, it fell into the hands of Schopenhauer, whose interest gave the book a new lease of life and opened the most significant chapter in the history of the reception of the *Upanisads*. The seminal philologist and editor of the *Sacred Books of the East*, Max Müller, later described Schopenhauer as the only 'intrepid' thinker who could have been able to 'discover a thread through such a labyrinth' (Müller, 1962, p. lviii).

Yet the *Sirr-i-akbar*, the text upon which Duperron's translations were based, was not, contrary to Duperron's belief, a Persian copy of the Sanskrit *Upanisads*. The text that inspired Schopenhauer's philosophy and that Jung would later consult was, in fact, the product of a project by the crown prince and the Mughal empire, Dara Shikôh (1615-1659), who in 1656 had assembled a team of experts on world religions in Benares with the intention of producing the first ever translation of fifty Upanishads from Sanskrit into Persian.¹⁰ Prince Dara was a Sufi by birth, but from a young age became fascinated by the possibility of achieving experiential oneness with God, referred to as *tauhid* in Sufi literature. During his youth, he had studied under the guidance of Sufi masters, applying various techniques, including control of the breath, in his meditative practices. *Tauhid*, he believed, was the final state of Sufi perfection in which the illusion of a separate self was extinguished, giving rise to a sense of primordial oneness (Göbel-Gross, 1962, p. 15).

¹⁰ For details regarding Prince Dara and his team of experts, which included scholars of Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism, see Hasrat (1982).

Orthodox Islamic scholars, however, considered Dara's emphasis on *tauhid* heretical. Frustrated by conventional Islamic scholarship, Dara turned towards the sacred scriptures of other religions, searching for corroboration of his notion of *tauhid* (App, 2014, p. 135). Eventually, he found support from what he believed were the world's most ancient record of divine revelation: the Indian *Vedas*, of which it was incorrectly assumed that the *Upanishads* were the philosophical and esoteric core.¹¹ Dara became convinced that the *Upanishads* taught a secret doctrine that had been alluded to in the Koran: the extinction of the I, resulting in a merging with Allah. 'The *Upanishads* are even mentioned in the Koran', he remarked, 'since it speaks of a hidden book which only someone with a pure heart can comprehend (Göbel-Gross, 1962, pp.13-18).' The Indian texts, he argued, taught an experiential wisdom that lay at the heart of all world religions, containing 'all the secrets ... of the meditation methods of *tauhid* (Göbel-Gross, 1962,, p. 15).' They were the clearest exposition of the experience that was called by different names in 'the Torah, the Evangelists, the Psalms, and other scriptures' (Göbel-Gross, p. 15) Indeed, he went so far as to argue that the *Upanisads* ought to be read as the Koran's primary commentary (Göbel-Gross, p. 15)

In 1657, the Persian translation containing fifty '*Upanisads*' was produced. Two years later, Dara was put to death for his heretical views on *tauhid*. The *Sirr-i-akbar*, however, survived and was copied many times. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the 'translations' contained copious commentaries, interwoven within the translation and indistinguishable from it to a reader.¹² These included elements from other Indian literature, such as Sankara's famous commentaries on the *Vedanta*, alongside passages from Sufi Masters, Greek philosophy, Zoroastrian lore and Christian missionaries, all of which Prince Dara had studied intensively during his search for cross-cultural confirmation for his views on *tauhid*. Moreover, Prince Dara and his team had carefully selected which sections of the *Upanisads* to include and expand with commentarial layers, and which of them to omit. Their choices reflected the Prince's own interests and his search for oneness with Allah. Philosophical passages, particularly expositions on

¹¹ This assumption continued amongst contemporary Indologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See, for example, the descriptions in Müller's *The Sacred Books of the East*, pp. lxvi-lxvii.

¹² For a study of the edits made by Prince Dara, see Dresden (1974), in Gignoux and Tafazzoli (Eds.), *Mémorial Jean de Menasce* (pp. 35–43). Fondation Culturelle Iranienne.

monism, were amplified by substantial commentary. Texts related to myth and ritual, on the other hand, tended to be abbreviated or omitted entirely. Rather than being a faithful translation of the *Upanisads*, the text that inspired Schopenhauer's philosophy of Will was not the ancient Indian verses, but rather, as historian Urs App suggested, 'a melting pot of Oriental and Occidental philosophies and religions' (App, 2014, p. 145), compiled to reflect Dara's search for oneness with Allah.

7. Jung's Oupnek'hat

The *Oupnek'hat*, through its impact Schopenhauer's metaphysics of Will, had an important intellectual impact on Jung's metapsychology. Yet the *Oupnek'hat* also had a more direct impact on Jung's interpretation of Eastern religion, constituting an important sourcebook during his studies of Eastern religion, although when Jung read it remains unclear. Jung owned a copy of Franz Mischel's German translation of Duperron's translation, which had been published in 1882. A copy can be found in his personal library. When Jung acquired the book or when exactly he consulted it are facts that remain unknown, since he does not reference the *Oupnek'hat* in any of the above works. It is possible that he consulted it while researching his major discussions on the *Upanisads* prior to 1912, in the second half of *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*, during his self-experimentations recorded in the *Black Books*, or in his discussions of Indian religion in *Psychological Types* (1921). Like Duperron and Schopenhauer, Jung believed the *Oupnek'hat* to embody the essence of Eastern thought. In 'The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man', the original German publication of which appeared in 1928 ('Das Seelenproblem des modernen Menschen'), he wrote:

It is certainly more than an amusing freak of history that just at the time of the Revolution a Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron, should be living in India and, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, brought back with him a translation of the Oupnek'hat a collection of fifty Upanishads, which gave the West its first deep insight into the baffling mind of the East. ... These forces [of the collective unconscious] worked also upon Anquetil du Perron and provoked an answer which has come down in history and speaks to us through the mouths of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. For he brought the Eastern mind to the West, and its influence upon us we cannot as yet measure (Jung, 1964, pp. 85-86).

Although the precise date is unknown, Jung certainly read the *Oupnek'hat* and found particular passages significant. His own copy is heavily annotated. Excerpts and summaries from the *Arthavaveda*, a hymn alluded to both in the calligraphic version of *Liber Novus* (Jung, 2009, p. 45) received particular attention. One such passage relates to the definition of the word 'Oum' and its proper ritual application. Jung annotated the following verses:

After saying the Oum, they asked Pradjapat: what is the origin of this word? What's the way to pronounce it? Is this sound male or female, or does it belong to either of them? Is it pronounced singular, dual, or plural? ... what is its explanation? What things takes shape from it, and with whom does it take shape? ... How many letters does it have ... and how many sounds ... what is it connected to and where is the origin in the body' (Duperron, 1882, pp.547-548).

At the bottom of the page, Jung added his own question, in Latin, writing 'and how can they drink it', [*et cum qua se id muiscent?*] (Duperron, 1882, p. 548). At the bottom of the following page, Jung attempted his own scansion of the word Oum, perhaps wishing to practice speaking it himself after reading.¹³ At the top of the page, he gave his translation of Oum, which followed Duperron's, namely 'God, Godhead, Being' ('Gott, Gottheit, Wesen') ((Duperron, 1882, p. 549), which is suggestive of the impact both Dara's search for *tauhid* and Duperron's subsequent monistic translation of the *Upanishads* had on Jung's interpretation of the text. Jung underlined several other passages relating to the word 'Oum' which describe the single primordial essence of the world. One such passage, for instance, reads that the *Arthavaveda* teaches the 'state of being absorbed in the primordial being, that I am That (Oum); in which man has entirely given up duality' ((Duperron, 1882, p. 553).

The *Oupnek'hat* was also a text for one of Jung's principal sources on Eastern religion, Paul Deussen, whose six-volume work, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, was amongst Jung's most cited works on Indian philosophy throughout his career. The second volume, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, was of particular interest to Jung, who

¹³ In a conversation in 1958 with one of the leading figures in the reception of Buddhism in the West, Alan Watts, Jung suggested that the sound 'Oum' was the primordial sound of the universe enjoying itself. (Minutes of the meeting between Jung and Watts were retrieved by the author through personal correspondence with Mark Watts).

frequently referenced it in *Psychological Types* (1921). Deussen's translations and commentaries on the *Upanisads* were based upon Duperron's *Oupnek'hat*. Yet Deussen, like Duperron himself, was not aware of the text's idiosyncratic history. Ironically, he believed Duperron's translations to be too faithful to the original *Upanisads*, arguing that his 'excessive literality' had obscured the texts' meaning, adding that only 'insight as keen as that of Schopenhauer' could decipher it (Deussen, 1908, p. 37). Deussen's own interpretation of the *Oupnek'hat* was coloured by his life-long interest in Schopenhauer's philosophy. In 1911, Deussen founded the Schopenhauer Society (*Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft*). In 1912, he became the first editor of the *Schopenhauer Jahrbucher*. According to his friend, Friedrich Nietzsche, it was Deussen's 'Kantian-Schopenhaurian preparation' that enabled him 'to know Indian philosophy from the inside' (Nietzsche, 1902, pp. 321-322).

Deussen followed the assumption, first made by Prince Dara in the *Sirr-i-Akbar*, echoed by Duperron and later still by Schopenhauer, that the *Upanishads* represented the culmination of Indian soteriology. They were for India, he wrote, 'like Parmenides and Plato [were] for the Greeks' (Deussen, 1908, p. 41). Unsurprisingly, given his own philosophical predilections and the *Oupnek'hat's* history, he found a 'marvellous agreement' between the *Upanishads* and the idealist philosophies of Kant and Schopenhauer (Deussen, 1907, p. 4). He emphasised the heterogenous development of their philosophies, comparing them to 'two calculators working by different methods [that] arrive at the same result' (Deussen, 1907, p. 4). The ancient Indians, he argued, knew long ago that the existence of an objective universe was only possible 'insofar as it is sustained by a knowing subject', identical in all individuals (Deussen, 1907, p. 4). In fact, they had anticipated Kant's doctrine, namely that the *a priori* conditions of experience, space and time, did not exist independently, but derived from this same subject.

In Deussen's view, the fundamental doctrine of the *Upanisads* was the 'best elucidation' of 'Plato's Ideas, the Christian God, Kant's Thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer's Will and the forces of natural science', all of which, he claimed, were 'one and the same thing' (Deussen, 1907, p. 148). The *Upanishads'* teaching of *maya* represented the most complete explanation of how the thing-in-itself, the One essence, could be at the same time, manifest in various, temporary forms. Unlike Schopenhauer, however, he argued

that, rather than contradicting Christian doctrine, the *Upanishads* put 'the finishing touches to Christian consciousness', making it 'on all sides consistent and complete' (Deussen, 1907, p. 49). By portraying the universe as essentially identical to Schopenhauer's 'pure knowing subject' of experience, the *Upanishads* reconciled all the 'fundamental contradictions of natural science, religion and philosophy [and] Darwinism and Christianity' (Deussen, 1907, p. 49). Deussen's interpretation of the *Upanishads*, therefore, although indebted to Schopenhauer, was less pessimistic than his predecessor's, positing, as it were, an intentionality to the Will, echoing Jung's criticism of Schopenhauer in his Zofingia lectures. Deussen's interpretation, therefore, provided welcome support for Jung's later conceptualisation of Indian religion, from one of the most prominent contemporary Indologists.

8. Conclusion

I have focused on Jung's 'first period' of engagement with Eastern thought, which spanned from his university years until 1912. I have argued that an understanding of this period of Jung's engagement with Indian thought set the stage for his later expositions of Eastern religion and meditative practices. Moreover, Indian thought (or, more accurately, the *Oupnek'hat*, mediated through Schopenhauer's reading of it), indirectly stimulated Jung's early broadened conception of the libido, which formed the groundwork of many of his signature psychological concepts that were to emerge later in his career. Furthermore, I have argued that the *Oupnek'hat* was an important sourcebook for Jung's research on Eastern religion in itself, as well as for Indologists whose translations and commentaries he consulted throughout his career. Yet far from being a literal translation of the *Upanishads*, the *Oupnek'hat* was a syncretistic text, an amalgamation of various spiritual and philosophical traditions reflecting its author's monistic philosophy. Therefore, 'Indian' thought, as Jung understood it during this period, played a significant role both in the development of his psychology and in shaping the trajectory of his later interpretations of Eastern religion.

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