

Inner Space/Outer Space: Terence McKenna's Jungian Psychedelic Ufology

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses the relationship between “inner space” (the mind/consciousness) and perceptions of “outer space” (the extraterrestrial) in Western psychedelic cultures. In particular, it analyses the writings and lectures of Terence McKenna, the most influential psychedelic thinker since the 1960s. Assimilating a broad range of ideas taken from esotericism, shamanism, and science fiction, McKenna became the principal architect of an occult theory of psychedelic experiences referred to here as “psychedelic ufology.” The article further argues that McKenna was formatively influenced by the ideas of Carl Jung and that, as such, subsequent psychedelic ufology tends to be Jungian.

KEYWORDS: Terence McKenna, Carl Jung, psychedelic ufology, UFOs, hallucinogens, shamanism, gnosis

During a lecture in Switzerland in 1995, the American psychedelic thinker Terence McKenna (1946-2000) claimed that if a person gave him “15 minutes of [their] life” (i.e. if he was given the time to administer an hallucinogen) he could guarantee “a 20% chance of meeting aliens—and the odds go up to maybe 40% if you increase the dose!”¹ While this can be interpreted as a playful comment about induced hallucinations rather than anything more profound, this would be a mistake. For McKenna it was no coincidence that “UFO contact [was]... the motif most frequently mentioned by people who take psilocybin recreationally.”² “At active levels, psilocybin induces visionary ideation of spacecraft, alien creatures, and alien information. There is a general futuristic, science fiction quality to the psilocybin experience that seems to originate from the same place as the modern myth of the UFO.”³ He is not alone in claiming this. Indeed, Rick Strassman, Slawek Wojtowicz, Luis Eduardo Luna, and Ede Frecska suggest that, “instead of searching for aliens in the sky, we should look much closer—inside ourselves.” By means of psychedelics we can follow “inner paths to outer space.”⁴

“Psychedelic ufology” concerns discourses about outer space and extraterrestrial visitation engendered by altered states of consciousness induced by hallucinogens. There are three general interpretations: (a) Psychedelic experiences of extraterrestrials are purely endogenous, a product of the mind under the influence of a powerful hallucinogen. This does not mean, of course, that they cannot also be significant moments of illumination. As the German anthropologist Christian Räscher has commented, inner space frequently “becomes a source of revelations to its bearer.”⁵ (b) Hallucinogens make contact possible with exogenous, independent entities from outer space or another dimension. (c) Often, however, interpretations of inner space/outer space experiences are ambiguous. While significant as moments of gnosis, it is not entirely clear to the user whether they are endogenous or exogenous. This was expressed well by Gracie, who, with Zarkov, was a pseudonymous psychedelic writer in the 1980s. In their *Notes from Underground* (which acknowledges the influence of McKenna⁶), she reflected on a “close encounter.”⁷ Although “the personal reality of these creatures seems indisputable during the contact... that interpretation runs into my normal skepticism when I am out of contact. Is the notion that these are *beings* merely the obvious interpretation of these phenomena by the human mind? Or is something else going on that we can only understand by interpreting it as an encounter with an alien being?”⁸

As to McKenna’s interpretation, in an interview towards the end of his life, he suggested that “DMT plunges us, not into our own unconscious, but into some sort of hyperspace or ‘interdimensional nexus’ with its own alien inhabitants. In other words, the entities are out there.”⁹ While this seems to place him within (b), his understanding is a little more complex: “my own personal encounter with a UFO has led me to view them as real, *whatever ‘real’ means*. They are *phenomenologically* real.”¹⁰ Having been introduced to Edmund Husserl’s (1859-1938) phenomenology as a student, he was attracted to its emphasis on the first-person analysis of consciousness. Indeed, he insisted that “not enough [had] been written about the phenomenology of personal experiences with visionary hallucinogens.”¹¹ McKenna’s phenomenological approach to the psychedelic experience, which is a good example of what the American writer and scholar Erik Davis has described as “weird naturalism,”¹² “requires the probing vector of empirical ‘exploration’ to turn within and to affirm extraordinary subjective

experience as data about a realm or dimension.”¹³ McKenna’s slippery articulation of weird naturalism makes him difficult to categorize. While his thought can be understood as rigorously (a), much of it is written as if he understands his experiences of inner space/outer space to be (b), which leads the reader to conclude that his approach is (c). In the final analysis, to use Jeffrey Kripal’s phrase, McKenna is probably best described as an “author of the impossible.” That is to say, he sought to convey ideas “too deep and disturbing to the neat rational lines of modernity and normal linear modes” of analysing subjective experience. He theorized the anomalous and “the fleeting signs of a consciousness not yet become culture” and, thereby, transgressed “those firm epistemological boundaries that,” as Kripal says, “since Descartes, have increasingly divided up our university departments (and our social reality) into things pertaining to matter and objective reality (the sciences) and things pertaining to human experience and subjective reality (the humanities).”¹⁴

Consequently, McKenna’s reasoning, which appears loose, speculative, eclectic, convoluted, slippery, unsystematic, and often ambiguous, disinclines scholars to take his work seriously. However, it is precisely this type of outré thought that many psychedelic explorers and spiritual seekers find evocative, inspiring, and, indeed, reflective of their own experiences. Indeed, McKenna’s work is not only becoming increasingly influential within shamanic and psychedelic cultures, but its openness to “forbidden science” seems to be attracting attention within the UFO community. As the anthropologist Chris Roth points out, firstly, “at a typical UFO interest group meeting in any American city, one can hear debates about social psychology, interdimensional physics, and the ethnography of shamanism,” and, secondly, “the names dropped are... likely to include Carl Jung, Terence McKenna... and Castaneda....”¹⁵ While Roth doesn’t develop this point, the references are important, in that they indicate a growing interest in psychedelic ufology.

BACKGROUND NOTES ON JOURNEYING TO INNER SPACE/OUTER SPACE

In his 1970 book *Annäherungen: Drogen und Rausch (Approaches: Drugs and Intoxication)*, the German writer Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) used the term “*psychonauten*” to refer to the psychedelic exploration of inner space.¹⁶ His interest in drugs and ecstatic experience led him to look at “the flower children of California” and

the “Provos of Amsterdam”¹⁷ who were exploring “realms that are closed to normal perception.”¹⁸ While few writers on drugs have taken an interest in Jünger’s work, his term “psychonaut” has found its way into late-modern psychedelic culture.¹⁹ This is because it describes very well the self-perception of those who use psychedelics to explore inner space. Not only is there a widely reported sense of transcending time and space,²⁰ but also there is a feeling of launching out into uncharted regions. Often the psychonaut experiences a perception of flight and even a feeling of weightlessness. Indeed, it is because this is a well-documented feature of trance states that many psychonauts have found shamanism useful for interpreting their experiences.²¹ As the anthropologist Michael Harner (1929-2018) commented, “one of the most typical aspects of the shamanistic experience is the change into another state of consciousness, often called a trance, with the shaman feeling that he is taking a journey. During the [1960s it became] common to speak of ‘taking a trip’ with a psychedelic substance, and this is no coincidence.”²²

Furthermore, bearing in mind the experience of journeying to other worlds, it is unsurprising that the accounts of some psychonauts are informed by science fiction and fantasy. Again, a good recent example is the book by Strassman, Wojtowicz, Luna, and Frecska, *Inner Paths to Outer Space: Journeys to Alien Worlds Through Psychedelics and Other Spiritual Technologies*. Not only do they claim that “more science fiction literature, art, and film” has “been inspired by mind-expanding experiences than most of us suspect,” but also that there are “secret gateways to alien worlds... hidden inside our own minds.” Hence their thesis that “humans already have been travelling in space and time and making contact with alien species” by means of psychedelics.²³ Certainly the neuroscientist and psychoanalyst, John Lilly (1915-2001), became convinced in the 1970s that Ketamine enabled communication with extraterrestrials.²⁴ Indeed, it is important to note that such ideas are not limited to post-1960s drug cultures. For example, in her 1961 book *Exploring Inner Space*, the American nutritionist Adelle Davis (1904-1974), who wrote under the pseudonym Jane Dunlap, made a number of references to “interplanetary travel” during LSD intoxication.²⁵ Again, over a century and a half prior to the psychedelic revolution of the 1960s, in 1799, the British chemist Humphry Davy (1778-1829) became convinced that nitrous oxide gave him access to “higher intelligences... wholly independent of human beings...” His visions transported

him into “fantastical immensities; experiences of a kind of interplanetary space travel, in the course of which, he flew or floated amongst heavenly universes... [and] encountered all manner of incredibly strange beings.”²⁶ This is abundantly evident in his final, posthumously published work, *Consolations in Travel, Or the Last Days of a Philosopher*, which includes a description of a trek through space, during which he received the ministrations of a “higher intelligence” that he referred to as “the Genius.”²⁷ He perceived “a luminous atmosphere, which was diffused over the whole of space.” Eventually, “it became more circumscribed and extended only to a limited spot around me.” He also experienced “rising continually upwards” as if “I were myself part of the ascending column of light.” He then saw “the moon and the stars.”

I passed by them as if it were in my power to touch them with my hand; I beheld Jupiter and Saturn as they appear through our best telescopes, but still more magnified, all the moons and belts of Jupiter being perfectly distinct, and the double ring of Saturn appearing in that state in which I have heard Herschel often express a wish he could see it. It seemed as if I were on the verge of the solar system... I again heard the low, sweet voice of the Genius, which said, “You are now on the verge of your own system: will you go further or return to earth?”²⁸

The path from “inner space” to “outer space” is well-trodden.

Finally, it is interesting that Strassman’s research into the effects of the powerful hallucinogen DMT (N, N-dimethyltryptamine) revealed striking similarities between the reports of those who had taken the drug and those who claim to have been abducted by aliens.²⁹ This led him to posit the thesis that abduction experiences might simply be the result of a spontaneous release of naturally occurring DMT in the human brain.³⁰ Likewise, the British parapsychologist Serena Roney-Dougal has argued that UFOs are more frequently reported at times of geomagnetic stress, which can cause the pineal gland to secrete this naturally occurring hallucinogen.³¹ While such claims remain largely speculative, nevertheless, the point is that the work done on the effects of endogenous DMT³² has, in some cases, led to the confluence of ufology and psychedelic research.

A MODERN MYTH OF THINGS SEEN IN THE SKIES

The ideas of Carl Jung (1875-1961) were embraced by many in the 1960s counterculture and, subsequently, within the burgeoning New Age milieu.³³ His image even appeared on the cover of The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that, although he was largely antagonistic to the use of hallucinogens,³⁴ his books found their way into the hands of spiritual seekers with an interest in psychedelics, esotericism, and the paranormal.

By the 1950s, Jung had begun to collect accounts of UFO sightings and, in 1958, published his thoughts on their significance in *Ein moderner Mythos*, which was translated in 1959 as *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*. Jung was, however, more concerned with the importance of UFOs as “psychic products” than he was with whether they were real or not.³⁵ That said, he did not simply dismiss the possibility of UFOs. As he commented in 1957 in a letter to Gilbert Harrison, the editor of *The New Republic*, “the psychological aspect is so impressive, that one almost must regret that the UFOs seem to be real after all.”³⁶ In the final analysis, while he acknowledged that there might be some empirical evidence for UFOs, he was generally agnostic as to their physical reality and far more interested in their psychological significance.³⁷ Jung's argument was simply that, even if “an unknown physical phenomenon is the outward cause of the myth, this would detract nothing from the myth, for many myths have meteorological and other phenomena as accompanying causes which by no means explain them.” This is because “a myth is essentially a product of the unconscious archetype and is therefore a symbol which requires psychological interpretation.”³⁸ That is to say, whether UFOs are entirely hallucinatory phenomena (although he preferred the term “vision” to “hallucination” because the latter term tends to be freighted with pathological baggage) or an individual's interpretation of some anomalous aerial event did not matter to Jung, because both involve the activity of the mind and, as such, tell us something about the experiencer. As to what they tell us, Jung made a number of points, five of which are of relevance to psychedelic ufology.

Firstly, why had “the rumour” of flying saucers spread so quickly? He concluded that there must be a collective psychic motive. That motive, he suggested, was the emotional

stress caused by the geopolitical tension of the Cold War—“Russian policies and their still unpredictable consequences.”³⁹ Interestingly, the political theorist Jodi Dean posited a similar argument in the late-1990s. Although she makes no reference to Jung, she argues that, the fact that “there are three adult Americans who believe UFOs are real for every two sceptics” is directly related to “current American paranoia and distrust.”⁴⁰ For Jung, the prevalence of UFO belief in the 1950s was symptomatic of Cold War angst: “the present world situation is calculated as never before to arouse expectations of a redeeming, supernatural event.”⁴¹ Similarly, we will see that, for McKenna, drawing on Jung, psychedelic close encounters enable access to redemptive alien gnosis in times of crisis.

Secondly, concerning this “redeeming, supernatural event,” Jung argued that, whereas earlier cultures would have considered “intervention from heaven as a matter of course,” in ostensibly secular societies, largely bereft of the mythic resources of the past, UFOs replace traditional deities as the agents of salvation. “We have indeed strayed far from the metaphysical certainties of the Middle Ages, but not so far that our historical and psychological background is empty of all metaphysical hope.”⁴² Hence, while this hope “activates an archetype that has always expressed order, deliverance, salvation, and wholeness,” it does so in a way “characteristic of our time.” It takes “the form of an object, a technological construction, in order to avoid the odiousness of a mythological personification.” His point is that, “anything that looks technological goes down without difficulty with modern man. The possibility of space travel makes the unpopular idea of a metaphysical intervention much more acceptable.”⁴³

Not only did this thesis appeal to McKenna, but it has become popular within subsequent psychedelic ufology. For example, in his discussion of psychedelics and contemporary shamanism, Luna (whose work is explicitly indebted to McKenna⁴⁴) comments that it “is not strange that the UFO motif, which is part of the modern imaginary—perhaps, as proposed by Jung, even an archetypal expression of our times—is used by shamans as a device for spiritual transportation into other worlds.”⁴⁵

Thirdly, an idea that informed McKenna’s understanding of UFOs was Jung’s alchemical interpretation of their protean nature. Indeed, Jung was intrigued by an account of a

dream, in which the UFO appeared fluid. Like “the great magician Mercurius” (i.e. mercury), who “falls as *aqua coelestis* from heaven,” so UFOs appear as “heavenly fluid,” like drops from the skies. He compared this to alchemical accounts of mercury, the “water of the Philosophers... the classic substance that transmutes the chemical elements and during their transformation is itself transformed.” Again, when volatilized, “*spiritus Mercurii*... was regarded as a kind of panacea, saviour, and *servitor mundi*.”⁴⁶ Not only are UFOs protean, appearing and disappearing in different forms, but they are typically interpreted as redemptive.

Fourthly, although UFOs are protean and sometimes “oblong or shaped like cigars,”⁴⁷ Jung was intrigued that reports indicate that they are predominantly saucer-shaped. This was important because, he argued, circular objects are symbols of “psychic wholeness” and the human self is teleologically oriented toward its own fulfilment/wholeness. Hence, “circular symbols have played an important role in every age.”⁴⁸ “There is an old saying that ‘God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference is nowhere.’ God in his omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence is a totality symbol *par excellence*, something round, complete, and perfect.”⁴⁹ Likewise, Jung made reference to the “philosopher’s stone,” the circular symbol of which is, like UFOs, an archetype of the self. Hence, both can also be usefully compared to mandalas,⁵⁰ in that they are “manifestations of totality whose simple, round form portrays the archetype of the self, which... plays the chief role in uniting apparently irreconcilable opposites and is therefore best suited to compensate the split-mindedness of our age.”⁵¹

To unpack the above point a little, fifthly, for Jung, mental wellbeing depends on the development of a functional relationship between the conscious psyche and the unconscious psyche. Much Jungian psychology is thus focussed on this relationship and the utilization of techniques to enable readjustment when it shows signs of “dissociation” or deterioration. In other words, this process of self-realization, which Jung called “individuation,” is a process of growth towards wholeness: “the psychological process that makes a human being an ‘individual’—a unique, indivisible unit or ‘whole man.’”⁵² Those “suffering from psychic dissociation”⁵³ lack wholeness because they are unaware of the troubling contents of their unconscious mind. The UFO (whatever it is occasioned by externally, if anything at all) emerges as a symbol of

psychic wholeness. It is a bridging manoeuvre that effectively represents a visit to the conscious mind of alien ideas from the unconscious mind. The goal is self-actualization through the integration of the conscious and the unconscious. Hence, for those in “vital psychic need,”⁵⁴ the circular UFO is effectively a vehicle of redemptive gnosis: “precisely because the conscious mind does not know about” the contents of the unconscious “and is therefore confronted with a situation from which there seems to be no way out, these strange contents cannot be integrated directly but seek to express themselves indirectly” as UFOs.⁵⁵ Ideally, therefore, the result of a close encounter with a flying saucer is one of healing whereby the conscious mind comes to terms with the troubling contents of the unconscious. Anxiety is gradually assuaged and the self is enabled to progress towards wholeness (i.e. individuation). Hence, although close encounters can be disturbing, they are part of a salvific process leading to “stability” and “inner peace.”⁵⁶ Likewise, McKenna understood psychedelic close encounters in terms of individuation. Indeed, since an early mushroom-induced UFO sighting he claimed that “all has been continuous transformation.”⁵⁷

While McKenna’s thought was informed by neo-shamanism, ethnobotany, esotericism, media theory, and science fiction, this confluence of influences was viewed through a Jungian lens. Hence, for example, developing Jung’s interpretation of UFOs as agents of redemptive gnosis from the unconscious mind, he suggested that psychonauts might also, during altered states of consciousness, receive visitors from another dimension: “right here and now, one quanta away, there is raging a universe of active intelligence that is transhuman, hyperdimensional, and extremely alien... What is driving religious feeling today is a wish for contact with this other universe.”⁵⁸

TERENCE MCKENNA’S PSYCHEDELIC UFOLOGY

While both psychedelic experiences and close encounters are notoriously discombobulating, they tend to be invested with, as William James (1842-1910) put it, a “noetic quality.” They are understood to be “states of knowledge... states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance....” As such, “they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time.”⁵⁹ McKenna agreed. The psychedelic experience is “a transdimensional doorway” to “hallucinogenically derived Gnostic Truth.”⁶⁰ This

explains his enigmatic statement, “the mushroom speaks.”⁶¹ It is a fungal “source of gnosis.”⁶² However, as we will see, he also argued that the mushroom is itself can be understood as an extraterrestrial communication technology. While “science is hard-pressed to admit that light years away there might be beings on planets in orbit around another star,” in fact, they “can be contacted within a moment if you have recourse to a certain chemical compound.”⁶³

Who was McKenna? He is one of the most widely cited late-modern psychedelic thinkers.⁶⁴ Whereas the theories of Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) and Timothy Leary (1920-1996) dominated the Easternized psychedelic thought of the 1960s, since then neo-shamanic interpretations of the psychedelic experience have become hegemonic. While this shift in the early 1970s can be explained by the popularity of books such as particularly Carlos Castaneda’s (1925-1998) *The Teachings of Don Juan* (1968) and *A Separate Reality* (1971), as well as the ideas of Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), Gordon Wasson (1898-1986), and Harner,⁶⁵ by the 1990s McKenna was being embraced as “the intellectual voice of rave culture.”⁶⁶ He is now recognized as “one of the pioneers of the psychedelic movement in the West.”⁶⁷ Along with a number of frankly bizarre esoteric ideas, including his Timewave Zero theory and the apocalyptic significance of 2012,⁶⁸ he became known for his identification of the mushroom as “a gateway to the intergalactic communication network.”⁶⁹ Not only were his writings widely read by a new generation of psychedelic spiritual seekers, but his lectures were sampled by popular musicians and he was invited to work with a number of artists and bands, most notably Zuvuya on *Dream Matrix Telemetry* (1993) and *Shamania* (1994), The Shamen on their single “Re: Evolution” (1993),⁷⁰ and Spacetime Continuum, who collaborated with him to produce the live multi-media event “Alien Dreamtime” at the Transmission Theater, San Francisco on 26-27 February, 1993.⁷¹ Indeed, not only did ufology *per se* become popular within psychedelic rave culture, but McKennan ideas have become increasingly conspicuous within the occult discourses of psychonauts, which are sometimes accompanied by reports of “a wide variety of alien encounters and visits to alien worlds.”⁷²

Born in 1946 in Paonia, Colorado, in 1965 he travelled to Berkeley to begin a degree in art history at the University of California. He was one of a small number of students to

enroll on the Experimental College Program, founded by the Professor of Philosophy, Joseph Tussman (1914-2005). As his younger brother Dennis McKenna⁷³ recalls, “academically, this was the best thing that could have happened to Terence; he was ripe for something like this... There he first studied Mircea Eliade, Edmund Husserl and the phenomenologists, and deepened his appreciation for the works of Carl Jung, who in turn led him fatefully to the *I Ching*. He discovered the Western esoteric traditions... spurred on by Tussman’s encouragement to explore every avenue of interest...”⁷⁴ He also became involved in countercultural politics and experimentation with psychedelics. Dennis, who visited his brother, recalls that, while “there were many drugs around... the one that emerged as significant for us was DMT. It was rare even then, but for some reason it crossed our paths and we agreed it was the quintessential psychedelic. It only lasts maybe twenty minutes, but it’s a full-on psychedelic experience, very intense, and really like a completely different reality.”⁷⁵

Following his involvement in the 1968 student-led strike at San Francisco State University, his activities came under the scrutiny of the authorities. Consequently, in 1969, he decided to travel to Nepal to research traditional Buddhist paintings (*thangkas*). He was particularly intrigued by the idea that their “most fantastic, extravagant, and ferocious images are drawn from the pre-Buddhist substratum of folk imagery.”⁷⁶ Hence, his gaze shifted to the indigenous pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet—“a kind of shamanism closely related to the motifs and cosmology of classical shamanism of Siberia.”⁷⁷ Moreover, influenced by the discussions of shamanism in the late-1960s, which were largely inspired by the ideas of Eliade—who was also influenced by Jung—and Wasson on the ritual and ancient use of hallucinogenic fungi, he interpreted *thangkas* as the product of shamanic psychedelic trance states. Along with his reading of Jung, this relationship between shamanism and psychedelics became central to his work. As Wouter Hanegraaff has commented, in many respects, McKenna’s philosophy is a “typical example of Eranos religionism, with Jung and Eliade as the central figures.”⁷⁸

That said, again, it is important to understand that McKenna’s thought is not simply a combination of psychedelics, Jung and shamanism. Rather, it is an eclectic combination of a broad range of ideas and influences, some of which were drawn from science fiction

and media theory—specifically the work of Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)—but many of which were simply pilfered from popular culture. As his brother Dennis recalls, “pop music, like pop culture in general, profoundly influenced us.”⁷⁹ More particularly, “a major reason for our fascination [with psychedelics] could be attributed to our life-long immersion in science fiction, aliens, other dimensions, and related topics.”⁸⁰ Indeed, McKenna had been a “UFO enthusiast” since boyhood.⁸¹

While McKenna recognized that his breadth of his interests and eclecticism, which had been encouraged at the Tussman Experimental College,⁸² sometimes led to convoluted analysis, discrepancies, and obfuscation, he insisted that “any complex philosophical system makes room for self-contradiction.”⁸³ Nevertheless, Jung provided him with the theoretical framework he needed to draw these often disparate ideas together. As Dennis has commented, “the works of C.G. Jung played a crucial role in our developing thought—or escalating delusion, as some might have uncharitably described it.”⁸⁴ He continues, “Jung’s work provided a framework for understanding psychedelic experiences. States that before could only be accessed through dreams, meditation, or certain other spiritual disciplines could now be attained through drugs.”⁸⁵ It is unsurprising, therefore, that McKenna later revealed that, as a young man, his “greatest desire [was] to become a Jungian analyst.”⁸⁶ Certainly, it is arguable that the key esoteric ideas that McKenna worked with, from the *I Ching* to alchemy, can be traced back to his reading of Jung. “I’ve had an interest in hermeticism and alchemy since I was about 14 and read Jung’s *Psychology and Alchemy*, and it opened for me the fact of the existence of this vast literature, a literature that is very little read or understood in the modern context.”⁸⁷ Again, it was important for his own use of the *I Ching* that “Jung regarded the *I Ching* as a repository of archetypes.”⁸⁸ More specifically, however, Jung provided the key to his interpretation of inner space/outer space. As his brother notes, “for Terence and me, discovering Jung was a revelation... If cosmology was the lens through which we learned to view the universe at large, Jungian psychology became our cosmology for the universe within. Buried in every person’s neural tissue was a dimension at least as vast and fascinating as that of the stars and galaxies.”⁸⁹ It is important to keep this point in mind when interpreting comments which seem to suggest a belief in the independent existence of extraterrestrials. The “universe of the unconscious” was central to McKenna’s thought. It is “right there for exploration” and

“psychedelics [are] the chemical starships for bearing us inward.”⁹⁰ (That said, we have seen that, as an “author of the impossible,” there is ambiguity in McKenna’s work regarding the interpretation of inner space/outer space.)

It is worth noting here that, not only did McKenna consider the UFO researcher Jacques Vallée to be “one of the foremost commentators on the phenomenon,”⁹¹ but there are continuities between Vallée’s ideas and those of Jung. Moreover, not only did McKenna read Vallée through a Jungian lens, but Vallée seems to have contributed to his interpretation of Jung on UFOs. For example, he identifies Vallée as “the first person to suggest... the ‘cultural thermostat theory’ of UFOs.” Vallée, he continues, “proposed that the flying saucer is an object from the collective unconscious of the human race that appears in order to break the control of any set of ideas that are gaining dominance in their explanatory power at the expense of ethics.”⁹² Actually, as we have seen, this theory can be traced back to Jung. It is, however, Vallée’s development of it that informs McKenna’s thought. Similarly, while we have seen that Jung understood UFOs to function in a similar way to deities in the history of religions, so Vallée, in *Passport to Magonia* (1969), made a similar link with the fairies described in *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (1911) by Walter Evans-Wentz (1878-1965).⁹³ McKenna was persuaded by the argument and developed a very similar thesis. Indeed, in 1994, he wrote the “Introduction” for a reprint of *The Fairy Faith*. While it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that he came to Evans-Wentz through Vallée, he claims not to have done: “I first encountered W.Y. Evans-Wentz’s *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* in 1966.”⁹⁴ Whether he did or not, Vallée’s use of *The Fairy Faith* certainly informed his own reading of it. The beliefs discussed by Evans-Wentz are important because they concern “an invisible co-present dimension in which dwell the transformed souls of the ancient dead, able to interact with humans who wander into the lonely enchanted landscapes that seem partial doorways between the fairy world and our own.”⁹⁵ Following Vallée, McKenna argued that *The Fairy Faith* represented an important example of studies of “events at the fringe of reason,” much like “books concerning flying saucers.”⁹⁶ Indeed, drawing on both fairy lore and science fiction, McKenna often described the alien entities he encountered during induced altered states as “self-transforming machine elves.”⁹⁷

Just as alchemy and Gnosticism fascinated Jung—in that he considered them to be forerunners of analytic psychology⁹⁸—so they also became central to McKenna’s thought. Not only was he intrigued by Gnostic ideas, but, possibly because he had begun his study of Jung with *Alchemy and Psychology*,⁹⁹ it was important to him that Jung’s “great path into the unconscious was alchemy.”¹⁰⁰ For McKenna, alchemy was “a pivotal domain... that lies halfway between the concerns of an archaic shamanism and... the concerns of a quasi-scientific psychedelic attempt to explore our consciousness.”¹⁰¹ Moreover, it was important that, for the alchemists, “the firm ontological division between mind and matter that is built into [contemporary] Western thinking did not exist. That comes with Rene Descartes... For the alchemist mind and matter were two terms whose mutual exclusivity could be blurred under certain circumstances and the terms of one could migrate toward the other.”¹⁰² This gave “inner space” significance as a dimension of reality that was able to transform the everyday world of material objects. Nowadays, he argued, this is a perspective that can only properly be grasped by minds “intoxicated by hallucinogenic drugs.”¹⁰³

Although it would take us beyond the present discussion to unpack all the details of the McKenna brothers’ alchemical “Experiment at La Chorrera” in the Colombian Amazon,¹⁰⁴ it is worth noting that, with reference to Jung’s work, they speculated about the possibility of “transforming one’s body into something like a UFO.”¹⁰⁵ This odd idea surfaced during a psychedelic session when Dennis began hearing a low, endogenous buzzing sound, which led him to emit, “for a few seconds, a very machine-like, loud, dry buzz, during which his body became stiff.”¹⁰⁶ Ostensibly based on scientific theories of resonance, but also on alchemical ideas of correspondence,¹⁰⁷ they concluded that if an audible sound (such as that emitted by Dennis) was able to resonate with the endogenous sound, it might produce an energy capable of producing a holographic object, “a molecular aggregate of hyperdimensional, superconducting matter that receives and sends messages transmitted by thought.”¹⁰⁸ Fascinated by alchemical ideas and his reading of science fiction, this object McKenna theorized in terms of a technologized philosopher’s stone: “the image of the philosopher’s stone as hyperdimensional jewel-become-UFO—the human soul as starship.”¹⁰⁹ While McKenna claims the idea to have been original, of course, it was not—or, at least, not wholly so. We have seen that Jung had already made the connection between the philosopher’s

stone, mandalas, UFOs, and the individuated self (“the stone is man”¹¹⁰). As Davis has commented, “Jung’s cosmic pulp-culture act of comparison directly contributed to the McKenna’s belief that the end result of the Experiment would be the creation of ‘the ultimate technological artifact,’ an apocalyptic device similar to ‘starships, time machines, crystal balls, magic mirrors.’”¹¹¹

As McKenna later recalled, “our lives had become pure science fiction.”¹¹² “Whether the ideas that seized us over those days were telepathically transmitted by the mushroom” (a theory to which we’ll return below), or, says Dennis, “by a mantis-like entity on the bridge of a starship in geosynchronous orbit above the Amazon... or created in our own minds, I’ll never know.”¹¹³ However, the point is that, they were Jungian psychonauts fascinated by the occult and science fiction, who had become convinced that, through some alchemical process that combined human and mushroom DNA—which they termed “hyper-carboration”¹¹⁴—they could transform the base material of the body into “an eternal hyperdimensional being.” Again, as Dennis comments, “in this notion we were following Jung, who... realized that the flying saucer is an image of the self, the suppressed psychic totality that lurks behind the apparent dualism of mind and nature.”¹¹⁵

Related to this and central to McKenna’s thought are Jung’s theories of “archetypes” and the “collective unconscious.” He understood the mind, to quote Dennis, as “a real place, a realm populated by archetypes that reside in some lower psychic stratum all humans share... In such a view, the idea that each of us is a separate individual is an illusion.”¹¹⁶ This goes a little beyond Jung, for whom the unconscious is not a place or a thing as such, but rather something more akin to a process. For Jung, archetypes, which make up the unconscious, are “identical psychic structures common to all,” which together constitute “the archaic heritage of humanity.”¹¹⁷ Indeed, “the archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived, and it takes its colour from the individual conscious in which it happens to appear.”¹¹⁸ Again, this is why, of course, “manifestations of totality whose simple, round form portrays the archetype of the self” manifest in modern minds as UFOs.¹¹⁹ For McKenna, however, the collective unconscious was reimagined as a “hyperdimension of gnosis.”¹²⁰ Under the influence of hallucinogens, he experienced “an unanticipated dimension that

involved contact with an alien intelligence. Organized entelechies presented themselves in the psychedelic experience with information that seemed not to be drawn from the personal history of the individual or even from the collective human experience.”¹²¹ Hence, while rooted in Jungian analysis, McKenna’s thought followed an idiosyncratic trajectory informed by his understanding of shamanism, alchemy, and Gnosticism. “The world of gnosis”¹²² revealed during a psychedelic experience “is not easy to measure. It appears to be a world nearly as large as the... domain of nature. It is not simply the Jungian collective unconscious...” What “Jung thought of as a place in the organization of the psyche is cognized in the shamanic model as a place, a nearby, adjacent dimension into which the mind can project itself and, by self-scaling itself to these interior dimensions, experience them as realities.”¹²³

Concerning the “experience of an interior guiding voice with a higher level of knowledge” (similar to Davy’s “Genius”), McKenna’s analysis was both Jungian and, again, regarding its independent existence, ambiguous. “Are we dealing with an aspect, an autonomous psychic entity, as the Jungians would style it—a subself that has slipped away from the control of the ego? Or are we dealing with something like a species Overmind—a kind of collective entelechy? Or are we in fact dealing with an alien intelligence with all that this implies?”¹²⁴ This line of thought was, I suspect, also informed by his reading of Vallée, for whom, as Kripal put it, “the precise nature of the ‘outside’ is debatable...” Indeed, “Vallée never stops suggesting that the outside may still be a human one,” by which he means that “we are all part of some immense form of Mind or Cosmic Consciousness...”¹²⁵ It was this type of speculation that influenced McKenna’s interpretation of Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious: “the unformed archetypes of the collective unconscious may be the holographic substrate of the species’ mind. Each individual mind-brain is then a fragment of the total hologram; but, in accordance with holographic principles, each fragment contains the whole.”¹²⁶

As to McKenna’s understanding of alien gnosis, it was, again, rooted in Jung’s thought. While the UFO phenomenon “contains an opportunity for genuinely new knowledge,” it “need not represent a visitation from space visitors.”¹²⁷ The significance of UFOs lies in their message: “humanity needed to wake up and get its act together in order to avoid destroying the planet.”¹²⁸ Indeed, like Vallée, he argued that the UFO appeared as “an

idea intended to confound science, because science has begun to threaten the existence of the human species as well as the ecosystem of the planet.” Again, he insisted that, “at this point, a shock is necessary for the culture... The myths that are building now are like messianic myths that preceded the appearance of Christ. They are myths of intervention by a hyperintelligent entity that comes from the stars to reveal the right way to live.”¹²⁹ Hence, the “UFO is the central motif to be understood in order to get a handle on reality here and now. We are alienated, so alienated that the self must disguise itself as an extraterrestrial in order not to alarm us with the truly bizarre dimensions that it encompasses. When we can love the alien, then we will have begun to heal the psychic discontinuity...”¹³⁰ All this, of course, is pure Jung.

Likewise, with reference to “the Overmind”—which is sometimes described in terms of “the collective unconscious”¹³¹—McKenna developed a broadly Jungian theory of psychedelic UFO sightings, which represent “an instance of crisis between the individual and the Overmind, where the Overmind breaks through the oppressive screen thrown around it and comes to meet the individual. It is like an interview with an angel—or a demon. It is laden with intense psychological resonances for the person experiencing it.”¹³² While the concept of an “Overmind” was used in 1944 by Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) as part of his theory of the ascent of consciousness,¹³³ McKenna almost certainly lifted it from *Childhood’s End* by Arthur C. Clarke (1917-2008). That said, a similar idea was developed by Leary in 1977. Building on an earlier idea about “starseeds” (which, which we will see, is not dissimilar to McKenna’s understanding of the relationship between alien spores and the emergence of human consciousness),¹³⁴ he suggested an “eight circuit psychology,” consisting of four circuits that are essential to life on earth and four largely dormant circuits awaiting our future interstellar evolution and life extension beyond the planet. This is interesting, not because his seventh circuit has been linked to the collective unconscious,¹³⁵ but because the eighth is “meta-biological.”¹³⁶ It is the basis of a posthuman collective mind, similar to that discussed by McKenna. Moreover, argued Leary, at this advanced point in our evolution “we expect that humanity will be instructed in the reception of nuclear signals by higher intelligences contacted after leaving the planet.”¹³⁷ Significantly, these higher circuits can be stimulated by psychedelics. This is why “the 1960s witnessed a general raising of consciousness, a massive ‘mind-fission’.” Unfortunately, “the drug-culture of the 1960s

wandered around, 'spaced out' (this is a good term), 'high,' but with no place to go. One generation too early for interstellar migration."¹³⁸ Again, it is not difficult to see links between these ideas and McKenna's. However, it is also interesting that, in 1977, Robert Anton Wilson (1932-2007), who was the first writer to seriously discuss McKenna's work,¹³⁹ developed Leary's "exo-psychology." In particular, he linked "circuit VIII" to paranormal experiences, psychedelics, shamanism, "contact with alien (extraterrestrial?) 'entities'," "the extraterrestrial unconscious," and "a galactic Overmind."¹⁴⁰ The point is that, bearing in mind that Wilson and McKenna knew each other, it is difficult not to see some of former's ideas subsequently articulated in the latter's work.¹⁴¹ (The Overmind is not mentioned in McKenna's work until after 1977.)

Interestingly, McKenna also used the term "Oversoul" in his discussion of UFOs. Indeed, not only do the terms seem to be linked, but, in some passages, they seem synonymous. Unsurprisingly, therefore, his interpretation of the Oversoul was also fundamentally Jungian. Stimulated by social anxiety, the UFO emerges

as an autonomous psychic entity that has slipped from the central control of the ego and approaches laden with the "Otherness" of the unconscious. As one looks into it one beholds oneself, one's world information field, all deployed in a strange, distant, almost transhumanly cool way, which links it to the myth of the extraterrestrial. The extraterrestrial is the human Oversoul in its general and particular expression on the planet.¹⁴²

It is perhaps worth noting that, while the concept was introduced by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) in his essay, "The Over-soul" (1841),¹⁴³ not only has Emerson's understanding of it been likened to "the collective unconscious,"¹⁴⁴ but it was also mentioned by the contactee Orfeo Angelucci (1912-1993), whose usage was quoted by Jung.¹⁴⁵ The collective unconscious, UFOs, and alien gnosis are all combined in McKenna's interpretation of the Oversoul. It is "a guiding Mind" that "regulates human culture through the release of ideas out of eternity and into the continuum of history."¹⁴⁶ Hence, as McKenna put it, "UFOs come from another dimension... totally different from our own, but tied up with the human psyche in a way that is puzzling, alarming, and reassuring."¹⁴⁷ Again, informed by Jungian analysis, he argued that, if the

mushroom is able to establish contact with “extraterrestrials on planets circling other suns somewhere in the galaxy,” that communication will be “mediated through the Oversoul.”¹⁴⁸ There is a fundamental relationship between outer space and inner space.

Finally, McKenna came to the conclusion that “the mushroom was somehow more than a plant hallucinogen or even a shamanic ally of the classic sort.” Rather, he concluded, “the mushroom was in fact a kind of intelligent entity—not of earth—alien and able during the trance to communicate its personality as a presence in the inward-turned perceptions of its beholder.”¹⁴⁹ Inspired by panspermia theory—which posits the idea that life did not originate on Earth, but arrived within comets, meteorites, and space dust—he argued that mushrooms (not unlike Leary’s “starseeds”) may also have arrived from outer space. “Across the aeons of time and space drift many spore-forming life forms in suspended animation for millions of years until contact is made with a suitable environment.”¹⁵⁰ One such suitable environment was cattle manure! Consequently, psychoactive mushrooms began to sprout amidst early farming communities. Of course, the first encounters between hominids and mushrooms may have even “predated the domestication of cattle in Africa by a million years or more.”¹⁵¹ However, the point is that, because “the strategy of the early hominid omnivores was to eat everything that seemed food-like and to vomit whatever was unpalatable,”¹⁵² their diet must have included magic mushrooms.

His developed thesis was that each spore is “an artifact of an alien intelligence” actively seeking to establish a symbiotic relationship with humans.¹⁵³ In other words, “the mushroom might have been engineered” as a vehicle of “alien information.”¹⁵⁴ This accounts for “the informational content of the trip.”¹⁵⁵ If his theory of alien gnosis is true, of course, then the mushroom may well have had a formative role in the evolution of the human consciousness. That is to say, “starborn magic mushrooms” induced visionary experiences that were the catalyst for the development of the imagination, language, and spirituality.¹⁵⁶ “There is a hidden factor in the evolution of human beings that is neither a ‘missing link’ nor a telos imparted from on high. I suggest that this hidden factor in the evolution of human beings, the factor that called human consciousness forth from a bipedal ape... involved a feedback loop with plant hallucinogens.”¹⁵⁷

While this latter theory is not directly related to anything Jung argued, nevertheless, McKenna did incorporate Jungian ideas, particularly in relation to the emergence of the human psyche and its processes. For example, he understood the prehistoric intervention of mushrooms in terms of Jung's theory of "transference," which he interpreted as "the emergence of an I-Thou [i.e. personal] relationship between the person taking the psilocybin and the mental state it evokes." This "was a necessary condition of early and primitive humanity's relationship to its gods and demons."¹⁵⁸ Mushrooms engage in personal communication with humans during psychedelic experiences. What did the mushroom reveal to McKenna? "I am older than thought in your species... Though I have been on earth for ages, I am from the stars... You as an individual and Homo sapiens as a species are on the brink of the formation of a symbiotic relationship with my genetic material that will eventually carry humanity and the earth into the galactic mainstream of the higher civilizations...." Hence, the mushroom continued, "higher mammals with manipulative abilities can become partners with the star knowledge within me..."¹⁵⁹ Indeed, as part of its own evolution, the mushroom commented, "I require the nervous system of a mammal."¹⁶⁰ That said, while mushrooms are an important source of gnosis, McKenna stated that he did not "necessarily believe" what was being revealed to him: "rather we have a dialogue. It is a very strange person and has many bizarre opinions... When the mushroom began saying it was an extraterrestrial... I couldn't figure out whether the mushroom [was] an alien or... some kind of artifact allowing me to hear the alien when the alien is actually light-years away..."¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, regardless of their precise nature, the prehistoric human consumption of these fungal conduits of gnosis from outer space led directly to individuation.¹⁶² Not only are mushrooms a key factor in the evolution of the human consciousness, they are also central to our growth toward wholeness. We are, argued McKenna, only now beginning to realize the significance of this and, as a result, moving beyond traditional religious ideas about "transhuman" beings: "it is as though the Father-God notion were being replaced by an alien-partner notion... In other words, our cultural direction is being touched by the notion of alien love, and it comes to us through the rebirth of the use of plant hallucinogens."¹⁶³

PSYCHEDELIC UFOLOGY

The influence of McKenna is evident in much post-1970s psychedelic thought.¹⁶⁴ A good example is Jim DeKorne's 1994 book, *Psychedelic Shamanism*. Having acknowledged his indebtedness to McKenna,¹⁶⁵ he reflects on "the UFO contact/abductee phenomenon," which "manifests too many themes analogous to psychedelic states and shamanic initiation to be regarded as unrelated."¹⁶⁶ Following McKenna, he developed his thesis in an explicitly Jungian direction.¹⁶⁷

What's it like to encounter an entity from mind-space while under the influence of a psychedelic substance? More specifically, how does a modern Westerner process such an adventure in the absence of any culturally sanctioned framework to give it meaning? The ancient myths and religions of humankind seldom reflect current experience anymore... It is hardly surprising then that the 'gods' now encountered are often decked out in the trappings of science fiction... Extraterrestrial themes are a firmly established motif of our evolving mythos. The UFO contact is now seen by many investigators to be an interface between inner and outer dimensions, analogous to a kind of involuntary shamanic encounter. It is a significant fact that psychotropic drugs, proven catalysts for accessing the mythic realms of the psyche, frequently evoke alien contact experiences.¹⁶⁸

For DeKorne, "the shaman, in effect, is an ego who has learned how to reconnect with his or her source in mind-space," which he links to "Jung's collective unconscious."¹⁶⁹ Having said that, informed by McKenna's interpretation of Jung, he argued that "the consciousness itself is a multidimensional phenomenon."¹⁷⁰ We should not, he says, think of "a state of consciousness alone," but rather think in terms of "a location, or hierarchy of locations, in extra-dimensional space."¹⁷¹ "Our reality consists of two infinities: an outer cosmos of three spatial dimensions and an inner cosmos of an indeterminate number of spatial dimensions inhabited by what we experience as images, emotions, and thoughts."¹⁷²

This understanding of inner space/outer space is important for DeKorne, in that it helps to explain both his understanding of psychedelic shamanism and also his experiences of "alien contact." For example, following the ingestion of DMT during an experiment at "a

major university,"¹⁷³ he records that he found himself "crudely, approximately... approaching a 'space station'." He continues,

there were at least two entities (one on either side of me) guiding me to the platform. Although I didn't actually "see" them, their presences were clearly felt. I was aware of many other beings inside the space station—automatons: android-like creatures that "looked" (all this transcends visual description) like a cross between crash test dummies and the Empire troops from *Star Wars*, except that they were living beings, not robots... I passed abruptly through another realm, losing all awareness of my body. It was as if there were alien beings there waiting for me, and I recall that they spoke to me as if they had been awaiting my arrival...¹⁷⁴

Going beyond Jung and developing some of McKenna's ideas, DeKorne's general approach is what might be described as "shamanic realism," in that he understands psychedelics to enable contact with a reality that exists independently of our experience of it. Furthermore, aliens are able to transgress inner space and, by their own means, "to 'holographically' project themselves into our physical space."¹⁷⁵ Indeed, he develops an interesting neo-shamanic psychedelic ufological thesis:

The fact that the "aliens" are able to enter our three-dimensional world, seemingly at will, suggests that they utilize shamanic principles analogous to our own when we project into their space. In other words, it appears that the way of the shaman is a two-way street and that the ideal of living in the *unus mundus* or one world applies impartially to the denizens of any dimension. The "shamans" of all worlds have probably always known this, and the principle suggests the possibility of true interdimensional alliances for those powerful or knowledgeable enough to create them. In the present context, whatever the UFO encounter may be, it represents at least the possibility of an ally relationship: a traditional shamanic connection with a hidden power for the purpose of healing the ills of the tribe.¹⁷⁶

This latter emphasis on healing is key. The aliens took DeKorne "on a fabulous and terrible journey through [his] fears"¹⁷⁷ as part of a process similar to Jungian

individuation. Aliens are described as the “allies of our growth” whose work involves “strengthening the soul.”¹⁷⁸ Quoting the contactee Whitley Strieber, he argues that in “really facing the visitors” and in “accepting that one may also endure great fear” the experiencer is eventually enabled to “become free of all fear.”¹⁷⁹

DeKorne is a good example of a psychedelic thinker who, not only takes close encounters and psychedelic experiences seriously, but also demonstrates the influence of McKenna. He is, of course, not alone. We have seen that there are other psychedelic writers and teachers, such as Gracie, Zarkov, Strassman, Wojtowicz, Luna, and Frecska, who are, to varying degrees, both indebted to McKenna and interested in ufological experiences and the notion of alien worlds.¹⁸⁰ Another popular writer on psychedelics and the paranormal whose work betrays the influence of McKenna is Paul Devereux. He too believes that “there is much to be learned in a ufological sense” from the study of the psychedelic experience and shamanism.¹⁸¹ Moreover, with reference to McKenna, he has suggested that “ancestral mushrooms may have originated on some other planet.” He continues, “the psilocybin family of hallucinogens... produces a ‘logos-like phenomenon of an interior voice that seems to be almost a superhuman agency... an entity so far beyond the normal structure of the ego that if it is not an extraterrestrial it might as well be’.”¹⁸²

Again, similar points have been made by the psychedelic thinker and software developer Peter J. Meyer, who has used his knowledge to develop and promote McKenna’s Timewave Zero theory.¹⁸³ Concerning extraterrestrials, he has suggested a number of interpretations of their manifestation during the DMT experience that build on McKenna’s work. For example, the drug might provide “access to a parallel or higher dimension, a truly alternate reality which is, in fact, inhabited by independently-existing intelligent entities.” Or perhaps “a non-human intelligent species created humans by genetic modification of existing primate stock then retreated, leaving behind biochemical methods for contacting them. The psychedelic tryptamines are chemical keys that activate certain programs in the human brain that were placed there intentionally by this alien species.” Again, maybe “the entities are probes from an extraterrestrial or an extradimensional species, sent out to make contact with

organisms such as ourselves who are able to manipulate their nervous systems in a way which allows communication to take place.”¹⁸⁴

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Psychedelic research has shown that users typically experience spatiotemporal distortion and, in some cases, encounters with non-human entities. Moreover, psychonauts have, particularly since the publication of Eliade’s work,¹⁸⁵ increasingly found shamanism useful in helping them to make sense of journeying “outside of time and space into... a parallel universe.”¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, following Castaneda’s popular discussions of shamanism, this parallel universe has often been understood in terms of “non-ordinary reality,” which is “only slightly different from the ordinary reality of everyday life”¹⁸⁷ (i.e. it *is* “reality”). However, we have seen that the nature of non-ordinary reality has shifted. It has, in effect, been shaped by a modern “set and setting.”¹⁸⁸ To use Jung’s terminology, inner space has been reimagined according to “a modern myth.” The journey to inner space leads to outer space and the aliens from outer space meet humans in inner space.

While scholars tend to dismiss such ideas as the trivial ramblings of disordered minds, McKenna was convinced that they were not “irrational illusions.” Rather, he insisted, “what we experience in the presence of DMT is real news.”¹⁸⁹ Inner space/outer space is the locus of alien gnosis. Following Jung, he believed that what is revealed in nonordinary reality is actually important for ordinary reality—both for the individual experiencer and also, maybe, for wider society. Hence, while “frightening, transformative, and beyond our powers to imagine,” he argued that it should “be explored in the usual way.” That is to say, “we must send fearless experts... to explore and to report on what they find.”¹⁹⁰

Typically, however, what psychonauts find is McKenna and, more often than not, Jungian. This is because, not only has McKenna become the principal interpreter of inner space/outer space, but his interpretations were informed by Jungian analysis. Consequently, as the most influential post-1960s psychedelic thinker, his ideas have shaped the experiences of those who have followed him. As the British psychiatrist Ben Sessa has commented, there are now “growing communities of followers” for whom the

mushroom enables communication with “wider extraterrestrial culture.”¹⁹¹ McKenna has effectively authored the psychedelic experiences of his readers and introduced new ideas into the psychonaut community. In this sense, he can be understood to have “co-created” inner space/outer space. As Davis has commented of McKenna’s thought, “cultural practice, in mediating a particular species of psychedelic material, changes the phenomenology of that ‘medium’ for all future consumers of the material...”¹⁹² With ideas drawn from science fiction, esotericism, and Jung to guide him, this psychedelic author of the impossible rewrote the unseen world of nonordinary reality.

¹ Terence McKenna, quoted in Michael Lindemann, “Highlights of a Swiss UFO Conference,” *CNI News* 8.1 (5 July, 1995), <https://jacobsn.com/deoxy/deoxy.org/t_swiss.htm> accessed 21 December, 2016.

² Terence McKenna, *The Archaic Revival: Speculations on Psychedelic Mushrooms, the Amazon, Virtual Reality, UFOs, Evolution, Shamanism, the Rebirth of the Goddess, and the End of History* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 62.

³ McKenna, *The Archaic Revival*, 58.

⁴ Rick Strassman, Slawek Wojtowicz, Luis Eduardo Luna, and Ede Freska, “Introduction,” in *Inner Paths to Outer Space: Journeys to Alien Worlds Through Psychedelics and Other Spiritual Technologies* (Rochester: Park Street Press, 2008), 1-2. See also Graham St John, *Mystery School in Hyperspace: A Cultural History of DMT* (Berkeley: Evolver Editions, 2015), 223-258.

⁵ Christian Räscht, “Introduction: The Exploration of Inner Space,” in *Gateway to Inner Space: Sacred Plants, Mysticism, and Psychotherapy* (Bridport: Prism Press, 1991), 2.

⁶ While Gracie and Zarkov were close to McKenna, their thinking diverged from his in a number of important respects. As Zarkov put it, “I don’t buy Terence’s whole package.... On the other hand, Terence is on to a lot very important things.” Quoted in Douglas Rushkoff, *Cyberia: Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace*, second edition (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2002), 75.

⁷ In *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1972), Hynek devised a sixfold classification of “close encounters” to describe events during which a person witnesses a UFO and/or alien entity.

⁸ See, Gracie and Zarkov, *Notes from Underground: A “Gracie and Zarkov” Reader* (San Francisco: Gracie and Zarkov Productions, 1985), 34. See also Andrew Gallimore’s McKenna inspired, “Building Alien Worlds—The Neuropsychological and Evolutionary Implications of the Astonishing Psychoactive Effects of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT),” *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 27, no. 3 (2013), 455-503.

⁹ John Horgan, *Rational Mysticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company), 177.

¹⁰ McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 60 (emphasis added).

¹¹ McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 3.

¹² Erik Davis, *High Weirdness: Drugs, Esoterica, and Visionary Experience in the Seventies* (London: Strange Attractor Press and MIT Press, 2019), 8-11.

¹³ Erik Davis, “The Weird Naturalism of the Brothers McKenna: Esoteric Media and the Experiment at La Chorrera,” *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 7, no. 2. (2016), 179. See also

¹⁴ Jeffrey Kripal, *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Scared* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), 22-23.

¹⁵ Christopher Roth, “Ufology as Anthropology: Race, Extraterrestrials, and the Occult,” in *E.T. Culture: Anthropology in Outerspaces*, ed. Debora Battaglia (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 42.

¹⁶ Ernst Jünger, *Annäherungen: Drogen und Rausch* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 2014 [1970]); Ernst Jünger, “Drugs and Ecstasy,” in *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade*, ed. Joseph Kitagawa and Charles Long (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 327-342.

¹⁷ Jünger, *Annäherungen*, 356, 380.

¹⁸ Jünger, “Drugs and Ecstasy,” 335.

¹⁹ E.g. Dan Carpenter, *A Psychonaut’s Guide to the Invisible Landscape: The Topography of the Psychedelic Experience* (Rochester: Park Street Press, 2006); Jonathan Ott, “Pharmañopo-psychonautics: Human

Intranasal, Sublingual, Intrarectal, Pulmonary and Oral Pharmacology of Bufotenine," *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 33, no. 3 (2001): 273-281.

²⁰ See, Christopher Partridge, *High Culture: Drugs, Mysticism, and the Pursuit of Transcendence in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

²¹ See Christopher Partridge, "Carlos Castaneda and the Construction of Non-ordinary Reality," in *Altered Consciousness in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jake Poller (New York: Routledge, 2019), 185-202; Don José Campos, *The Shaman and Ayahuasca: Journeys to Sacred Realms* (Studio City: Divine Arts, 2011), 83-88.

²² Michael Harner, "Introduction," in *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*, ed. Michael Harner (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), xii.

²³ Strassman, Wojtowicz, Luna, and Frecska, "Introduction," 3.

²⁴ John Lilly, *The Scientist: A Metaphysical Autobiography* (Berkeley: Ronin, 1997).

²⁵ Jane Dunlap, *Exploring Inner Space: Personal Experiences Under LSD-25* (London: The Scientific Book Club, 1961), 30, 56-58, 199, 200, 205. She was administered LSD under the supervision of Oscar Janiger.

²⁶ Molly Lefebure, "Humphry Davy: Philosophical Alchemist," in *The Coleridge Connection: Essays for Thomas McFarland*, ed. Richard Gravil and Molly Lefebure (Penrith: Humanities-Ebooks, 2007), 93-94.

²⁷ Humphry Davy, *Consolations in Travel, Or the Last Days of a Philosopher* (London: John Murray, 1830), 20.

²⁸ Davy, *Consolations*, 45-46.

²⁹ Rick Strassman, *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (Rochester: Park Street Press, 2001), 216-219. See also, Rick Strassman, "The Varieties of the DMT Experience," in *Inner Paths*, 73-74.

³⁰ Rick Strassman, "The Pineal Gland: Current Evidence for its Role in Consciousness," *Psychedelic Monographs and Essays* 5 (1991), 167-205; Strassman, "DMT: The Brain's Own Psychedelic," in *Inner Paths*, 33-50. See also, Graham St John, "The DMT Gland: The Pineal, The Spirit Molecule, and Popular Culture," *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 7, no.2 (2016), 153-174; St John, *Mystery School in Hyperspace*, 115-145.

³¹ Serena Roney-Dougal, *Where Science and Magic Meet* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1991), 151.

³² E.g. Steven Barker, "N, N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT), an Endogenous Hallucinogen: Past, Present, and Future Research to Determine Its Role and Function," *Frontiers in Neuroscience* (06 August, 2018) <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6088236/pdf/fnins-12-00536.pdf>> accessed 29 November, 2018.

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³⁵ Carl Jung, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge, 2002 [1958]), 1.

³⁶ Carl Jung, "Letter to Gilbert A. Harrison," *Open Culture*, <http://www.openculture.com/2013/05/carl_jungs_1957_letter_on_the_fascinating_modern_myth_of UFOs.html> accessed 21 September, 2018.

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³⁹ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 7.

⁴⁰ Jodi Dean, *Aliens in America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 10-11.

⁴¹ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 17.

⁴² Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 18.

⁴³ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 18.

⁴⁴ See, L.E. Luna, "Ayahuasca: The Sacred Vine of the Amazon," in *Inner Paths*, 81-82.

⁴⁵ L.E. Luna and P. Amaringo, *Ayahuasca Visions: The Religious Iconography of a Peruvian Shaman* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1991), 35.

⁴⁶ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 22-23.

⁴⁷ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 4.

⁴⁸ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 17.

⁴⁹ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 17.

⁵⁰ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 16, 93. See also Carl Jung, "Mandalas and the Path to Psychic Wholeness," in *Jung on the East*, ed. John J. Clarke (London: Routledge, 1995), 228-233.

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- ⁵³ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 7.
- ⁵⁴ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 7.
- ⁵⁵ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 7.
- ⁵⁶ Jung, *Flying Saucers*, 229.
- ⁵⁷ Terence McKenna, *True Hallucinations*—in the combined volume *True Hallucinations and The Archaic Revival* (New York: MJF Books, 1993), 42.
- ⁵⁸ Terence McKenna, quoted in Clifford Pickover, *Sex, Drugs, Einstein, and Elves* (Petaluma: Smart Publications, 2005), 84. See also Andrew Gallimore, *Alien Information Theory: Psychedelic Drug Technologies and the Cosmic Game* (London: Strange Worlds Press, 2019).
- ⁵⁹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929), 380-381.
- ⁶⁰ McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 42.
- ⁶¹ McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 100.
- ⁶² McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 99.
- ⁶³ McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 16.
- ⁶⁴ See, Andrew Monteith, “The Words of McKenna’: Healing, Politics Critique, and the Evolution of Psychonaut Religion Since the 1960s Counterculture,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 84:4 (2016), 1081-1109.
- ⁶⁵ Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); Carlos Castaneda, *A Separate Reality* (New York: Pocket Books, 1971); Harner, *Hallucinogens and Shamanism*. See also, Partridge, *High Culture*, 288-341; Partridge, “Carlos Castaneda.”
- ⁶⁶ Lindemann, “Highlights.” For example, Fraser Clark, one of the key movers and shakers of rave culture, is explicit regarding his indebtedness to McKenna: “The Final Word on Drugs,” in *Psychodelia Britannica: Hallucinogenic Drugs in Britain*, ed. Antonio Melechi (London: Turnaround, 1997), 185-204.
- ⁶⁷ Slawek Wojtowicz, “Magic Mushrooms,” in *Inner Paths*, 149.
- ⁶⁸ Terence McKenna, “Approaching Timewave Zero,” <http://www.fractal-timewave.com/articles/approaching_twz.htm> accessed 12 November, 2018. See, Davis, *High Weirdness*, 164-167.
- ⁶⁹ Wojtowicz, “Magic Mushrooms,” 149.
- ⁷⁰ Zuvuya and Terence McKenna, *Shamania* (Delerium, 1994); Terence McKenna and Zuvuya, *Dream Matrix Telemetry* (Delerium, 1993); The Shamen and Terence McKenna, “Re: Evolution” (One Little Indian, 1993). For a recent sample of McKenna, listen to EL_TXEF_A, *For Terence McKenna* (Flumo Recordings, 2015).
- ⁷¹ The event was recorded on both CD and DVD: Spacetime Continuum with Terence McKenna, *Alien Dreamtime* (Astralwerks, 1993); *Alien Dreamtime*, directed by Ken Adams (2003).
- ⁷² Wojtowicz, “Magic Mushrooms,” 149.
- ⁷³ Note: to avoid confusion, Dennis is identified using his forename; references to Terence follow the convention of using the surname only.
- ⁷⁴ McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 101-102.
- ⁷⁵ Dennis McKenna, quoted in Alexander Price, “Immanentizing the Eschaton: An Interview with Dennis McKenna,” *Reality Sandwich* (11 March, 2007) <http://realitysandwich.com/13139/interview_dennis_mckenna/> accessed 14 October, 2018.
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- ⁷⁷ McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 55.
- ⁷⁸ Wouter Hanegraaff, “Entheogenic Esotericism,” in *Contemporary Esotericism*, ed. Kennet Granholm and Egil Asprem (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013), 404. Eranos was a discussion group organized since 1933 in Ascona, Switzerland. Key figures included Jung and Eliade.
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- ⁸⁰ McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 286; see also 119-124.
- ⁸¹ Terence McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 159.
- ⁸² See, McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 100-102.
- ⁸³ Terence McKenna, “Sacred Antidotes,” *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* 6, no.1 (1996), 96
- ⁸⁴ McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 127.
- ⁸⁵ McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 128.

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- ⁸⁷ Terence McKenna, "Lectures on Alchemy: Esalen Institute, 1991" <https://medium.com/@Ayahuasca_yage/lectures-on-alchemy-with-terence-mckenna-e7a81430aae7> accessed 10 November, 2018.
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- ⁸⁹ McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 128.
- ⁹⁰ McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 128.
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- ⁹³ Jacques Vallée, *Passport to Magonia: On UFOs, Folklore, and Parallel Worlds* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969).
- ⁹⁴ Terence McKenna, "Introduction to the Library of Mystic Arts Edition," in W.Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (New York: Citadel Press, 1994), i.
- ⁹⁵ McKenna, "Introduction," ii.
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- ⁹⁸ Carl Jung, *The Gnostic Jung*, ed. Robert Segal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Carl Jung, *Jung on Alchemy*, ed. Nathan Schwartz-Salant (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
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- ¹⁰⁰ McKenna, "Carl Jung and Psychic Archetypes." See also Terence McKenna, *Food of the Gods: A Radical History of Plants, Drugs, and Human Evolution* (London: Rider, 1992), 262-263.
- ¹⁰¹ McKenna, "Carl Jung and Psychic Archetypes." See also McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 132-136.
- ¹⁰² McKenna, "Carl Jung and Psychic Archetypes."
- ¹⁰³ McKenna, "Carl Jung and Psychic Archetypes."
- ¹⁰⁴ See McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 105-118. For useful discussions, see Davis, "Weird Naturalism"; Wouter Hanegraaff, "'An End History. And Go to the Stars.' Terence McKenna and 2012," in *Religion and Retributive Logic: Essays in Honour of Professor Garry W. Trompf*, ed. Carole Cusack and Christopher Hartney (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 291-312.
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- ¹⁰⁶ McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 53. See particularly McKenna, *Brotherhood*, 250-272.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Davis, "Weird Naturalism," 185-192.
- ¹⁰⁸ McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 71.
- ¹⁰⁹ McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 77.
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- ¹¹¹ Davis, "Weird Naturalism," 190.
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- ¹¹⁴ McKenna, *True Hallucinations*, 94.
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- ¹²¹ McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 27.
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- ¹³³ Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2005), 266-275.
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- ¹⁵⁷ McKenna, *Archaic Revival*, 144.
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- ¹⁵⁹ Oss and Oeric, *Grower's Guide*, 14-15.
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- ¹⁹⁰ McKenna, *Food of the Gods*, 258-259.
- ¹⁹¹ Ben Sessa, *The Psychedelic Renaissance* (London: Muswell Hill Press, 2012), 4.
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