




October 2016

## Zen Noir vis-à-vis Myers-Briggs Personality Typology: Semiotic Multivalency as Grounds for Dialog

Edward J. Godfrey  
Temple University, godfrey@temple.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf>

 Part of the [Buddhist Studies Commons](#), [Comparative Methodologies and Theories Commons](#), [Comparative Philosophy Commons](#), [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [Personality and Social Contexts Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

### Recommended Citation

Godfrey, Edward J. (2016) "Zen Noir vis-à-vis Myers-Briggs Personality Typology: Semiotic Multivalency as Grounds for Dialog," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 20: Iss. 3, Article 28.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol20/iss3/28>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Religion & Film by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).

---

## Zen Noir vis-à-vis Myers-Briggs Personality Typology: Semiotic Multivalency as Grounds for Dialog

### Abstract

Marc Rosenbush's film, *Zen Noir* (2004) is at first glance a Buddhist film wherein a troubled detective finds himself at a Zen temple with a murder to solve. But upon further investigation, it becomes evident that the film can also be understood in terms of Myers-Briggs personality typology, which is an extension of the personology and depth psychology of C.G. Jung. This suggests a multivalency which allows the imagery of the film to be interpreted in two different ways; as both suggesting Zen enlightenment *and* Jungian individuation. To assist with this comparison, this paper introduces the Ten Ox-Herding Paintings of Zen to symbolically contrast with the images of *Zen Noir*, which further emphasizes and clarifies this point. When the Buddhist themes of *Zen Noir* are juxtaposed face to face with the themes of depth psychology, the multivalency of its symbolism establishes a fruitful ground for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialog.

### Keywords

Rosenbush, Zen Noir, MBTI, Myers-Briggs, Zen, Buddhism, Comparative Dialog

### Author Notes

Edward Godfrey is a recent graduate of Temple University. His research is currently focused on the philosophical elucidation of the subtle-body of Tantric Yoga and Buddhism with an emphasis on chakras in order to facilitate multidisciplinary dialog between contemporary scholars and practitioners.

## Introduction

Marc Rosenbush's film, *Zen Noir* (2004), is at first glance a film thoroughly ensconced in the themes of Zen Buddhism. Set in a dark and brooding film *noir* atmosphere, the film depicts the story of a deeply troubled detective who finds himself at a Zen monastery in order to solve a murder. But once there, he realizes that things are not quite what they seem. As the film unfolds, we find that the world Rosenbush has created is wildly symbolic, and it becomes clear that the monastery is a symbol of the detective's psyche and that he is not investigating a murder, but his own fear of death and loss. If we recognize this introspective, psychological element of the film, the Buddhist themes become conflated with Western allegories of navigating the psyche. My contention is that when the psychological themes of this film are investigated, we will find that the alleged Buddhist theme of enlightenment must compete with a symbolic depiction of Myers-Briggs Typology and Jungian individuation.<sup>1</sup>

The argument this paper presents is two-fold. First, it argues that the themes of the detective's psychological growth in *Zen Noir* can also be understood through the hermeneutic of Myers-Briggs personality typology (MBTI)—an expansion of Jung's personality typology—and Jungian individuation.<sup>2</sup> Second, as a baseline with which to compare this psychological reading, this paper introduces a traditional visual medium from Zen Buddhism that symbolically depicts enlightenment; the Ten Ox-herding Paintings.<sup>3</sup> Through analyzing the symbols in this film using two different schools of thought, "semiotic multivalency" arises, or the state of (at least) two distinct interpretations of one set of symbols.

The first argument of this paper is that each character is better understood as a symbolic manifestations of the detective's psyche which he must confront and overcome. To explain, in

MBTI, each type is broken down into four personality characteristics. In this case, as will be explained in detail below, it is argued that the detective is an Extroverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judger, or an “ESTJ.” If each character represents an aspect of the detective’s psyche, the first character, Ed, represents the detective’s extroverted thinking (Te) and introverted sensing (Si). Taken at face value, this character comes across as a tired Zen cliché as he is elusive, antagonistic, and perpetually answering questions with questions. But when taken psychologically Ed becomes a symbolic depiction of the detective’s own defenses that keep him distanced from the issues that trouble him. The detective’s resolution with Ed leads to the first meaningful interaction with the master of the temple, or in the context of this argument, the detective’s extroverted intuition (Ne). This is expressed in the film by the master helping the detective recognize interconnectedness (*pratīyasamutpāda*) and the inevitability of death.<sup>4</sup> The final character, Jane, represents the detective’s introverted feeling (Fi). This is the facet of the detective’s psyche that he suppresses as we find out early in the film that his mother died when he was seven and that his wife died during childbirth along with their unborn child. Jane represents both the detective’s inability to trust and love and as such the detective’s rejection of Jane is symbolic of his rejection of his own feelings.

If the case is sufficiently made that *Zen Noir* can be accounted for through MBTI we are left in a position wherein we must deal with the tension that arises between Jungian themes of individuation and Zen enlightenment. The second argument of this paper is made by introducing the Ten Bulls (十牛), or the Ten Ox-herding Paintings. This visual depiction of Zen enlightenment is comprised of a series of paintings wherein a young boy establishes a progressively deeper relationship with a bull or ox, which represents his own Buddha-nature, just as the detective seeks to establish a deeper relationship with Jane in *Zen Noir*. In the Ten Bulls,

the bull eventually disappears, signifying a radical shift in consciousness. However, Rosenbush's film concludes with the detective and Jane sitting side-by-side, suggesting a very different sort of image.

The contrast between these two interpretations leaves us with an undecided state of what I call "semiotic multivalency." This allows the film to become a cross-roads of cross-cultural philosophy, psychology, and religion, which makes for a remarkable place to begin comparative dialog.

### ***Vis-à-vis* MBTI**

Let us begin with a brief overview of the psychological themes of the film. In *Zen Noir*, what at first seems to be a routine police investigation is actually a voyage into the psyche of a severely depressed man who is attempting to come to terms with his fear of loss and death. On the surface, the film depicts a series of deaths, but symbolically these represent the detective "dying" to successive layers of his own psyche. When this psycho-symbolic interpretation is recognized, the film takes on a marked richness and depth.

The film's lead character is a nameless detective who lives alone in a cramped apartment after his wife died in childbirth, and now spends his off-time sitting next to his .38 Special drinking whiskey in the dark; a caricature of frustration, desperation, and sorrow and a suitable hyperbole of *dukkha*.<sup>5</sup> His most prevalent feature is his systematic logical processes and methods which he clings to obsessively. Take the following quote for example where the detective is explaining his method for how he imagines he will solve the murder:

The universe operates on a few relatively simple principles. So once you know the score, it's not too hard to find your way around. One of those principles is that there's always a guilty party. Take murder for instance. At first glance it may seem mysterious but in the end it always comes down to the same basic equation. Somebody died, somebody did it; a simple matter of cause and effect.

This sums up the detective's mentality succinctly as it accentuates his trust in logic derived from personal experience. It also intimates the sense of guilt he carries; if it is always the "same basic equation," then someone is always responsible for a death. It is because of statements like this that the detective appears to be, according to MBTI, an ESTJ; that is an extroverted, sensing, thinking judger.

This complexity of the film arises when the characters are understood to represent the various psychological functions of the lead character. By the nature of MBTI, each type is broken down into four psychological functions.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the ESTJ detective, that would be:

<u>Order</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Character</u>
Primary	Extroverted Thinking	(Te)	Ed
Auxiliary	Introverted Sensing	(Si)	Ed
Tertiary	Extroverted Intuition	(Ne)	Master
Inferior	Introverted Feeling	(Fi)	Jane

To explain, the detective's primary function is Te, which is defined by a reliance on objective and external facts and standards for problem solving, whether this comes in the form of laws, authority figures, mathematics, formal logic, or any other clearly defined rules that govern a system.<sup>7</sup> His auxiliary function, Si, is defined by reliance on past experience of personal sense impressions to recognize patterns and generate a sense of continuity. This function insists that the individual learns through doing as it constantly reinforces itself. As a veritable cliché of a police detective, Myers makes the following corroborative assertion:<sup>8</sup>

[ST types focus] upon facts, because facts can be collected and verified directly by the senses.... [They] approach their decisions regarding these facts by impersonal analysis, because of their trust in thinking [and its] step-by-step logical process of reasoning from cause to effect.... [Their] best chances of success and satisfaction lie in fields that demand impersonal analysis of concrete facts....<sup>9</sup>

Next, the tertiary function operates as a backdrop to the first two functions. For the detective this is extraverted intuition (Ne). Ne represents pattern recognition and the search for novel solutions; it is the theory that holds together data. It is also what will allow the detective access to deeper insights into the big picture. That is, it is that which allows the detective to seriously confront the idea that his overbearing psychical orientation is incomplete, that something is missing, and that something needs to change if he wishes to discover it.

The detective's inferior function is Fi, which is the internal expression of emotion that is highly personal and available only to the individual. It influences one's morality and what is valued, and tends to resist manipulation by outside sources.

### **Application of MBTI**

If the characters of the film are understood as the detective's psychological functions, then each death in the film represents a shift in the detective's consciousness. This is one of the keys to this interpretation as each death is followed by a distinct change in the quality of interaction between the next character in line. Psychologically speaking, this suggests that each death allows that which was previously unconscious, unexamined, and spontaneous to make its way into the detective's field of awareness. These deaths represent a change in psychical orientation that abandons the familiar in exchange for an investment into aspects of the psyche that have been

neglected. As the film progresses, the detective becomes more and more aware of the influence of his functions, finally leading him to uncover his inferior function that he has been so desperately repressing.

Having introduced these psychological themes, we now turn to their depiction in the film. To begin, the detective arrives at the monastery after receiving a phone call that there has been a murder. The murder here is symbolic of the detective dying to his insistence that he should continue to live his life the way he has always done. The phone call he received may be considered a wakeup call that brings him around to reconsider his own existence and the limitations of his current course.<sup>10</sup> When he first shows up at the monastery to investigate this murder, his character comes across as extremely strong, bossy, and generally overpowering. He bursts into the *zendo* with gun drawn yelling, “Alright, nobody move!” (and of course the monks are all sitting perfectly still in *zazen*). His attitude and this symbolism suggest the powerful judgment of his rationality that carries the weight of his ego.

Beneath the detective’s gruff exterior is a deep sorrow. His wife appears throughout the film in flashbacks but also in ghostly form, where her face is painted grey, bearing the Japanese character for death (死 - *shi*) on her forehead.<sup>11</sup> The relationship between his primary function and the sorrow arising from his inferior function are expressed in the following; “There are days you wake up you simply want to die and the only thing that keeps you from putting a gun to your head is the pure routine of the job. Stick to the basics, ask the questions, wait until they trip up. They always do.” It is clear that the detective suffers from a pathological condition which he attempts to suppress by over-emphasizing his primary function. Ordinarily, the primary and inferior function share a mutual relationship wherein the inferior function informs the primary, and the primary keeps the inferior in check. In extreme conditions, as is the case here, the primary



may lock down and repress the inferior. The journey expressed in this film is the detective acquainting himself with this neglected inferior function.

The first character interviewed at the monastery by the detective is named Ed, who later reveals his Zen name to be “articulate lotus flowing from the source.” There is a certain irony in this name as his conversations with the detective are far from articulate. Quite to the contrary, these interactions are very awkward and obfuscating as Ed seems to avoid answering questions at all costs; he answers questions with questions, pursues trivial tangents, asks for clarification of irrelevant details, and continually offers the detective tea, generally disrupting the investigation any way he can. Although this makes for a terrible cliché of elusive Zen dialog, in the context of MBTI, Ed represents the detective’s primary and secondary function, which throws back at the detective all of the detective’s own stubborn tricks.

Ed, if understood as a representation of the detective’s Te/Si (the coupling of his primary and auxiliary function), psychologically mirrors all of the detective’s cognitive methods and biases. The detective asks questions, Ed asks questions. The detective tries to extract information, Ed extracts information. In this light, instead of a tired cliché, Ed’s dialog becomes quite pertinent, holding a mirror up to the detective’s psyche, offering a counter-action to every move the detective makes.<sup>12</sup> This is suggested all the more in several of the scenes in which the detective and Ed appear as Rosenbush explicitly depicts this mirror metaphor in the body language and physical positioning between the characters.<sup>13</sup> The detective’s frustration with Ed can be interpreted as a depiction of the limitations of the scope and range of the detective’s methods. That is, the frustration he experiences with Ed is identical to the frustration he feels with himself in attempting to solve this “murder” with a skill set that is not suited for the job.

However, as the film progresses, the detective begins to wear Ed down. He finds him one day beating his head against the monastery's bell. It turns out that Ed didn't want the job; the work is tough and the hours are terrible. His frustration seems to arise from the monotony and repetition of his life, which mirrors the detective's monotonous application of his own methods. Ed's breakdown is also the detective's.

In the scene depicting this breakdown the detective is at a corkboard arranging all of his facts on pieces of paper, connecting like topics with pins and bits of string. To add a touch of anxiety and frustration, the scene is done in fast-motion and set to chaotic music. This is an apt metaphor for the detective's mind: he is attempting to accomplish the impossible and is becoming progressively more frustrated. Eventually, he strips down to his undershirt, tears away all of his notes and breaks the corkboard over his head.<sup>14</sup>

It is only after his breakdown that the master finally speaks, suggesting that the detective is ready to abandon familiar methods and listen to the quieter voices of his psyche. Prior to this point, the only communication the detective had with the master was the master silently holding up an orange. The master, I propose, represents the detective's tertiary Ne, which is defined by growth, novelty, and an abstract understanding of the big picture. With tears in his eyes, the detective acknowledges he is at wit's end and asks for help, only to be shown the orange again. He gets frustrated about his lack of progress with the murder investigation and the master speaks for the first time, asking, "What murder?" The detective gets angry and says, "Right, that's it, I'm taking you in," but cannot find his pistol, which is the symbol of his authority—that which backs up his methodology.<sup>15</sup> The loss of the gun represents the end of the detective's absolute reliance upon that which is psychologically familiar.

That night at midnight, the detective has a special meeting with Ed as he promised to tell the detective the truth behind the murder. As it goes, it was Ed who somehow got his hands on the detective's pistol. He says to the detective, "Do you want to know a secret? Sometimes, the mystery is bigger than you think." He then shoots himself. The detective, after a short interlude, is found rocking back and forth incredulously muttering, "...my gun, my gun ...." This suggests the immediate realization of deeper, less accessed aspects of the psyche that rose up into consciousness in such a way that was not compatible with the detective's ordinary, everyday mindset, causing him rethink his perception of himself.<sup>16</sup> In light of this, Ed's statement of "bigger than you think" may be understood as "bigger than your primary and auxiliary function allow you to think." This demonstrates that the detective had a momentary insight into the solution to his problem. This becomes symbolically more meaningful after the following meeting with the master.

The transformative growth experienced by the detective through the death of Ed is solidified in the very next scene as it is here where the detective has his first meaningful (i.e., not orange-based) conversation with the master, who represents the detective's tertiary function (Ne). This pivotal conversation follows the format of the detective asking a question and then the master interrupting him in order to redirect his attention to his immediate surroundings.<sup>17</sup> The detective asks what's going on in this strange place and the master replies, "tea."<sup>18</sup> He begins to ask another question and the master interrupts, "drink." He asks again and the master says, "Finish. Slow. Good." Once the detective has slowed down, the master, for the first time, takes the detective's question seriously. Psychically, this may be understood as the detective setting aside his inculcated preferences and allowing his tertiary function to express itself.

After this conversation, their interactions grow richer. The next scene that demonstrates the detective's growth is when the master brings the detective around to realize that sometimes there is no cause of death and that people just die. Although simply a fact of life, it is a fact that the detective does not want to admit as it is bound to so much of his personal sorrow. The master first assures him that they have much in common, which the detective denies. The master asks for the detective's hat and it is revealed that the detective, much like the monk, is bald. This symbolically functions like the loss of the detective's pistol. As the pistol was the authority that adamantly supported the detective's psyche, the hat is a symbol of his own self-identity. The master then places the hat on his own head to demonstrate to the detective his own authority and perhaps symbolizes that the detective's primary and auxiliary functions must be supported and informed by this tertiary function.

The master then questions the detective about the murder, bringing him around to the realization that sometimes there is no cause of death, of course, with the threat of blows from a fluorescent foam bat. After his questions about the murder are answered with swift strikes from the master's foam *keisaku*, the detective asks, "If he wasn't murdered then, why am I even here?"<sup>19</sup>

This transition suggests that the detective's dominant Te has reached the very end of its natural limits, beyond which something psychically novel and apparently frightening will be required. What follows is the detective panicking out of frustration, trying to leave the monastery which is symbolically rendered as a crazy montage of Scooby Doo doors, giant pigs, a cascade of oranges, and the detective nearly being swallowed up by a mysterious void. But, as the monastery is a symbol of the detective's mind, there is no way whatsoever for him to escape.<sup>20</sup>

The last encounter the detective has with the master is when the master finally explains the symbol of the orange.<sup>21</sup> The orange is a symbol of interdependent origination or *pratītyasamutpāda*. Much in the spirit of Thich Nhat Hanh, the master states in the midst of a much longer block of dialog,

Every bit, not just orange, entire world. Look, look, what you see? Orange. Ok? What else? Skin? Juice? Good. But must look deeper. Tree, orchard, farmer, rain. But deeper, what else? Death, dead orange, dead insect, dead people, all dead, all dead but all still right here. This orange, now every bite, every taste, not just orange, entire universe.<sup>22</sup>

To this, the detective bows deeply having finally understood the message. Shortly thereafter, while the detective and the master are sitting in *zazen* side by side, the master slowly tips over and dies, representing the detective successfully incorporating his tertiary function into his psyche.<sup>23</sup>

The final character, Jane, represents the detective's inferior function, which is introverted feeling (Fi).<sup>24</sup> This is the facet of the detective's psyche that he attempts to suppress as we find out early in the film that first the detective's mother died when he was seven and then that his wife died during childbirth along with their unborn child. So, it is clear that his character carries much sorrow and has profound difficulty allowing women into his life. He is left in a neurotic state wherein his Fi is unable to express itself. He is thus unable to relate to others on an emotional level and projects his neurosis onto others to keep them at a distance. In this sense, Jane is not merely a woman he relates to through his Fi, but that she is his *anima* itself, his very relationship with his own unconscious.

Jane's character comes across as rather static as she plays the cliché role of the Hollywood romantic interest, in this case the *femme fatale*. She smiles seductively, is flirtatious, and has

romantically captivated the detective. In the film, she and the detective begin to pursue a relationship, but it is later revealed that Jane has a secret: she is dying. There is no suggestion of any urgency to her dying, nor is any prospective ailment introduced, symbolically expressing the mere fact of her mortality. The detective is clearly distraught when he learns of her condition, stating, “No, I can’t do this. Not again.”

His relationship with Jane changes throughout the film, beginning with playful flirtation. Their relationship deepens after the death of Ed when the detective is left wracked with anxiety. She encourages him to “just breathe.”<sup>25</sup> This is an interesting allusion to the role the body and breath play in meditation as the breath is a gateway of sorts to the unconscious.<sup>26</sup> After Ed dies (*i.e.*, after the detective recognizes the limits of his Te/Si) he learns to start listening to his breath, cultivating an awareness of the more subtle aspects of his mind-body.

Through their relationship, the film strongly emphasizes the disruptive nature of her character. After their first sexual encounter, the film segues to a lingering full-screen shot of an orange engulfed in flame. Perhaps the most overt depiction of Jane *qua* disruption comes when she interrupts the detective’s first hint of waking up. In this scene, the detective is mindfully slicing up an orange to eat (after his conversation with the master), and just before he gets his first slice to his mouth Jane bursts into the room sobbing.<sup>27</sup>

The detective’s final breakthrough which frees him from the disruptions symbolically expressed through Jane occurs when he encounters his deceased wife in his meditation. She reaches out her hand to him but he does not react and she fades away leaving him in peace. This scene is a turning point for the detective as it represents his acceptance of her death.

The final scene of the film depicts the detective sitting on a *zafu* wearing a black robe, but also wearing his lost detective’s hat smartly on his head. He states, “I awake at dawn and am

once again myself.”<sup>28</sup> Sitting next to him is Jane. He asks her, “How long have you got?” She replies, “I don’t know.” He closes his eyes, grimaces, and after a few moments relaxes and replies, “OK.” He then holds out his hand to Jane and she takes it.

This final scene of *Zen Noir* stands out as a near textbook depiction of how C.G. Jung defined individuation.<sup>29</sup> The following passage from Jung aptly captures the imagery of the scene.

...if the unconscious can be recognized as a co-determining quantity along with the conscious, and if we can live in such a way that conscious and unconscious... are given recognition as far as possible, the centre of gravity of the total personality shifts its position. It ceases to be in the ego which is merely the centre of consciousness, and instead is located in a hypothetical point between the conscious and the unconscious, which might be called the self.<sup>30</sup>

The detective (consciousness) changes its relationship with Jane (unconsciousness) and their center of gravity shifts, symbolically expressed through their holding of hands. Psychologically speaking, this is a state of the psyche in which the four functions, although different, no longer find themselves in opposition. In this case, the center which used to be securely inculcated in Te (the detective at the beginning of the film) is now balanced between himself (Te) and Jane (Fi).

This conclusion is very well accounted for by the symbolism of Jungian individuation. However, this is not entirely in accord with the *telos* of Zen Buddhism. We turn next to a Buddhist reading of the film to further explore this point.

## **Ten Bulls**

Before we may state that *Zen Noir* is a Buddhist film, it is prudent to ask what we even mean by a “Buddhist film”.<sup>31</sup> This film appears to neatly fall into the second category proposed by

Whalen-Bridge, “Western films about clearly-marked Buddhist topics or characters.” That is, it is not of Asian origin, nor is it merely “thematically conducive to Buddhist allegorization.” The purpose of this section then is to assess just how “clearly-marked” these Buddhist topics are. To explore this question, we may turn our attention to an artistic depiction of Zen Buddhist awakening from within that tradition itself.

For this task, the Ten Ox-herding Paintings are suitable as they are explicitly from the Zen tradition and symbolically depict the process of Buddhist awakening.<sup>32</sup> The ten frames of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings represent successive stages of development along the path towards enlightenment. The standard I propose is that if *Zen Noir* contains authentic Zen themes, then it must more or less stand up to the criteria of Zen itself. In the following, I will juxtapose the symbols of *Zen Noir* and the Ten Bulls to see how Rosenbush’s insights hold up. As we shall see, *Zen Noir* only accounts for six of the ten frames.

Before we begin, I should note that I have always contested that the Ten Ox-herding Paintings could use a “0<sup>th</sup> frame.” By this I mean a frame preceding the first that would depict ordinary life prior to any stirring of religious sentiment. This I have envisioned as perhaps a cityscape or the like, something depicting a lifestyle completely divorced from nature—nature being the setting of Kakuan’s paintings. In the film, this “0<sup>th</sup> frame” is characterized by the detective sitting in his dark apartment, drinking heavily, and contemplating suicide. The telephone ringing in the background during his opening monologue is a powerful symbol for this initial stirring of religious sentiment that is being neglected due to the distractions of everyday “city” life. If nature is the environment chosen by Kakuan to represent the ideal ground of self-cultivation, then it is only natural that a gritty, booze-soaked, *noir* cityscape represents its antithesis.<sup>33</sup>



The first proper frame of the Ten Ox-herding paintings goes by the name “searching for the ox” (尋牛). In it there is a boy in the forest looking for an ox, the ox being a traditional Buddhist symbol for enlightenment.<sup>34</sup> At first the ox is missing so one must go looking for it in its natural domain. In the film, the detective answers the phone and ends up at a monastery. Symbolically, it is made clear that the detective only ended up at this Zen monastery after looking into some other options. For effect, after a mysterious phone call from a “guy with an accent” asking him to hurry to the temple, the detective says, “Three synagogues later it occurred to me that there aren’t many Chinese Jews so I wound up here.” The detective finds himself turning away from the distractions of the world and towards an investigation of himself.<sup>35</sup>

The second frame, “seeing the traces,” (見跡) is represented by the boy seeing the footprints left behind by the ox. This second frame generally represents an event or teaching that naturally resonates with the individual, reorienting him or her along a new path. These traces are suggested when the detective states, “...in some sad corner of your mind you still hope for something more. Something real. A truth so bright it will pierce the shadows and reveal the secrets locked within our souls.” This expresses the idea that the detective encountered something that gave an authentic voice to this inner impulse that he could not find at a synagogue, thus guiding him to a *zendo*. If frame one represents the initial curiosity to seek out the monastery, then the second frame represents something authentic that keeps him there.

The third frame, “seeing the ox” (見牛), depicts the momentary initial experience of the awakening process. In the film, this may be expressed by the detective’s first encounter with Jane *qua* the symbol of his unconscious. Stated negatively, this may also be expressed by when the detective directly experiences something beyond the scope of his ordinary psychical orientation in the case of Ed’s death. The loss of his gun and the death of Ed signals a breach in the everyday,

ordinary paradigm of his psyche. This represents the detective reaching the limits of familiar ground which forces him into regions of his psyche that are altogether foreign. The death of Ed also leads to Jane's first instructions to "just breathe" which symbolizes the detective getting out of his head and into the first legitimate exploration of his own body, and thus his repressed emotions. But, is this the extent of "catching a glimpse" that Kakuan had in mind?

This experience may be understood not as an attainment of some positive mental state, but more so the cessation or letting go (*nirodha*) of the ordinary perspective of ego-centered consciousness. That is to say, it is not the ego directly observing that which is unconscious, but a flickering, so to speak, of ego-centered consciousness itself. This is a momentary suspension of the ordinary everyday perspective that allows for a spontaneous yet fleeting manifestation of one's original nature.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth frame, "catching the ox" (得牛), depicts the first sustained experience of one's true nature. This frame straddles the paradigms of ego-consciousness (the boy) and enlightenment (the ox), still expressed dualistically. This frame also expresses that this relationship is unstable. The boy is pulling with all of his might on the rope he has affixed to the ox, and the ox is resisting him every step of the way. In the film, the detective is depicted sitting in meditation and struggling under the assault of stray thoughts, haunting images from his unconscious, and his fear of intimacy. In Jungian terms, this struggle is with the female expression of his unconscious—his *anima*. It is an expression of the detective facing his fear of encountering the deeper recesses of his own psyche, capturing the theme of frame four quite well.

In frame five, "taming the ox" (牧牛), the boy is leading the ox by a tether. The symbolism of this suggests that if the boy was to release the ox—even for a moment—it would quickly wander off, suggesting a fickle relationship that has, for the moment, settled down. This is

represented in the film in a number of scenes, primarily the ones in which the detective is diligently meditating while being assailed by the trauma of his past, as well as scenes in which he has meaningful conversation with Jane. The detective has still not “tamed” his fear completely, but has managed to coexist with Jane in a cordial and productive manner.

In the final scene of *Zen Noir*, the detective and Jane are sitting side-by-side in *zazen*. The tenuous focus of frame five is now replaced with a new-found confidence; the detective gets his hat back. This final scene depicts the sixth frame of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings, “coming home on the ox’s back” (騎牛歸家). This frame suggests the boy and the ox are finally in accord with each other. This accord is demonstrated in the film by the detective’s acceptance of Jane, expressing contentment with the fact of Jane’s (and thus his own) mortality in spite of the sorrow this brings. This is literally and figuratively where the film stops. The remaining absent frames will be addressed in the following section.

## **Discussion**

Two interpretations of *Zen Noir*’s symbolism have been presented, and we must now discuss the nature of their relationship. However, we must refrain from making hard and fast value judgments as such judgments are strictly dependent upon which presuppositions we take into the comparison. I contend that it is most prudent to exercise patience and, more so, a sense of ambivalence in such scenarios. Or perhaps more appropriately, to exercise a sense of *multivalence*, respecting the coexistence of each symbolic interpretation as equals.<sup>37</sup> To work our way through these two interpretations, the successes and failures of the film’s symbolism will be addressed below.

In many respects, this film was very successful in animating the abstract messages of Buddhism; e.g. impermanence (*aniccā*), life's intrinsic frustration and discontent (*dukkha*), self-cultivation (*bhāvanā*), and the possibility of awakening to a deeper understanding of one's self. Held to the standard of the Ten Bulls, the film also fares well, taking the viewer at least partially through an adequate analog of this ancient depiction of awakening.

The question of partially representing the Ten Bulls is not entirely a fault of the film, and as such may still be seen as one of the film's successes. Rosenbush appears to have been hindered by the literalism of the Hollywood film *noir* setting, so it is reasonable to accept that compromises had to be made. By the standard of the Ten Ox-herding paintings, four frames were not accounted for. In order to do so, a radical paradigm shift would have been required that would have compromised the more literal aspects of the film. In general, such themes may very well be impossible to render without completely losing an audience not familiar with Zen. For example, what could the film make of Dōgen's "casting off of body and mind?"<sup>38</sup> This, I suspect, is why Rosenbush remained within the more familiar themes of Western, Jungian psychology, either intentionally or unintentionally. At a bare minimum, as I have argued, the film adequately represents the first six frames, which is still quite an accomplishment as far as authenticity is concerned.

As much praise as this film deserves for adequately depicting Buddhist philosophical concepts and values, it nonetheless misses the mark in other areas.<sup>39</sup> The predominant shortcoming of this film may be distilled to the simple fact that it never seems to move beyond the ordinary position of ego-consciousness. That is, it remains staunchly embedded in a dualist paradigm which makes it incapable of symbolically rendering the later frames of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings which no longer abide by such a structure.

Addressing these issues more explicitly, this shortcoming is further revealed when we inspect frame seven of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings, “the ox forgotten” (忘牛存人). In it, the ox is entirely absent as the boy ceases to identify the unconscious in the familiar and comfortable terms of his ego-consciousness as a distinct, separate other. It is not clear how it is even possible for *Zen Noir* to symbolically account for this frame at all as the detective’s completeness would necessarily have to be demonstrated in the absence of Jane. One of the symbols that Jane represents, the detective’s fear of death and emotional vulnerability (Fi) is forgotten, much like the ox, but Jane remains.<sup>40</sup>

It would also be a cinematographic challenge to represent frames eight and nine, “both man and ox transcended” (人牛俱忘) and “returning to the source” (返本還源), which are depictions of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and interdependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), respectively. It is only here where the radical shift away from the ordinary paradigms of consciousness occurs, wherein the conscious and unconscious assume a relationship that is altogether different—not abnormal, but “super-normal”.<sup>41</sup> *Zen Noir* does not address this quintessential point; the master’s story about the orange falls short of this mark as it is merely a second-hand recollection. To soften this criticism, it would be fairer to say that *Zen Noir* simply *cannot* address these points while remaining cogent. Ultimately, it is this radicalness of transcending the everyday, ordinary perspective that is not captured by the film, most excusably, as mentioned, due to the story’s requirement to stay as much as possible in the realm of the mundane in an already wildly abstract film.

The final frame of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings, “Returning to the city” (入鄴垂手), is not represented either. In this frame, the boy is now a man and returns to the city, or back to the everyday world to help others. As the film starts in the detective’s apartment while he is looking

into a mirror and then flashes into this abstract inner *zendo*, it would have been relatively simple to flash back out. Perhaps a cut to the detective walking the busy city streets in the light of day would have been a powerful symbol of waking up, especially in contrast to the dark, exclusively indoor setting of the film.<sup>42</sup> But the film makes no such suggestion that the detective's work is incomplete.

## Conclusion

With the above cases made and evidence presented, *Zen Noir* stands at a cross-roads of interpretation, the values that one takes from the film revealing only the values one brings in. The fertile symbolism of the film stands ready to accept a variety of interpretations. This multivalence, it appears, is not a coincidence as the director was admittedly inspired by David Lynch who famously leaves his films' interpretation up to the viewer.<sup>43</sup> If the evidence has been presented sufficiently, then it will be clear that *Zen Noir* is an excellent film to further interdisciplinary discussion on the symbols of the human psyche, particularly between those of Zen and Western psychology.

To summarize, I hold it best to play the role of a detective and closely examine the evidence. The first piece of evidence is the strong presence of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator. This, in and of itself, adds a fascinating interpretation of the film, but it paradoxically precludes the film from accomplishing its goal, which is to render an explanation of Zen. The next piece of evidence is the comparison of the film with the Ten Ox-herding Paintings, which strongly suggests a deep thematic compatibility with an authentic Zen visual medium of self-cultivation, albeit partially. With these two points in mind, we may inspect the successes and failures of both

positions, as well as the limits of storytelling within a specific film genre. We are left then with the film remaining open to interpretation, inviting further investigation as a crossroads of semiotic multivalency.

<sup>1</sup> Jung is used in this paper for his theory of individuation. In spite of the well-deserved criticism with which he is ordinarily laden, his insights into individuation sufficiently capture the problems latent in developing a relationship with one's own unconscious while remaining within a dualist paradigm that defines consciousness as diametrically opposed to the unconscious with no possibility of unification.

<sup>2</sup> This paper recognizes that there are problems with MBTI and personality theory in general, and wishes to set aside these discussions to focus on the comparative project at hand. For those interested in a few contemporary insights into the debate see, Merve Emre, "Uncovering the Secret History of Myers-Briggs" *Digg.com*. 7 October, 2015. Web. 9 October, 2015; and John B. Lloyd, "The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Mainstream Psychology: Analysis and Evaluation of an Unresolved Hostility." *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion and Education*. 33.1 (2012): 23-34.

<sup>3</sup> The tension between Buddhism and its interpretation through Jungian psychology is well documented and will not be explicitly addressed in this paper. Sharrin aptly captures the essence of this tension when he explains that early Jungian interpretation merely "serves to use Buddhism as a vehicle for the validation of Depth Psychology, rather than an open investigation of their mutual limitations and strengths." For example, one such heavy-handed Jungian interpretation of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings can be found in Spiegelman and Miyuki's collaboration. J. Marvin Spiegelman & MIYUKI Mokusen, 1985. *Buddhism and Jungian Psychology* (Tempe: New Falcon Publications, 1994). For an approachable critical evaluation of the interaction between Jung and Buddhism see Ron Sharrin, "Jung and Buddhism." Blog. *Buddhism Today*. Blogspot, 29 June 2010. Web. 12 May 2016. <http://buddhism-today.blogspot.com/2010/06/jung-and-buddhism.html>. The reader may find Clarke's evaluation of the topic to be exceedingly thorough. J. J. Clarke, *Jung and Eastern Thought: A Dialog with the Orient* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> *Pratītyasamutpāda* is usually translated as "dependent origination" or "codependent arising" which indicates a radical level of interconnectedness that stands in contrast to ontologies that presuppose individual essences.

<sup>5</sup> The detective's namelessness and inability to recall his own name when asked resonates with both Jung and Zen as it suggests that his true nature is larger than the confines of ordinary states of consciousness. That is, his "name" is also an expression of his unconscious or perhaps his Buddha Nature. In the context of Buddhism, *dukkha*, while ordinarily translated merely as "suffering," is the existential distress that accompanies confronting unsatisfactory states such as change, old age, sickness, and death.

<sup>6</sup> See Isabel Briggs Myers with Peter B. Myers, *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type* (Palo Alto, Davies-Black Publishing, 1995), 18-20; and C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 6*. Translated by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 405-7. As a point of clarification, Jung identified these basic functions while Myers proposed the nuance of coupling each function with either introversion or extroversion staggered through the first four functions.

<sup>7</sup> *Psychological Types*, 342-54.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that this personality seems to reflect the cultural personality of a society that has embraced logic and reason at the expense of other modalities. In this sense, to Rosenbush's credit, *Zen Noir* can also be seen as social commentary on contemporary attitudes.

<sup>9</sup> *Gifts Differing*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that the detective has no idea who called him, suggesting an internal source for this call which is commensurate with both Jung and Zen.

<sup>11</sup> This character is conspicuously missing its second-to-last stroke. Whether or not this carries its own symbolic meaning or is merely an oversight is not clear.

<sup>12</sup> If this is the case, MBTI may offer cursory insight into Zen dialog.

<sup>13</sup> As an all-too-important aside, Rosenbush employs a visual strategy for depicting the quality of the characters' interactions. Face-to-face dialog represents conflict and two people talking past each other. Face-to-side-of-face dialog represents tension, but a degree of compromise. Sitting side-by-side represents mutual understanding and acceptance.

<sup>14</sup> Comparisons can be made here to the futility and frustration encountered in Zen *kōan* practice wherein a riddle of sorts is offered by a Zen Master that is designed to force a student to seek an answer outside of the realm of the everyday ordinary mind. As expressed in an interview, Rosenbush himself saw this film as a sort of *kōan*. See Elisabetta Porcu, "Staging Zen Buddhism: Image Creation in Contemporary Films." *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 15.1 (2014): 84.

<sup>15</sup> The firearm is an apt symbol of authority as it epitomizes the either/or paradigm, emphasizing the difference between the person holding it and the person down-range. For example, "You see, in this world there's two kinds of people, my friend: Those with loaded guns and those who dig. You dig." *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Dir. Sergio Leone. Perf. Clint Eastwood, Eli Wallach, Lee van Cleef. Produzioni Europee Associati (PEA), 1966.

<sup>16</sup> This suggests a brief insight into the *kōan* imagery from endnote 14; that something entirely novel rose up in his psyche that compromised his ordinary mode of consciousness which is the intention of a *kōan* in the first place.

<sup>17</sup> This reorientation to one's sensorium is fundamentally in line with the teachings of the historical Buddha. For example, the *Sabba Sutta* (SM 4.25.23) and the *Sakuṇagghi Sutta* (SM 5.47.6). Wallis, Glenn. *Basic Teachings of the Buddha: A New Translation and Compilation, with a Guide to Reading the Texts* (New York: The Modern Library, 2007), 27 & 3.

<sup>18</sup> This is potentially a reference to 8<sup>th</sup> Century *Chán* Master Zhàozhōu Cōngshěn (趙州從諗; Jap. Jōshū Jūshin) who used mindfully drinking tea as a value exhibited by enlightened individuals. See Zhàozhōu Cōngshěn. *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu*. Trans. James Green (Boston: Shambhala, 2001), 146. The dissimilarity between the skill with which Ed offers tea and how the master offers tea is conspicuous. Rosenbush mentions that Zhàozhōu was one of his influences. "Staging Zen Buddhism," 84.

<sup>19</sup> It is a common trope in Zen for the master to physically strike a student as a means of jarring them out of the habituated patters of thought which inhibit progress.

<sup>20</sup> *Detective*: What is this place? I mean, somebody called me, right? Told me to come here? And I thought, but nothing seems to... I mean yesterday, yesterday I tried to leave, but outside... why can't I leave? *Jane*: Where else is there?

<sup>21</sup> An entire paper could be written about the symbolism of the orange. Oranges literally appear on the cover of the DVD; individual oranges appear a number of times in various states (with bullet holes and bleeding, rotten crawling with insects, in flames) to represent the detective's psyche; are central to the master's philosophy; and the detective's progress is also symbolically expressed by them.

<sup>22</sup> Here we encounter a tired cliché of Zen that borders on racism, that Zen teaching is bound to the ethnically mysterious, revealing insights in broken English. It is also troubling that Kim Chan, who is ethnically Chinese, was cast for a role that is purportedly Japanese. This is, after all, *Zen Noir* and not *Chán Noir*.



<sup>23</sup> It is problematic for the master to die in the film prior to the detective's alleged enlightenment. In the Zen tradition, it is the master who verifies one's awakening. Here, the master seems more so to play the role of a Jungian analyst who brings patients out from neurotic states so that they can reorient their psyche and choose a path of healing and personal balance.

<sup>24</sup> Jane is admittedly the most difficult character with which to grapple symbolically. Depending on how literal or figurative the viewer wishes to categorize her, radically different interpretations will arise. I have chosen to err on the side of the abstract.

<sup>25</sup> Jane's character is disappointingly shallow. If she is supposed to be an expression of the detective's unconscious, it seems that the deeper characteristics of this archetype would have made their way into the film. Instead of mere *Eros*, had Jane, later on in the film, developed into the role of *Sophia* (beyond teaching him how to breathe), it would have made a much more compelling case for the detective's development.

<sup>26</sup> That is, the breath is jointly controlled by the motor nerves which can be controlled consciously and the parasympathetic nervous system which operates unconsciously.

<sup>27</sup> In light of endnote 13, this scene concludes with an embrace, which is a more subtle expression of face-to-face conflict.

<sup>28</sup> This may be an attempt by the director to mimic the expression of Qingyuan Weixin's "mountains are mountains and waters are waters" See SUZUKI D.T., *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1994), 24. One could paraphrase, "first he was a detective, then he wasn't a detective, and now he is a detective again."

<sup>29</sup> As MBTI is based on Jungian typology it is to some degree compatible with Jung's concept of individuation.

<sup>30</sup> C. G. Jung, Commentary to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Trans. C. F. Baynes (Harcourt Brace: Orlando, 1962), 124.

<sup>31</sup> John Whalen-Bridge, "What is a Buddhist Film?" *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 15.1 (2014): 45.

<sup>32</sup> The representation of these paintings referenced here are from 12<sup>th</sup> century Chinese *Chán* (Zen) master Kuòān Shīyǔǎn 廓庵師遠, known in Japan as KAKUAN Shien.

<sup>33</sup> Jung's thoughts on the matter: "people who know nothing about nature are of course neurotic, for they are not adapted to reality. They are too naive, like children, and it is necessary to tell them the facts of life, so to speak—to make it plain to them that they are human beings like all others." C. G. Jung & Aniela Jaffé, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Trans. Richard & Clara Winston. (New York: Vintage, 1989), 166.

<sup>34</sup> This symbol was also used by the historical Buddha in the *Nikāyas*, as well as in popular *Mahāyāna* texts such as the *Lotus Sutra*.

<sup>35</sup> As per Zen Master Dōgen, "To learn the Buddha way is to learn the self." Dōgen. *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*. Trans. Normal Waddell and Masao Abe (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 41.

<sup>36</sup> It is much to the credit of Rosenbush that this was not depicted literally, but rather figuratively focusing on the detective's loss of the familiar.

<sup>37</sup> "Ambivalence" suggests hesitancy in choosing one over the other, whereas "multivalence" suggests contentment in allowing both to stand simultaneously.

<sup>38</sup> *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*. 41.

<sup>39</sup> This section will overlook certain mundane oversights, like wearing shoes on a *tatami* mat, the aforementioned premature death of the Zen master, and the generally awful depictions of *zazen* posture.

<sup>40</sup> It is possible to end a *noir* film with the loss of the romantic interest; e.g., *Chinatown*. Dir. Roman Polanski. Perf. Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston. Paramount Pictures, 1974. It may be left as an exercise for the reader to re-imagine a version of *Zen Noir* in which Jane dies that allows for a thematic analog to frame seven of the Ten Ox-herding Paintings.

<sup>41</sup> Yuasa argues that deviations from normalcy are usually exclusively classified as abnormalities. For example, Jung defined “normal” as having a healthy relationship with one’s unconscious, and “abnormal” or “neurotic” as any state that fell short of this. Yuasa asserts that the inclusion of “super-normalcy” is needed in order to facilitate dialog on the topic of self-cultivation that proposes to move above and beyond ordinary conceptions of “normal.” That is, both Yuasa and Zen agree that there are states of being that transcend what is considered “normal” YUASA Yasuo, *The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki-Energy*. Trans. Shigenori Nagatomo and Monte S. Hull (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 62-4. This is a point overlooked by Rosenbush.

<sup>42</sup> A similar “Oz-like” symbolic transition is used in Oshii’s *Avalon* (2001). *Avalon*. Dir. OSHII Mamoru. Perf. Malgorzata Foremniak, Wladyslaw Kowalski, and Jerzy Gudejko. Deiz Production, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> Rosenbush: “[*Zen Noir* is a] surreal exploration of some pretty heavy Buddhist ideas, in particular the question of how we deal with death and the fact that the only constant in the universe is change. That’s my pretentious answer. My other answer is: if David Lynch, the Buddha and the Marx Brothers all took acid and made a low-budget movie together, this would be it” “Staging Zen Buddhism,” 83.

## References

- Avalon*. Dir. OSHII Mamoru. Perf. Malgorzata Foremniak, Wladyslaw Kowalski, and Jerzy Gudejko. Deiz Production, 2001.
- Chinatown*. Dir. Roman Polanski. Perf. Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston. Paramount Pictures, 1974.
- Clarke, J.J. *Jung and Eastern Thought: A Dialog with the Orient*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Dōgen. *The Heart of Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō*. Trans. Normal Waddel and Masao Abe. Albany: SUNY Press, 2002.
- Emre, Merve. “Uncovering the Secret History of Myers-Briggs” *Digg.com*. 7 October, 2015. Web.
- Jung, C.G. Commentary to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Trans. C. F. Baynes. Harcourt Brace: Orlando, 1962.
- Jung, C. G. & Aniela Jaffé. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Trans. Richard & Clara Winston. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Jung, C. G. *Psychological Types: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 6*. Translated by R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- KAKUAN Shien. “The Ten Oxherding Pictures.” *Manual of Zen Buddhism*. Edited by D.T. Suzuki. N.p.: Forgotten Books, 2007, 126-38.
- Lloyd, John B. “The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Mainstream Psychology: Analysis and Evaluation of an Unresolved Hostility.” *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion and Education*. 33.1 (2012): 23-34.

Myers, Isabel Briggs with Peter B. Myers. *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type*. (Palo Alto, Davies-Black Publishing, 1995).

Porcu, Elisabetta. "Staging Zen Buddhism: Image Creation in Contemporary Films." *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 15.1 (2014): 81-96.

Sharrin, Ron. "Jung and Buddhism." Blog. *Buddhism Today*. Blogspot, 29 June 2010. Web. <http://buddhism-today.blogspot.com/2010/06/jung-and-buddhism.html>

Spiegelman, J. Marvin & MIYUKI Mokusen. *Buddhism and Jungian Psychology*. Tempe: New Falcon Publications, 1994.

SUZUKI D.T. *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. 1949. New York: Grove Press, 1994.

*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Dir. Sergio Leone. Perf. Clint Eastwood, Eli Wallach, Lee van Cleef. Produzioni Europee Associati (PEA), 1966.

von Franz, Marie-Louise & James Hillman. *Jung's Typology*. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1984.

Wallis, Glenn. *Basic Teachings of the Buddha: A New Translation and Compilation, with a Guide to Reading the Texts*. New York: The Modern Library, 2007.

Whalen-Bridge, John. "What is a Buddhist Film?" *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 15.1 (2014): 44-80.

YUASA Yasuo. *The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki-Energy*. Trans. Shigenori Nagatomo and Monte S. Hull. Albany: SUNY Press, 1993.

Zen Noir. Dir. Marc Rosenbush. Perf. Duane Sharp, Debra Miller, Kim Chan, and Ezra Buzzington. Magic Lamp Releasing / Zenmovie LLC, 2006.

Zhàozhōu Cōngshě. *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu*. Trans. James Green. Boston: Shambhala, 2001.