

Chapter 6: Out-of-body experiences (74 p.).

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Chapter 6: Withdrawals

For the religious person, the sacred is the foundation of all existence. This sacred can manifest itself as a subtle energy, as an increased charge, in all that lives. Whoever is sufficiently manically inclined can perceive this sacredness in one way or another. Whoever is sufficiently magically disposed can manipulate this subtle matter and achieve results with it. Neither profane nor sacred does man remain a passive spectator: he evolves. He has and makes history. His evolution can be favorable or unfavorable, depending on the choices he makes in life. In a way, he can steer his evolution and even accelerate it. He achieves this through an ethical life. Initiations can elevate a person's level or bring him to a lower level. This was explained earlier (5.2.2.). Such initiations naturally relate to processes in the subtle body. Gradually, one becomes more and more aware of this. Some also observe that the ethereal body can leave the biological body. Then we are talking about the so-called 'out-of-body experiences'. The term has already been mentioned a few times in the preceding text. We referred, among other things, to the subtle cord, a kind of umbilical cord that connects the biological and the subtle body (4.2.2.). And we delve deeper into this latter theme, out-of-body experiences, here. Behold, the common thread connecting our various chapters.

6.1. Out-of-body experiences

The theme of 'out-of-body experiences' was also discussed when mentioning the experiments of A. de Rochas (4.2.2), in which, by adding subtle energy or so-called magnetization, the subtle body became detached from the biological. Both remained connected to each other via this subtle cord, called "the silver cord" in the Bible (*Ecclesiastes 12:6*). During sleep, the subtle body usually hangs 75 cm up to a meter above the biological. If someone who has just fallen asleep receives a sudden shock, he or she sometimes feels as though they are falling. Mentally gifted people say that the ethereal body then 'falls' back into the biological too suddenly.

We have also already mentioned the so-called repercussion: an injury inflicted on this subtle body has repercussions in the biological body. This demonstrates that the subtle body acts causally on the biological. We will return to this later.

Many people testify to having experienced such an out-of-body experience at some point in their lives. In a number of cases, it came upon them spontaneously and completely unexpectedly. Others can induce this in

themselves consciously, intentionally, and repeatedly. Finally, such an out-of-body experience can also occur in the face of acute danger, following an accident, a serious illness, or a death struggle. Many people describe it as a wondrous and luminous experience. A sample.

6.1.1. Exits without immediate danger

A wondrous sublimity

Thus there is the following testimony from Plotinus (203/269), a philosopher of the ancient world: “ Often I awaken from my body, awakening to myself. I become an outsider in the face of things, I become present within myself. I see a beauty of wondrous sublimity. At that moment I am certain of having part in a higher world. The life that I then live is the highest. I identify myself with the divine, I am in it. And, once that ultimate act is reached, I establish myself therein. After the rest in the divine, when I fall into contemplation and reasoning, I ask myself how I could have descended in that manner yet again and how my soul could ever have entered the innermost part of a body . ”

So much for this Neoplatonic philosopher. Apparently, for Plotinus, “falling into thinking and reasoning” is an activity that does not illuminate the full reality. In other words, there is a way of being that largely transcends “thinking and reasoning.” Plato also took this view with his myth of the cave and his theory of forms (5.1.2.).

G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time^{1*}*, reports to us of such an out-of-body experience that he knows from his own experience and previously as a conscious exercise. He writes: “I had put my body to sleep and when I left it I looked around. I tried to look at myself (note: from his subtle body, which then hovers just above the biological body, he wants to view this biological body), but I did not succeed. I tried to simply grasp my physical body, but this did not succeed either, for I simply passed through it. I therefore noticed that I could simply walk through the bed and the walls. 'Walking' is not the right expression for this, however, for it was more a displacement through an expression of will. Keep your thought in your power, for every thought creates forms.”

People who have had such an experience indeed say that thought is the engine of movement. This is not the case with the biological body. For example, you can think: “I am going to move my arm,” but that thought is insufficient. You also have to do it; you have to perform work with your muscles. Those are two clearly distinct things. In an out-of-body state, that

is not the case. If you merely think: I am going to move my (subtle) arm, it already happens. If you express the wish to turn over, it occurs instantaneously. That is why it is so incredibly important to constantly control your thoughts in that state.

People who cannot do this, people who become anxious and lose their self-control in an out-of-body state, fly back and forth in an uncontrolled and unrestrained manner. One may interpret this 'flying' in the most literal sense. One 'floats' through space, through the walls. One ascends and descends according to what one thinks one is doing. One floats through one's own biological body, over which one has no grip in the out-of-body state and which one cannot move at all. It is a very bizarre experience.

Re-entering the body sometimes gives a sensation as if one is falling. Quite a few people who unconsciously exit the body experience this fall just before waking up. For a moment, both bodies must be realigned before movement of the physical body is possible. For a number of people, this alignment results in an intense tingling sensation. That “every thought creates forms,” as Van der Zeeuw states, will be discussed further in the next chapter (7.2.4.).

“Going through the walls” may seem bizarre, yet it is also mentioned in the Bible. Let us recall (4.2.2.) that after his death and resurrection, Jesus *suddenly* found himself in the house where the apostles had gathered (*John 20:26*) . The fine substance of the subtle body is not hindered by the 'coarse' substance of the door or the wall. Indeed, both types of substance differ fundamentally. Let us refer to the so-called “hylistic pluralism” (1.4.2.).

Consciousness without brain activity

The journal Science, **Au-delà de la mort* ²(*Où se situe la conscience?*)* (On the Other Side of Death (Where is Consciousness?)), reports on such an out-of-body experience, which was verified under scientific conditions. Below, we reproduce the most essential points of the Science report. American heart specialist Michael Sabom , initially very skeptical regarding NDE experiences (note: 'NDE' stands for “near-death experience”), testifies about the removal of a vein (aneurysm) in the brain of a patient, a certain Pam Reynolds . Although the patient is on the operating table for about six hours, the removal itself takes only half an hour. During that short time, no blood is allowed to flow through the brain, leaving it without oxygen, with all the inherent dangers. As is known, organ malfunctions can occur if the parts of the brain attuned to this receive insufficient blood flow. Therefore,

hypothermia or cooling is applied. The body is kept at 35.5°C. Only then is the brain drained of all blood. Pam's entire surgical operation was recorded and filmed. This included brain activity via an EEG and changes in the brainstem. All this data was subsequently related to the story Pam herself told when she awoke from her 'anesthesia' and returned to normal consciousness.

She had, as she recounted, experienced a near-death experience (NDE). From an altered state of consciousness and from her subtle body, which was then situated a few meters above her biological body, she had 'perceived' the operation. After waking up, she remembered a great deal of what she had experienced during the operation, when her brain was inactive. What Pam 'saw' and 'heard' during her out-of-body experience was easily verifiable afterwards. For example, she 'saw' a kind of toothbrush, which was in fact the trepanation saw. The conversation between the surgeon and the cardiologist had been recorded. What Pam had 'heard' in her out-of-body state corresponded with this. A comparison of her story and the recordings allows her NDE to be accurately situated.

Dr. Sabom says regarding this: “ The recordings show that at that moment the body and the brain were without blood. We have the medical recordings of the course of the NDE. We can study the EEG activity. We are able to examine everything that occurred in the biological body during the NDE. This allows us to answer questions such as: Was the NDE triggered by a crisis in the temporal lobe or by specific electrical activity in the brain? Well, the answer is: 'no'. For the brain waves were flat and the brainstem was not active during the NDE. The question arises: How can consciousness be in a waking state without any brain activity?”

So much for the testimony of the heart specialist. The TV channel National Geographic is also dedicating a documentary to this entire incident.

This immediately leads to very penetrating questions regarding the relationship between consciousness and brain function. Does consciousness arise precisely as a result of brain function, as a number of current materialist views posit? Or is the reverse the case, and was there already some form of consciousness before the brain became active? And does this consciousness then ensure the optimal functioning of our gray matter? In that case, consciousness is the cause; the brain is merely the means, the infrastructure with which we think.

Reducing what is more to what is less

For the religious person, reality is 'overdetermined'. This means that if something occurs, it has more than one reason. If such a person narrowly escapes a serious accident, he says that he was protected by 'something' or 'someone'. A nominalist believes that this is simply a fortunate coincidence, nothing more. He feels that one should not look for more behind it than is necessary. The believer, on the other hand, posits the opposite and believes that the non-believer finds less in it than is given. One can approach reality in more than one way. It is a form of ABC theory. A is the given event that occurs, B the presuppositions with which one approaches reality, nominalistically or religiously. C is the result. Here: it was merely a fortunate coincidence, or, no, there is more, 'something' or 'someone' protected me.

An extreme nominalist approaches consciousness as a material brain process. If the brain functions optimally, consciousness arises spontaneously as a byproduct.

Let us immerse ourselves in an extreme and somewhat caricatural form of nominalism and 'explain,' for example, a piece of music played on a barrel organ. Music is merely the result of a rotating metal drum. Small plates have been placed at random positions on this drum. As the drum rotates, these plates collide with a small rod, causing it to move back slightly before falling back into place. But because of this, the rod strikes a string, which then produces its tone. Well, many plates cause different strings to be struck, either simultaneously or in succession. And that is music. Music, therefore, has to do with plates on a drum, strings, and a rotating motion. One should not look for anything more behind it. A composer? Never heard of one. What is he doing here? It should be abundantly clear that such a minimal 'explanation' is totally inadequate.

It is not the piano that 'makes' music of its own accord. The piece of music requires both a composer and a pianist. Similarly, the brain needs consciousness to function. Just as consciousness relates to brain activity, so the composer and the pianist relate to the performed piece of music. Pam Reynolds' experience even testifies to a form of consciousness that can exist without brain activity.

E. Wilson , **The Foundation* ^{3*}, gives us an extreme example of such a reduction of what is more to what is less. For him, the basis of all reality is 'hard natural science'. From this, he derives chemistry. From chemistry, he derives biology. From biology, he subsequently derives the humanities and

social sciences. And from this, finally, follow art and culture. Viewed from traditional philosophy, this extreme form of nominalism is rather the world turned upside down. In this reductive view, the higher is merely the result of exclusively lower and material processes. In that view, one can just as well 'explain' humanity, love, religion... as mere movements of cells, neurons, and atoms. That is all there is to it. However, that position is not so new. As early as 1748, J. De Lamettrie wrote in **L'homme machine** that human thinking, feeling, and willing can be traced back to mere chemical reactions in our brains. Even in our time, Verhofstadt D. writes in **Atheïsme als basis voor de moraal* ^{4*} regarding our theme, near-death experiences: "In fact, it concerns side effects of morphine-like painkillers." As if everyone who claims to have had an out-of-body experience needed to take painkillers beforehand.

The entire and so extensive paranormal phenomenon is 'explained away' as "merely" a chemical reaction. No higher reality is allowed to be involved. Life is a priori permitted to have only a materialistic explanation. Verhofstadt is essentially saying that he has never experienced an out-of-body experience, and that they therefore do not exist. As already mentioned (1.2.), this is a syllogism in which the antecedent clause has been omitted. Written out, this reasoning becomes: "Everything that I do not experience myself does not exist. Well, I do not experience an out-of-body experience myself, so out-of-body experiences do not exist." But the statement "everything that I do not experience does not exist" is, as an antecedent clause, an unproven generalization. The entire reasoning is therefore merely a hypothesis, not conclusive proof.

A profound experience

Robert A. Monroe, in **Out-of-Body Experiments* ^{5*}, knows the phenomenon of out-of-body experiences from personal experience. He draws attention to the fact that accounts of out-of-body experiences have occurred in all times and places. For most people, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. He writes that experiencing an out-of-body experience is often one of the most profound experiences in a person's life and that it can fundamentally change their outlook on life itself. This is expressed, for example, as: "I no longer simply believe in an immortal soul and life after death. I am simply certain that I continue to exist after death."

An anonymous testimony

I woke up but still needed a moment. Do you know that feeling? Saying a bit of goodbye to the world of your dream and gradually adjusting back to waking up in this world. And wondering if this is the start of a new workday.

If so, that alarm clock is about to start acting up. Otherwise, you can just lie there quietly for a little while longer. But that was the problem; I didn't have the impression that I was lying down. No, it seemed to me that I was gently floating upwards. I'd better open my eyes then; that gives you a point of orientation and that unstable feeling will pass, or so I thought. So I opened my eyes, but I saw only fibers. There were fibers everywhere around me. My face was right in the middle of them. Well, then I'm definitely not in bed, I thought.

I tried to gradually raise my head further. I succeeded. Now I saw wooden beams to my left and right, with a wooden floor made of fiberboard on top. You'd think you were still dreaming. But that couldn't be, because I was awake. I was still getting back up and expected to hit my head against the wood. But look, my head just went right through it. And my shoulders too. That was wondrous. And right in front of me, lying on the fiberboard, was a stack of books. I could even read the titles on the spines. Strange, I had all those books too. But mine were in a small pile in the attic. And that was located just above the bedroom. And suddenly I realized it. They were my books. And I was in my attic. My head and shoulders were just sticking through the attic floor. And the fibers I saw first were the insulation materials I had installed myself between the floor beams. But surely I couldn't be floating? And if I was just hanging in the air, then surely the bedroom had to be below me? And the bed? I wanted to see that. And as if by itself, without having to move a single muscle, my entire body turned over. I sank a little through the attic floor, through the beams, the insulation, and the plasterboard of the bedroom ceiling. And there, two meters below me, stood the bed. I saw my wife lying there, and next to her... I lay. I saw the thin thread connecting my biological body to my out-of-body. I saw the alarm clock on the nightstand. It was three minutes past three. I had no idea what was happening, wanted to get out of that situation, and panicked. Then I felt an intense falling motion and lost consciousness.

I woke up. I knew I had experienced something unusual. Yet it seemed to me just as real as the reality of everyday life. This was not 'just' a dream. I opened my eyes. I was lying in bed, next to my wife, who was sleeping peacefully on. The alarm was set for three and five minutes. Two minutes later, then. You don't have to tell me that out-of-body experiences don't exist. I have informed myself extensively about this since then.

The Dalai Lama

H. Harrer , **Seven Years in Tibet**⁶, relates: “The Dalai Lama told me that he was studying books describing the ancient methods of separating body and mind. The history of Tibet tells of many saints who were able to keep their minds functioning at a distance of hundreds of miles, while their bodies were immersed in meditation. The young Dalai Lama was convinced that, through his faith and with the help of rites, he could be with his mind in distant places, for example in Samyé. When he was ready, he wanted to lead me there from Lhasa. I remember replying with a laugh: ‘Well, Kundun, if you can do that, I’ll become a Buddhist too.’”

The Dalai Lama is evidently referring here to exercises in subtle 'out-of-body' states. As many nominalist-minded Westerners would do, Harrer did not take the Dalai Lama seriously in this regard. The well-known film adaptation of the book also omits this event. It reminds us somewhat of Poortman's complaint (4.2.2.), who writes that the belief in hylistic pluralism is repeatedly concealed in our culture, while there are often ample reasons to mention it.

Those who have returned from the hereafter

Alexandra David-Neel , ** Magic and 7Mystery in Tibet**; recounts. In Tibet, one encounters people who, after having been in a state of lethargy for a shorter or longer period, give a description upon awakening of various places they claim to have visited. Some of them limited themselves to visits to inhabited regions, but others recount wanderings in paradises, purgatory places, or in the Bardo, the intermediate realm in which the spirit wanders after death, awaiting its reincarnation. These curious travelers are called 'delogs', which means “those who have returned from the afterlife”. Although the stories of these delogs may differ from one another regarding the places visited and the events, they are nevertheless usually experienced as quite pleasant.

A woman I met in a village in Tsawarong, who had been lifeless for a whole week a few years earlier, told me that she had felt pleasantly surprised by the lightness and agility of her new body, which moved with extraordinary speed. To go to another place, she only needed to wish it. Moreover, she could walk on water, cross rivers, and pass through walls. One thing was impossible for her: cutting a material, yet almost intangible, cord that still connected her to her old body and which she clearly saw lying on her bed. This cord could extend indefinitely, but it hindered her when changing places. “I got entangled in it,” she said.

An out-of-body magician

J. Teernstra, *Sketches and Stories from Africa* ⁸, mentions the experience of Father Trilles, *A out-of-body magician*. Trilles was a missionary in Gabon, West Africa. It is this same priest who provided us with the description of an initiation of the ngil (3.3.3.). Teernstra's book, containing quite a few stories about black magic, still has a so-called ecclesiastical 'Imprimatur', a permission previously granted by the ecclesiastical authorities to print and publish it. It meant that the book contained nothing in content that contradicted church doctrine. The fact that the book received its imprimatur testifies to a great openness, to a broad axiomatics (4.1.1.), of the church at that time towards the world of the paranormal and magic. We present Trilles's story in abbreviated form.

Ngema, the village sorcerer, adorns himself at great celebrations with his gleaming helmet and his scarlet surcoat, which we once gave him as a gift. At night, however, I have been able to see him in his sorcerer's attire, with a mask made of animal skin and with his finery—which to me is ridiculous—usually sprinkled with human blood. For many years he has been both chieftain and a famous sorcerer. Everyone knows his power. Some people come to him from fifty miles or more to be healed. Thus I saw miraculous healings, which in my opinion could be attributed to hypnosis. To Ngema, I am one of his 'friends'. He needs me often. He likes to come and talk in the twilight. We often talked about his black magic and the summoning of spirits. One evening I invited him to go fishing with me.

"Too bad," he said, "can't you postpone that for a day?"

- "For what reason? Surely you can come with us?"

- "The Master has called us all together for tomorrow, my colleagues and I,"

- "What do you say? Which teacher?"

- "Well, the master, I say, the one who can." I understood.

- "Well done, and which colleagues are still coming?"

- "Well, those who live in the vicinity, and also further afield. Some come from thirty days away."

- "And where is that meeting being held?" Ngema hesitates for a moment.

"On the plateau of Yemvi, by the old abandoned mine, four days' journey from here."

(Note: Ngema sees the Catholic missionary as a white magician and treats him as if he were a colleague who also practices magic.)

Trilles is surprised:

- "How can you reach a place tomorrow evening that is four days' journey away from here? You will never get there on time."

Ngema looked at me indignantly:

- "White colleague, can't wizards travel where you are?"

- "Certainly, but not like you."

- "No, certainly not like me. You know, you can come have dinner with me tomorrow. In the evening you will see how we, black sorcerers, travel."

That evening, Ngema became very solemn.

- "I will start with it. While I am working, do not disturb me, at least if your life is dear to you. For both me and you, any disturbance means certain death."

As a test, Trilles asks him—since he is going to Yemvi anyway—if he would stop by his friend Eseba in Nshong, a three-day journey from here but on the way to Yemvi, to ask him to urgently bring the box of bullets that Trilles had forgotten there. Ngema agrees. In the evening, Ngema begins a number of ritual preparations. He sets out idols and keeps a fire burning, containing fragrant plants and sharp, sweet-smelling wood. Then he begins to hum a monotonous melody. This is his supplication in honor of the spirits who must help him. He also rubs his entire body with a red liquid. Next, he begins a slow dance around the fire, spinning on his own axis as well, faster and faster. For hours. Then he stands still. A sharp hiss sounds from the ceiling of the hut. Trilles looks up. A large snake coils downwards, keeps staring at Trilles, and moves its venomous tongue back and forth. Trilles understands that the snake is his 'elangela' or 'nahual' (note: more on this later in 10.2). She wraps herself around Ngema's neck and sways her head back and forth to the rhythm of his magic song. Afterwards, he falls into a deep sleep. The snake also goes to rest. Trilles stays with Ngema all night, whose body seems to be in a state of suspended animation all night. He is completely unresponsive. Trilles pulls open one of Ngema's eyelids. The eye is white and glassy. Trilles lifts one of Ngema's arms, then a leg. They fall back down without any sign of life. White foam appears at the corners of his mouth. Heart palpitations are barely perceptible. In the morning, Ngema awakens convulsively. It takes a while before he regains full consciousness. Then he says: "There were many of us, and we had a good time."

Trilles, however, is skeptical: "No, you were here all night, in a deep sleep!" Ngema: "I was not lying on the bed. That was just my body. But what is my body? I was on the Yemvi plateau."

Three days later, Eseba arrives at the mission: "Father, here are the bullets you had requested via Ngema." Trilles: "When was Ngema with you?" Eseba: "Three days ago, at 9 o'clock in the evening." Trilles is surprised: "Just

at the moment Ngema had fallen asleep. Did you see him?” Eseba: “No, Father, surely you know that we are afraid of spirits passing by at night. Ngema knocked on my door and that is how he delivered the message. But I didn’t really ‘see’ him.” For Trilles, there was hardly any doubt left: Ngema had gone to the celebration. His ‘self’ had made a journey in a few moments that normally takes several days. Moreover, his ‘self’ had acted, listened, and spoken there.

He lay over the foot of my bed

D. Fortune , **Psychic Self-Defense* ^{9*}, discusses what she calls an “etheric projection.” ‘Projection’ means “to cast out of oneself,” “to cause to leave.” This form of projection is to be distinguished from “astral projection,” which is still material but much more subtle or ethereal than the denser ethereal substance. The projected, the exited body, is also called an “etheric double,” “doppelganger,” or “phantom.”

The “emerging substance” is also called ‘ectoplasm’, from ‘ecto’, outward, and ‘plasma’, a form of fine matter. Between the ethereal doppelganger and the gross biological body, a tradition situates a “first substance.” In Greek, one spoke of “protè hulè,” and in Latin of “materia prima” or “primordial substance.” Let us refer to the chapter on fine matter in history (4.4.2.). It concerns the basic substance from which the ethereal and astral matters are condensed. The modern name is ‘ectoplasm’. The projected body can assume various forms. It is, as the presocratics emphasized, malleable, just like water, air, or fire. It is susceptible to all possible forms.

Fortune describes such an out-of-body process. An advanced occultist lies down and, after a few convulsions, enters a state of rapture, a ‘trance’. He then becomes as stiff as a board. Weight loss occurs. Fortune writes: “Many times I have helped to lift such a person when he was in that out-of-body state. I could even lift such a person all by myself, for he weighed no more than a child.” Where does the weight that leaves the body go? The author experienced it “firsthand.” A man in her circle of acquaintances had been ill and had been delirious with a high fever. Fortune had assisted him every night. When he had recovered sufficiently to be left alone at night, the author and a housemate slept in the same room with an open window and under a full moon. Fortune continues: “I fell asleep immediately. However, I cannot have slept long when I woke up with the sensation that a weight was pressing on my feet. It was as if a rather large dog had jumped onto the bed and lain down on my feet. The moon was shining in the room. In that light, I saw the man whom we had left in the bed downstairs. He was lying across

the foot of my bed, seemingly in a deep sleep.” He appeared to be wearing his dressing gown. His figure and his face were colorless.

Fortune wanted to tap him on the shoulder. She says: “I could not only see him but also felt his weight on my feet. When I moved slightly, he suddenly vanished, leaving me staring at the foot of the bed in utter astonishment. Only then did I realize that his entire appearance had seemed so colorless and had looked more like a pencil sketch than a human being of flesh and blood.” The following morning, the patient remembered nothing of this. He had, however, had confused dreams all night.

For Fortune, this was not an occult attack but rather the visit of a friend. In his weakened state, he likely no longer had normal control over his occult life forces. Thus, he had spontaneously entered a state of ecstasy and left his biological body, and had instinctively sought comfort from her. This may also explain why some people complain of a 'heaviness' they experience on their body during specific nightmares. It may involve someone's out-of-body experience.

It is striking that Fortune does not address what the sick acquaintance himself stated afterwards, namely that he had spent the entire night relived confused dreams of a sick person whom he could not describe further. Possibly he himself had helped someone with an occult problem, or he had simply met someone who had thoroughly exhausted him, causing him to become ill himself. It would be worthwhile to find out how Fortune felt a few days after that night. Did she become particularly tired? Was she depressed? That, too, could indicate a lack of vitality. Was she, in turn, perhaps also plagued by nightmares? Under that assumption, her teacher's out-of-body experience is not so innocent, for then he sought her out to draw from her vitality.

A multifaceted concept of reality

Many people have already experienced such an 'out-of-body experience'. They all describe it in related terms, at least insofar as they can talk about it undisturbed and without the risk of being ridiculed. Which points to its reality, albeit different from everyday reality. One can continue to argue about expansions of consciousness, but there must be a reason or basis somewhere for all these things, otherwise so many people would not engage in them. Those who occupy themselves with this claim that 'something' reveals itself as real. Even if that is something different from everyday reality. Without an ambiguous concept of reality, without a broad axiomatics, with

only the axioms and the perceptual capacity of the classical senses, one simply cannot enter this world. All materialism of a 'flat nature', all positivism, all nominalism that is merely sensualism or 'belief in the senses', closes itself off from this in advance. So tell us some experts on the subject.

An umbilical cord

As already mentioned: those who have experienced an out-of-body experience tell us that this consciousness is carried by a 'vehicle', a body resembling the biological one, but which consists of a much finer substance and is connected to it by a fine umbilical cord, just as a newborn baby is still connected to the mother by an umbilical cord. This subtle body is visible to those who are sufficiently clairvoyant.

We have already written that the Bible also mentions such an out-of-body experience and calls this umbilical cord the 'silver cord'. In *Ecclesiastes 12:6* we read: “the silver cord snaps, the golden bowl breaks”. This breaking means that the biological body is no longer 'animated', can no longer be supplied with life force, which immediately leads to biological death. The subtle body, however, can continue to exist without its biological 'partner'. That brings us to the next series of out-of-body experiences, namely those experienced in response to a direct life-threatening danger. This is referred to as an NDE, a “near-death-experience”, or as already mentioned, a 'BDE', a “near-death experience”.

6.1.2. A near-death experience or NDE

Another consciousness

In circles of the paranormal sciences, one occasionally hears talk about such NDEs or NDEs. A world-famous authority in this field was Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926/2004). In her book **Death and Life After**¹⁰ She writes: “We have studied twenty thousand cases of people all over the world who had already been declared clinically dead and who were nevertheless brought back to life. Some woke up spontaneously, and others only after attempts at resuscitation. During an operation, many people leave their bodies and observe the course of the surgical procedure. You no longer perceive the events with your earthly consciousness, but with a new kind of perceptual ability. You register everything, even though you no longer have blood pressure or a pulse and are no longer breathing, sometimes even when there are no longer any measurable brain waves. You know exactly what everyone is saying and thinking and how they are behaving .” And further: “ Usually, such experiences occur precisely when an encephalogram no longer yields a result or when the doctors can no longer detect any signs of life. Our second

body, in which we then temporarily reside and which we experience as such, is not a physical but an etheric body. During certain phases in sleep, we all have such experiences, but only very few people realize that.”

An overwhelming amount has been written about the existence of subtle matter and subtle bodies, especially in works with a so-called occult or magical slant. Likewise, quite a few philosophies discuss such subtle matter, including Neoplatonic philosophy.

I felt that I was leaving my body.

In her book **L'Amour foudre**¹¹ (Love at First Sight), Shirley Maclaine gives the floor to the British actor Peter Sellers (1925/1980). He confided in her that he had experienced an out-of-body experience.

- “I am afraid of this place.”

"Why?" I asked him.

- “Because I died in this place!”

I remembered reading in the newspaper how he had recently escaped death by the skin of his teeth.

- “Doctor Kennamer saved my life,” he said, “and I saw him do it!”

- “Do you mean that?” I said, “how?”

- “I felt myself leaving my body. I simply floated out of my physical shell and saw my body being driven away to the hospital. Then I saw Dr. Kennamer arrive. He felt my pulse and saw that I was dead. He did everything to get my heart beating again. Then I looked around and saw an incredibly beautiful, bright, lovely white light above me. I saw a hand through the light and I wanted to grab it. Then I heard the doctor say: “It is beating again. He has a heartbeat again!” At the same moment, I heard a voice say: “It is not time yet. Go back and finish your work!”

About a year and a half later, I was sitting in my apartment in Malibu with a group of friends. I had been traveling and didn't know that Peter had had another heart attack. We were chatting pleasantly when I suddenly jumped up from my chair: “Peter,” I said. “Something has happened to Peter Sellers !”

Then the phone rang. It was a newspaper reporter who wanted to speak to me. (Note: Shirley pretends to be a maid and says that Mrs. Maclaine is unreachable.)

- “I would like to hear her reaction.”

"On what?" I asked in surprise.

- “I am sorry if you haven't heard yet, but her boyfriend Peter Sellers has just passed away.”

I turned around. I felt Peter looking at me. I wanted to tell the man that he was mistaken. I wanted to tell him: "You might think he is dead, but actually he has only left his last body." Of course, I didn't say that. Yet I know Peter would have loved it if I had answered that way. So I said: "Shirley isn't here. I will pass on the message to her." I gently put the receiver down.

"What's wrong?" my friends asked. I saw Peter smile.

- "Nothing at all," I replied, "some reporter or other just told me that Peter Sellers has died."

When I saw little Kate, I 'fell' back into my body.

British singer Kate Bush (1958/...), known for her hit *Wuthering Heights* among others, writes in the magazine *Joepie* ¹²: "One day when I was still a child, my mother fainted. She immediately laid my father on her bed. He felt no pulse and administered artificial respiration. Afterwards, my mother recounts: "I rose like a hot air balloon to the ceiling, 'looked' down at my husband from there and shouted: 'Leave me alone! I'm fine!' Then I came into the room and cried: 'Where is Mommy?'" Mother says about this: "When I saw little Kate, I 'fell' back into my body and came back to life." Kate Bush believes that many people have such an experience.

Mrs. Schwarz

Let us quote Elisabeth Kübler-Ross: " In my lecture hall, what Mrs. Schwarz recounted was the first report for us of a patient who had an out-of-body experience. We already have (note: in 1977) hundreds of such reports recorded in California, Australia, or elsewhere. Without exception, they have one common denominator, namely that the person in question left their earthly body while fully conscious. That death, of which scientists want to convince us, does not actually exist. Death is nothing other than leaving your earthly body, in the same way that a butterfly emerges from its cocoon. Death is a transition into a new state of consciousness, in which you continue to feel, see, hear, understand, and laugh, and in which you are able to continue to grow. And the only thing we lose during this transformation is precisely what we no longer need: our physical body. It is like the winter coat we discard at the arrival of spring, because we know it is already very worn out and we no longer want to wear it anyway. And with death That is exactly how it is.

A large number of those patients have also told us that, in addition to the peace and tranquility that came over them, plus the realization that they could perceive themselves but not be perceived, they also felt that they were 'whole' again. That is to say, someone who has lost a leg in a car accident

and sees that leg lying on the road, after leaving his physical body, notices that he has both his legs again after all. During an explosion in a laboratory, one of our patients lost the sight in both eyes. Immediately afterwards, she found herself outside her body and could see again. She could perceive what further consequences this accident had and described afterwards what happened when people came rushing to her aid. After the doctors had succeeded in calling her back to life, she was completely blind. Do you understand now why many of them resist our attempts to bring them back to life, if, after all, they found themselves in a far more desirable, much more beautiful, and more perfect place?

And often we also meet those whom we did not even know were already “on the other side.” We know the case of a twelve-year-old girl who did not want to tell her mother anything about her delightful experience, because no mother likes to hear that one of her children finds it more delightful somewhere else than at home. That is, of course, very understandable. But what that girl had experienced was so unique that she had to share it with someone, no matter what. And so she confided to her father that when she ‘died,’ she had experienced so much delight that she would not have wanted to come back for anything in the world. The remarkable thing was—apart from the incredible splendor and the simply fantastic abundance of light and love that is also described to us by most others—that her brother was with her and had embraced her in his arms full of love and tenderness. When she had told her father all this, she added: “But the only thing I don’t understand is that I don’t have a little brother at all.” Then tears welled up in her father’s eyes and he had to confess to her that she had indeed had a brother, but that he had died three months before her birth. No one had ever said a word to her about it.

So much for E. Kübler-Ross . We also refer to the so-called ‘phantom pains’: people claim to have pain in a body part that has been amputated. An amputation concerns only the biological body. The subtle body remains intact in this process.

A lingering joy?

Karlis Osis and Erlendur Haraldson , **On the Threshold: Visions of the Dying** ¹³, also discuss the phenomenon of ‘out-of-body experiences’, albeit very extensively and on a scientific basis. Karlis Osis (Riga, 1917/1997) obtained his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Munich in 1950 based on a thesis on extrasensory experience. Erlunder Haraldson (Reykjavik, 1931/...) earned a doctorate in philosophy from the University of

Freiburg in 1972, likewise based on a dissertation on extrasensory perception. This says a great deal about the open-mindedness already present at those universities at the time regarding paranormal research.

In their book, they describe three different studies:

- 1. 1959-1960: Samples across the entire US. A questionnaire was sent randomly to 5,000 physicians and 5,000 nurses. Of these, 640 responses were returned, concerning 35,540 near-death experiences, of which 2,202 were apparitions and faces. 753 of those near death underwent a sudden, medically surprising change in mood some time before their death. 83% of the apparitions were family members; 90% whose identity could be established were next of kin: father, mother, partner, brother, sister, or children. In most cases, these came to accompany the nearly dying patient to the other world. 70% of those who appeared to the dying person were deceased; 30% were still living persons.

- 2. 1961/1964: research in six states (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania).

- 3. 1972/1973: research in northern India.

The factual material: Osis and Haraldsson studied hundreds of cases of Americans and Indians (especially from North India), both Christians and Hindus, regarding NDEs.

Their main impression: the cultural context and religious experience play a very small role regarding the NDE. The depth of religious faith, however, exerts a major influence.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross sees her observations in that area confirmed.

We read (oc): “Many claim to be met by acquaintances in their final moments of life. Others say they 'see' a man (Jesus , Krishna , Shiva ...) dressed in white and surrounded by a luminous aura, who brings a medically inexplicable peace and calm. In India, the messengers of the god of death are called 'yamdots'. If the Hindu prepared himself for life after death through good deeds, then a friendly yamdot reveals himself; if the Hindu behaved badly, then a creepy yamdot reveals himself.”

Based on such observations, gathered through the testimonies of medical personnel, Osis and Haraldsson conclude that another paradisiacal world exists. They also observe that, upon dying, beings—especially family members—often 'welcome' from the world of those near death to guide them

to the paradisiacal world. This may explain the medically sudden shift in mood. Whereas death was initially feared, the dying person now feels not alone, and moreover, 'in safe hands'. In such a case, overwhelmed by light and music, and accompanied by deceased acquaintances, one goes to meet the other world and its inhabitants happy and full of joy. It resembles the joy of a birth, but in the other world. In this context, there are numerous stories of people who, following a serious illness or traffic accident, claim to have been faced with a choice while in an out-of-body state: to return because they saw that a task still awaited them here, or to continue toward the light and leave this world.

Refuting experiences

Osis and Harlson believe they also encountered contradictory experiences in their study, namely where patients reported incoherent hallucinations. Oc 59: "There are incoherent hallucinations (note: apparent real experiences) in which patients, in a kind of waking dream, mumble things that appear meaningless to the doctor. We did not, however, take these cases into account."

Note: The very earthly nature of the contents stands out in such cases. Ordinary daily concerns, for example, are discussed. However, whether that is a reason not to take them into account is certainly the question. Could this not be a consciously suppressed or unconsciously repressed form of confronting death? The mere fear of death, not to mention a practical disbelief regarding the afterlife, can, in the proximity of death, lead to clinging "to this earth," with its daily concerns. Is that a reason to attach no importance to it and to dismiss such reactions as enlightened rationalism and hard science do: namely, as nonsense?

Meaningless muttering, the mental deterioration of a soul that is completely unprepared for death and what follows, can be a foreshadowing in terminal behavior. Let us think of incoherent night dreams. Could they not reflect the deeper essence of the immortal soul? Does a dying person not enter precisely that realm of night dreams, at least if, by neglecting an orderly life, he arrives unprepared in the afterlife? Religions worthy of the name have repeatedly pointed out that the soul must be prepared for the hereafter. Perhaps not without reason. The following text seems to illustrate this.

A dying hell

Do we read Phyllis Atwater , **Retour de l'après-vie** ¹⁴(Return from the Afterlife). The author herself experienced three near-death experiences, after

which she researched this phenomenon for 15 years. She had met a Californian woman in Boise, Idaho, who had come to live there. A sort of friendship developed. After a phone call, she learns that this woman had suffered a heart attack and is expecting her. The woman was deathly pale. What she had experienced during her clinical death amounted to this: she leaves her body, floats above it. Then she penetrates a dark corridor, a 'tunnel', and reaches its end. There she sees deserted hills full of naked people who look like a kind of zombies.

Let us note the following: Haitians claim that zombies are people who have been stripped of the greater part of their subtle life force through black magic rites and thus transformed into will-less 'automata'. The image of their nakedness also refers to this: they have been stripped of just about everything and possess hardly any life force.

G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time* ^{15*}, states that during a visit in an out-of-body state to what he calls “the very lowest realms,” he likewise sees the deceased people residing there naked. We will return to such visits later in the text (12.1.1.).

Let us listen to Atwater again : “They (the 'zombies') stood upright, shoulder to shoulder, and did nothing but stare at her. The spectacle was so terrifying that she began to scream. Immediately she re-entered her body. But she kept screaming. Only after a sedative did she finally fall asleep. Her interpretation: death, she maintained, is a nightmare. She cursed all the churches that have been tricking people for centuries with stories about paradise. The woman was desolate. At that moment, two other patients enter: an elderly woman and a woman supported by canes. They, too, had regained consciousness after being declared dead. Essentially, they told the same story and were just as horrified as the first.”

Atwater discovered only one common but striking point: all three repressed the transgressions that weighed on them; all three had an even heightened sense of guilt due to the NDE. They confessed that, by “already experiencing death,” they had stumbled upon what they feared most, and since then they had been more convinced than ever that they would have to atone for their 'sins'. These women were completely convinced of the existence of hell.

We wanted to briefly touch upon the existence of such paranormal 'hell' experiences, because usually there is an unsettling silence in that area, with the impression that such negative experiences do not occur.

People with sufficient 'sensitivity' and 'clear vision' can interpret these 'hell' experiences Biblically. They say that these women saw the 'rephaim,' as *Psalm 88 (89) 11/13* suggests, souls without divine spirit or life force (*Genesis 6:3*). In *Psalm 88 (89)*, a desperate deceased person laments the desperate, lonely, and dark situation into which he has fallen.

The fact that some experience their NDE as sublime, while others find it terrifying, can—again interpreted Biblically—point to their “judgment of God.” We will return to this in detail in Chapter 12: “On causes and effects.”

Finally, let us note that virtually all religions speak of an after-judgment. We find it not only in Christianity, but also in Judaism, among Muslims, in the ancient Egyptian religion, among the Zoroastrians in ancient Iran, among Eastern cultures: India, China, Japan, and Tibet, but also among Native Americans, and among Central American religions, such as the Incas and the Aztecs.

M. Richard , **Voyage aux limites de la mort* ^{16*} (Journey to the Limits of Death), describes the entire phenomenon of DNE or NDE as follows:

1. The subjective impression of dying.
2. Entry into a dark corridor or tunnel (cf. the Bible; the Book of *Job*)
3. Encounter with beings (including the deceased)
4. Inner peace and sense of well-being.
5. The impression of being outside one's own body ('out-of-body experience').
6. Access to an unexpected living space and to a love radiating light.
7. Regaining consciousness,
8. The absence of any fear of dying.

Note : We take this as a partial definition of near-death experiences, because, as has already been demonstrated, there are also very terrifying near-death experiences. These seem to have been pushed into the background, at least by some. Perhaps to avoid frightening those reading the accounts, or due to a lack of completeness on the matter. It is also omitted here that quite a few people, during a sudden death struggle following a

traffic accident for example, say that they see their entire life pass before them like a panoramic image, down to the smallest details.

So much for these testimonies regarding out-of-body experiences. It is clear that the phenomenon is not so rare and that it is not bound to any particular religion, time, or place. The phenomenon acutely raises the question of the origin of consciousness. According to the nominalist view, it is a byproduct of optimal brain function. The centuries-old tradition sees this differently: it is not our brains that think, but we, making use of our brains. The tradition also views the physical body as a single type of body, whereas a human being possesses other, subtler vehicles or bodies.

6.2. Dying

6.2.1. Just before dying

A preview or precognition

J. Bois , in **La télépathie* ^{17*}, in ** Les Etrennes merveilleuses ** (The Wonderful Tips), quotes Plutarch of Chaeronea (c. 45/125), where he relates how Calpurnia, the wife of Julius Caesar (c. 101/44), tried in vain to persuade her husband not to go to the Senate, where he would be murdered.

We read: Belline, *La troisième oreille* ¹⁸(The Third Ear). Michèle Morgan , a psychically gifted artist, recounts: “A few days before the death of a loved one, I had a precise foreshadowing of what was about to unfold. This happened at the moment of waking; as I closed my eyes again, I saw my two close friends at my side. The face of one was filled with tears, that of the other contorted with pain. In a lane, we walked in a funeral procession. The scene actually unfolded about ten days later, down to the smallest detail.”

M. Van Gestel , **My Child Sees More** ¹⁹, *A mother tells about her psychically gifted child* , recounts a similar experience. “I am reminded of a prophetic dream I had a few years ago about the cremation of a good friend. Six weeks later, this friend died in a traffic accident. The moment I entered the crematorium, the world stood still for a moment. The same flowers, the same candles, the same hall. The recognition was immediate. It was as if the image was burned onto my retina.”

J. Grant , **More Than One Life* ^{20*}, recounts an experience she had as a child when she was sitting at the table with a family member, together with a visitor, a doctor. “When I suddenly realized that the man sitting opposite me at lunch was going to die that night, it seemed natural to me to congratulate him on the fact that tomorrow would be his happiest birthday.

He was a doctor I adored, so I did feel sad that I might not see him for some time, but I knew that such feelings were extremely selfish. “Tomorrow is not my birthday,” he said kindly. So I hastened to explain that I meant the kind of birthday that fell on the day you died. I was sent out of the dining room, only to be soon followed by Mother, who scolded me for making such a cruel remark. Finally, Mother had calmed down enough to say that I probably hadn’t done any harm, for the doctor was only fifty-five and he knew that he was perfectly healthy. But the next morning the commotion flared up again, when the doctor’s body was found dead in his bed.”

6.2.2. The moment of dying.

The definitive end?

Traditional science has nothing to say about the state of man after death. For it, there is naturally no longer any question of consciousness after the death of the body. All life has ceased; the vital life functions have come to a standstill. This is the definitive end. The human body will now undergo decay according to biological laws. A deceased person may, if necessary, continue to live on in the memory of those who were close to him or her, and the ideas or philosophy of life that the deceased championed may possibly be carried on by others, but in the physical view, there is absolutely no place for the actual survival of 'something' within the deceased. Death is an irrevocable ruler.

This opinion is supported, among other things, by the undeniable fact that no one has yet returned from a possible afterlife to demonstrate to us in an unambiguous and rigorously scientific manner that death is not the ultimate end for man. Behold a nominalist view. However, it seems highly unlikely that this is the final word on death.

A soul that has left the body

J. Bois , in **La télépathie** ²¹(Telepathy), gives the following example. On the eve of a lecture on telepathy that he was to give in Rome at the Collegio Romano, Queen Margaret, who did not disdain the problems of “transcendent psychology” (according to Bois), told him the following historical fact in a private audience in 1904. Marshal von Moltke, one of the founders of modern strategy, was seriously ill and could not possibly leave his princely residence. At a certain moment, the sentries, who knew nothing of the situation, saw him standing, leaning on the bridge over the river. They approached him, but he disappeared. At that moment—so they learned—von Moltke had passed away. They were so shocked that they recorded the fact in the watchbook. The seeing of the soldiers here is not a telepathic phenomenon, but a

paranormal one; namely, the marshal's soul, which had just—and definitively—departed, had materialized in such a way that even ordinary perception sufficed to see that materialization.

Bois himself mentions both: there is the ghost of living people that leaves the body, and there is the ghost of the deceased that can 'appear', which materializes in such a way (meaning: assumes a gross material density) that ordinary seeing, hearing, and touching suffice to perceive it, often as a cold mist. Such phenomena do belong to the paranormal but are not telepathy in themselves. Telepathy will be discussed further in this text (7.5.1.).

Dying, perceived clairvoyantly

Ch. Lancelin, *La vie posthume*²² (The Afterlife) describes what manifests itself clairvoyantly at the moment of death. A certain Dr. Jackson-Davis, both a clairvoyant and a physician, wrote it down. We reproduce his account, which was written a century ago and now seems somewhat outdated, in an abridged form.

It was a lady of about sixty years whom I had often assisted medically. I saw that various internal organs seemed to resist the departure of the soul. The vascular system resisted to preserve the principle of life; the nervous system struggled with all its might against the destruction of the physical senses, and the brain sought to hold on to the intellectual principle. The body and the soul were like two spouses, offering resistance to their absolute separation. Shortly thereafter, the head was surrounded by a brilliant mist. Then I saw the cerebrum and cerebellum extinguish their internal parts. The radiance of the brain suddenly became ten times greater than normal.

This phenomenon invariably precedes the physical disintegration. Then I saw how the soul or the spirit separates from the body. The head became as if illuminated, and I noticed that, while the extremities became cold and dark, the brain acquired a peculiar brilliance. displayed. In the ethereal mist that surrounded the head, I saw that another head was clearly beginning to take shape. It was so brilliant that I could hardly look at it. In the same way that the ethereal head had detached from the brain, I saw one by one the neck, the shoulders, the torso, and finally the entirety of the ethereal body form. The Spirit (note: of the one who is passing on) rose up above the head of the dying biological body, but even before the final separation of the bond that had held the material and intellectual parts together for so long, I saw a flow of life-electricity come into being between the head of the dying lady and the lower part of the new ethereal body.

This led me to the conviction that death is merely a rebirth of the soul or spirit rising from a lower state to a higher one, and that the birth of a child in this world, or of a spirit in the other, are actually analogous processes. (Note: just as birth in this world signifies a farewell in the other world, so dying in this world is like a birth in the other world.) Nothing is missing from it, not even the umbilical cord, which was represented by a band of a kind of life-electricity, the so-called “silver cord”.

Incidentally: somewhere in one of her works, D. Fortune expresses it as follows: “For he who knows, the womb is a grave and the grave is a womb”. Understand: with conception in the womb, a spirit leaves its true home to incarnate in a biological body, whereas it is liberated from this once that body dies and the spirit can return to its true home.

Let us continue Dr. Jackson's description. He states that it is irresponsible to bury the body before biological decomposition has begun. The umbilical cord has often not yet broken. That is precisely the case when seemingly dead people revive after one or two days and report their findings.

He writes: “ It was impossible for me to ascertain what was taking place within this reviving intelligence, but I noticed her calmness and her astonishment at the deep sorrow of those who wept around her body. She seemed to realize their ignorance of what was truly occurring. The tears and the exaggerated lamentation of the relatives stem from the viewpoint characteristic of the majority of humanity, namely from the materialistic belief that with the death of the physical body, everything is over. You can proclaim, based on my various experiences, that if one dies a natural death, the soul undergoes no painful experience whatsoever. The period of transformation I just described usually lasts two hours. If you could see with clairvoyant eyes, then you would, in the vicinity of the petrified body, perceive an ethereal form with the same appearance as the man who just died, but a form more beautiful and, as it were, animated by a higher life.” So much for this text by Doctor Jackson.

Dying, seen from “the other world”.

G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time* ^{23*}, also describes the death of a person in a clairvoyant manner. In contrast to the testimony of Dr. Jackson, who, as a paranormally gifted person, 'saw' the event from his physical body, Van der Zeeuw himself is present during the passing of a young woman in an out-of-body state—subtle, that is. We thus have a

testimony from both 'this' and 'the other' side. It is to be expected that both testimonies will show a number of parallels. Sitting at the woman's deathbed are a few family members, including her husband. We should also mention that the couple once had a little daughter who had long since passed away. And now we listen to Van der Zeeuw .

In the room, he testifies, three subtle beings likewise appeared, who apparently wished to accompany the woman in her dying from "the other world." It was quiet. I heard the soft thoughts of those present and felt the man's suffering. He knew that he would lose his wife and had already accepted this. His resistance was broken. I followed the work of the three beings with intense interest, one on each side of the bed, while the third, half-hovering above the bed, performed some movements over the dying woman. It was as if the woman were being untied from her physical garment. Suddenly, a great light emerged from the room. I looked up and saw a landscape far above me, in which a large house was situated. The house was made of a transparent fabric and had many colors. The flowers standing in front of the house were wondrously beautiful. Music was also playing, more beautiful than I had ever heard. The emitted light bathed the entire room in a warm glow. In front of the house stood a young girl, otherworldly beautiful. She looked with joy at the scene below her. Suddenly the dying woman opened her eyes and saw what I saw. She stretched out her arms and cried: "Oh, how beautiful that is. Ina, Ina is coming to get me. I'm leaving! Goodbye, man. I am so happy."

At these words, I saw her body, which had straightened up briefly, fall back onto the bed, but she herself remained seated. A human emerged from a human, but what a difference from the physical body, which, compared to the spiritual body, was coarse in build. She was helped further by the three 'spirits' to emerge from her cocoon like a butterfly. In a short time, she was free, and the thread (note: the subtle umbilical cord) that connected both bodies broke. To my surprise, I saw that the husband, too, recoiled as if in physical pain. What was the matter?

His thread, too, had been connected to that of the young woman. I knew that they had given each other much love and were thereby spiritually connected, so that the woman was not only separated from her physical body by her spiritual body, but also from her husband's spiritual body. It was as if the man had provided her with strength through this thread during her illness and had tried to keep her on earth in this way. He had indeed remained strong, but when he felt within himself that the connection was

being broken, he collapsed. The woman, having become completely free, was taken away with the three spirits after having cast a final glance at her husband. At a rapid pace, they ascended straight to the house where Ina, a formerly lost daughter of the couple, received her with open arms.

The 'heaven' closed in, the light in the room gradually faded, and slowly I recovered from the emotion. I looked into the room one last time and saw the man kneeling, praying, before the bed in which the body lay, but from which all light had vanished. I tried to send good and comforting thoughts to him, but he was unresponsive and completely absorbed in his grief. I saw that he reproached himself for not having been good enough for her and regretted many things he should have done differently and better. I understood that only time could heal his grief.

So much for this text. One indeed notices quite a few similarities with the description given by Dr. Jackson. Let us also point out the following: "the husband's thread had been connected to that of the young woman." D. Fortune, in **Occultism**²⁴, writes that married couples who love each other deeply build a 'spiritual' bond, a kind of marital aura, and that this can gradually become very strong and endure a great deal, such as disagreement, differences of opinion, and escalating arguments, except for... adultery. Then, she writes, that aura suffers greatly and must be painstakingly rebuilt. To a sensitive or highly intuitive partner, adultery or infidelity therefore comes across as a horror, whereas the nominalistically minded person hardly takes it seriously, and in a number of cases does not even understand the whole commotion surrounding it.

What people have not learned during their lives.

Alexandra David-Neel, in **Magic and Mystery in Tibet**²⁵, writes: "As I have already noted, the initiates are able to keep their minds clear during the disintegration of their personality and to pass from this world into the other in full awareness of what is happening to them. They also need no help from anyone in their final hour, while the performance of religious rites after their death is entirely superfluous. This most certainly does not apply to the ordinary person, it being noted that by the expression "ordinary person" we must understand: everyone who possesses no knowledge of death, regardless of whether he is a cleric or a layman, in other words: the vast majority."

Lamaism does not abandon these ignorant people to their fate. During their 'throats of death' and even after they have breathed their last, a lama instructs them in that which they did not learn during their lifetime. He

explains to them the nature of the beings and things that present themselves to them, reassures them, and, above all, does not cease to point out the direction they must now take.

The very first concern of a lama assisting a dying person is to attempt to prevent him from falling asleep, losing consciousness, or sinking into a coma. He successively alerts him to the gradual loss of sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. In the body, now deprived of its senses and numb, the intellect must remain active and devote all its attention to the phenomenon unfolding. The only matter now is to make the spirit leave the body through the crown of the head, for if it escaped by any other route, his future well-being would be in great danger.” So far the quote from Mrs. David-Neel

The *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, in Tibetan the *Bardo Thödol*, and the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* are, for those cultures with their specific gods, a kind of manual for an approaching death, at the moment of dying, and for the state immediately after death.

6.2.3. After death

Earthbound souls

Many cultures are thoroughly convinced that the 'dead' still exist 'somewhere' in one way or another. This was shown to us, among others, by the story of the witch of Endor (*1 Samuel 28:3/25* see 1.4.2.), in which King Saul requested the dead-caller to put him in contact with the deceased prophet Samuel. Let us remember that the prophet Samuel was not at all pleased with this contact and wanted the deceased to be left in peace.

In some cases, the dead are not yet ready to continue their journey to the other world, for example because they still wish to resolve a problem on Earth. Consider a scenario like the one depicted in the film 'Ghost'. This film tells the story of a murder in which the murderer remains unpunished. Consequently, the soul of the murdered person does not yet find 'eternal rest', and thus, if it is occultly strong enough, it will 'reflect' on everything connected to the injustice done and attempt to undo this injustice.

J. Bois, *La telepathy*, in *Les Etrennes merveilleuses*²⁶ (The Great Tips) connects with Marcus Tullius Cicero (-106/-43), a Roman philosopher who, on the one hand, reacted skeptically to fortune tellers, but on the other hand, recounts the following with full seriousness and a wealth of detail. In Megara, there were two friends. One was murdered, whereupon the other dreams that

the slain shows him both the perpetrators and the place where his body was hidden.

One also finds many stories about deceased persons who find it very difficult to separate from the earth after their death. For example, they are too attached to what they leave behind here: their material wealth, their power, their worldly success... They run the risk of remaining, as is called, 'earthbound'. This state then lasts until they realize their true situation. Third parties may possibly help them with this, after which they continue their journey 'on the other side'.

G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time* ^{27*}, writes: "These people have passed into a state of spiritual unconsciousness. They are not yet aware of their death on earth. They therefore live as if in a dream and project the greater part of their consciousness onto earth. They go about their daily work, dust their furniture, and go to sleep as soon as it gets dark."

In this context, let us also refer, for example, to the ancient Egyptian 'cult of the dead', where everything was aimed at ensuring that the deceased pharaoh received what was necessary in his tomb to be able to live on as a subtle phantom. D. Fortune , **Spiritualism in the Light of Occult Science* ^{28*}, writes: "It is interesting to note, precisely to prevent this 'leaking of energy' from the etheric (note: subtle) body and to give the soul as much time as possible between incarnations, that the Egyptians embalmed their dead, whereas the Hindus, another race with a natural occult inclination, cremate their dead, precisely to detach the soul from the body, and also to ensure its departure to the place where it ultimately ought to be".

A blinding light

Mrs. David-Neel (oc, 34) further says of people who have just died: Some claim that the spirit, immediately after its disembodiment, experiences, as it were in a flash of lightning, an inner vision of the supreme reality. If a deceased person is able to hold onto that light, he is forever freed from the cycle of successive rebirths and dying processes. Then he has attained the state of nirvana. That occurs only rarely. Generally, the spirit is blinded by this sudden light. It recoils, is pulled backward by its erroneous conceptions, its attachment to individual existence, to the 'I', and by the desire for sensory pleasure. It also happens that the meaning of what presents itself to it completely escapes it, just as someone who is entirely filled with something often does not notice the things surrounding him.

The ordinary deceased, who has entered the afterlife in a state of unconsciousness, does not immediately realize the new situation upon regaining consciousness. For days he continues to speak to his former housemates and wonders why no one answers him and why they do not even seem to notice his presence.

A lama from the monastery in Litang (East Tibet) told me that some deceased people, through the intervention of pos (mediums), had indicated that they had made attempts to make use of their belongings and wanted to take up their plows to work the fields. It upset them that they could no longer perform those daily activities.

In such a case, the spirit of the deceased becomes confused. What has happened to him? He sees an immobile and emotionless body lying down, while lamas stand around it. Is he perhaps dead? Those who did not learn during their lives what the Bardo (note: the intermediate realm in which the spirit wanders after death, awaiting reincarnation) actually is, and who penetrate it while still completely filled with sorrow for the loss of their earthly life, can benefit hardly at all from the advice received. Perhaps they do not even hear it." So much for this text.

Mrs. Neel speaks of experiencing "in a flash of lightning" an "inner - contemplation of supreme reality" and of the attempt to "hold on to that light". Plotinus (6.1.1.) also described his out-of-body experience as "a beauty of wondrous sublimity". What is more: according to the Tibetans, whoever succeeds in holding on to the light is definitively liberated from further reincarnations. Such images bear a strong resemblance to what was said about experiencing the Platonic world of ideas (5.1.2.). Whoever has fully immersed themselves in the reality of those ideas apparently no longer needs to learn "earthly lessons". We will return to this theory of ideas shortly.

Haunted houses

But not everyone who passes on is at that height to experience something of that light. The stories about the afterlife hell showed us that (6.1.2.). Similarly, there is an overwhelming body of literature on so-called 'haunted houses'. H. Gasse, **Erzählungen der Antike* ^{29*} (Stories from Antiquity), relates a testimony by Pliny the Younger (61/112), who tells a ghost story in one of his books. The philosopher Athenodorus was able to buy a house in Athens for a ridiculously low price because it was said to be haunted. A shadowy figure was said to inhabit the house. But that was precisely why he

bought the house. During the first night, Athenodorus stayed awake, and what he expected happened. A chained ghost appeared and asked the philosopher to follow him. When both had arrived at a certain place in the garden, the ghost suddenly disappeared. Athenodorus had excavations carried out at that spot the next day. A skeleton was found there, firmly riveted with chains. The remains were collected and buried according to the customs of the time. After the burial, the house remained free of spirits. What is the purpose of this excerpt? The fear of spirits was not at all uncommon in ancient Hellas, as indeed is the case in all archaic cultures, even today. Well, Athenodorus appears to be familiar with such 'spiritual' phenomena. The deceased knew no proper burial. This single thought dominates him and ensures that he knows no peace until the living do something about it.

A fallen soldier

D. Fortune , **Psychic Self-Defense* ^{30*}, tells her story. In summary, her story comes down to this: Miss E.'s fiancé was killed in action during the war. Initially, she overcame her grief, but about six months later she fell into depression and collapsed. At night, never during the day, she feels her body losing all capacity for self-perception. She experiences an out-of-body experience with a severe loss of vitality.

D. Fortune does not treat Miss E., but her deceased fiancé, who cannot find his way in the other world and clings to her. As a result, she loses vitality, something the deceased soul lacks and 'steals' this energy. Her deceased fiancé tried to prevent her from recovering from those soul journeys in order to have her constantly with him. D. Fortune says that she “directed him heavenward” so that he no longer clung to Miss E.

A steam train

Robert A. Monroe , **Out-of-Body Experiences* ^{31*}, tells the story. We summarize. A thirty-five-year-old patient believed she was a steam train and made the characteristic sounds associated with it, just like children playing trains. A consulted psychic determined that the spirit of a deceased engineer had lodged itself in her aura. When the psychic was able to contact him, he explained that he had been crushed in an accident beneath his locomotive, which bore the number 89. He still thought he was lying under his locomotive and could not comprehend that he was dead. When he became convinced of his true situation, he understood that he had no business being in the patient's aura anymore. He left her and went on his way, after which the patient recovered.

A testimony

An anonymous person tells their story. It had been nine years since I had last met E. On the night of July 22nd to 23rd, 2003, I was suddenly awakened by a man standing beside my bed. I was immediately wide awake, but realized a moment later that I was in an out-of-body state and that my physical body was asleep. Only then did it dawn on me that the man beside my bed was not standing there with his physical body either, but with his subtle body. I now noticed that it was E. When he saw me, his mouth literally fell open in amazement, almost as if he were only now realizing that I was not who he had always taken me to be. He knew that I had a great interest in religion and the paranormal, and he had always looked down on me somewhat pityingly, with a distinctly materialistic view of life. But now, in his out-of-body state, nothing remained of his sense of superiority; on the contrary. He was not only infinitely surprised by “the full reality” he was now confronted with, which was practically at odds with the image he had had of me all those years, but he was also in complete panic.

Only now did I notice a large bloodstain on the site of his solar plexus. The umbilical cord had broken. I understood immediately that he had passed away, but that he did not yet fully realize his true condition. I tried to calm him down and make him see his real situation. I reminded him of our earlier conversations, in which I argued that there was much more to the world than that which was merely physically demonstrable and that death does not have the last word. He, however, maintained that dying was the very last thing that could happen to a human being.

I argued that he did realize after all that there is life after death, for there he stood, “in the flesh,” but without a biological body. He replied that he was not dead at all, “for surely you can see that I have my body and can still think,” he argued. I acknowledged that he had a body and consciousness, but that it was neither his physical body nor his earthly consciousness at all. I therefore suggested that he stick his arm through the wardrobe. It seemed such an absurd idea to him that he initially refused. I insisted. What did he have to lose? He finally moved his arm towards the wardrobe and, to his infinite astonishment, found that the hand disappeared completely inside, through the wooden door. He stood rooted to the spot. I continued by telling him that he was indeed dead, but now possessed only a subtle body, and that he could now determine that his thoughts about death as the end of everything were completely wrong. Gradually, he seemed to grasp the reality of his true situation. I then attempted to convince him that he must now go his own way, away from this world. Otherwise, he would remain an

earthbound spirit, who could only continue living by stealing the subtle life energies of other people still living in their biological bodies. Especially his widow, his only daughter, and all those who had been close to him in his life.

He seemed to gradually understand it, continued to look at me hesitantly for a while, and vanished into nothingness a moment later, almost like a mist slowly dissolving. I myself woke up in the morning and noted down this 'dream'. A year and a half later, I learned by chance the date of E.'s death. He had died on July 22, 2003. So much for this experience.

Such testimonies are found repeatedly. J. Grant , among others, in **More Than One Life* ^{32*}, mentions a number from his own experience. R. Montandon, in **Messages de l'au de-là* ^{33*} (Messages from the Other Side), also gives many examples and concludes: "Most of these deceased do not know that they have died and do not want to believe it either. They imagine that they are simply continuing their earthly life and their thoughts remain focused on this material world which they do not wish to leave at all."

In one of the popular radio broadcasts "Te Bed of niet te Bed" (In Bed or Not in Bed) on BRT 2 Limburg, Flemish radio and television presenter Jos Ghysen interviewed an exorcist in the 1970s, prompted by the success of the film of the same name, "The Exorcist." The recording took place in a studio with a large audience present. The man claimed that he regularly had to help people who had already passed away, but who did not yet realize it at all. They panicked at their new and unusual condition, refused to go their separate ways, and, in their ignorance, preferred to cling to a loved one. For the latter, this could manifest as extreme fatigue, eerie dreams regarding the deceased, and even ghostly apparitions. When the audience heard all this recounted, they fell into... uncontrollable, prolonged, and mocking laughter.

This makes it clear that people at home in the paranormal are more inclined to avoid any public attention. And those who do not, sometimes complain that, after being interviewed, they read things about themselves that they did not say at all, or find their words distorted. Sometimes the reporter on duty even feels the need to speak disparagingly about the interviewee's views in order not to lose "the scientific status of his text" and "credibility with the reader or listener." Apparently, it is not always possible for the average person to listen to such themes and other views on reality with a clear conscience. Indeed, the most fervent among them sometimes feel it as a high calling and a driven duty to make life miserable in every possible way for these "stray ones" in their eyes, and to publicly shame them with a

great deal of sensationalism, prejudice, nonsense, and lies. They allow themselves a great deal, and the laws that normally apply to everyone suddenly seem to no longer matter. “You shouldn’t take him seriously at all!” “He’s in a cult!” “He’s crazy!” That is what you hear quite often. Such critics certainly do not suffer from an excess of tolerance and humility. They claim their own worldview for themselves but do not want those around them to have theirs. Anyone who refuses to think like them is branded 'stubborn,' while they apparently forget that it is they who are constantly imposing their opinions.

However, one can also adopt a completely different attitude. One can listen to all this calmly and allow everyone their opinion, perhaps inform oneself seriously, and above all examine what logical arguments exist for or against such an 'alternative' view of reality. Moreover, those who are somewhat familiar with the axiomatics of that world will say that a person who is aware of afterlife situations can orient themselves much more easily during their transition. Such a person is, if necessary, also much easier to help there than someone who is completely ignorant of it. One already possesses, so to speak, a map and some signposts. It was precisely for this purpose that the Egyptians and Tibetans knew their Book of the Dead, and the Christian finds an excellent guide in the Bible.

And let us pause for a moment to consider what the anonymous witness says about E.: “He was infinitely surprised by ‘the full reality’ with which he was now confronted—in an out-of-body and deceased state.” The German philosopher Hans Driesch (1867/1941), **Parapsychologie* ^{34*}, states that man is clairvoyant in his deepest essence. However, this psychic gift is restricted in the biological body because otherwise man would not be able to live due to the excessive abundance of 'faces' and 'visions' from the other world. Sporadically, however, this clairvoyance can occur, certainly in cultures and individuals who open themselves up to the other side of reality. In Driesch’s view, it strongly appears that man, after shedding his biological body, is freed from the limitations of time and space and becomes clairvoyant.

What enables one to transcend the limitations of the material world and one's own biases—hopefully—and be confronted with “the full reality,” as the anonymous witness mentions above. Among others, the English paranormologist H. Price , the French-Jewish philosopher H. Bergson , the American pioneer J.B. Rhine , and M.M. Moncrieff , author of *The Clairvoyant Theory of Perception* ³⁵, are also proponents of this theory of clairvoyance.

Incidentally, this view dominates the entirety of ancient Greek philosophy, from Empedocles to the Neoplatonists. Those familiar with this body of thought state that modern man has hardly any awareness of it and that this ability is virtually never practiced.

Time and time again

J. Grant also confirms that many people are not, or not sufficiently, prepared for their death. She writes : “But I recently had close contact with people who had died so recently that they had not yet realized they were dead.” She recounts that she was staying on the fifth floor of a hotel room in Brussels and was already in bed when an unknown young man suddenly came running out of the bathroom and threw himself to his death through the window onto the hotel courtyard. She realized she was not dreaming and saw that this image was repeating itself. Then she understood that it was the subtle body of a deceased man who had committed suicide and, trapped in his despair, was reliving this gruesome scene over and over again. Grant writes: “Praying had not helped that man, so the task expected of me was to free him from the despair in which he was trapped.” It is remarkable that she does not hold prayer in high regard here, which precisely entails the mobilization of subtle energies and beings that can assist her in such a task. We will also return to this later (7.3.3.).

When one reads her book “ *Winged Pharaoh* ”, together with what she says about this in “ *More Than One Life* ”, it should be clear that she is assisted by Egyptian gods in her liberating work. Even though she does not explicitly mention this here. She continues: “I had liberated many recently deceased people while I was asleep... (note: in an out-of-body state, in order to subtly persuade the deceased, also in their subtle bodies, of their true situation). I was able to do this because I did not allow myself to be influenced by their fear.” To help the man’s spirit, she must empathize with his situation and “share his preconceptions” (2.3.), but at the same time ensure that her courage always remains greater than his fear. This is so as not to be swept along herself and not to suffer the same fate. Eventually, after much fear and “in a flood of tears”, she succeeded in drawing the young man’s suffering into herself, processing it, and thus liberating him from the fatal situation he relived time and again. The young man realized his true—deceased—situation and, once freed, could continue his way in the other world. The next morning, she inquired with the hotel management and learned that in her room, five days earlier, a man had committed suicide by jumping out of the window.

Poison tablets

G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time* ^{36*}, recounts the story of a man who committed suicide by taking poison tablets. The author claims to possess the ability to assist deceased people in their distress while in an out-of-body state. He attempts to bring them out of their ignorance and to break the compulsive and continuous repetition of their final earthly deeds. Van der Zeeuw continues: The man who had committed suicide sat at his desk—naturally with his subtle body—and repeated “endlessly and timelessly” what he had last experienced on earth. He had been unable to refuse his much younger wife her overly luxurious life, but had thereby brought himself into great financial difficulties and saw no other way out. During his lifetime, his wife had had an affair with a younger man behind his back.

The woman and the younger man, however, were now tormented by the death of the legal husband. To make the deceased man aware of his situation, that he has passed away, those who wish to help him must empathize with his situation in order to enter into communication with him. Van der Zeeuw recounts that he offered help together with several spirits and told the man that he had died. Disbelief, however, was the result: “Surely you can see that I am sitting at my desk and can speak with you,” he argued. Gradually, however, he became convinced of his true situation. He also 'saw' that his wife was cheating on him. “Hate took hold of him and, to our great surprise, we saw terrible demonic figures enter the room,” Van der Zeeuw testifies. The man faced an important choice, but lo and behold, he changed his mind and stammered: “Had I known, I would have given you freedom, and I wish you the best now.” The writer concludes with the words: “Had he remained in his hatred, he would not have been able to shake off the demons.”

From the same author we read: “In 'higher' spheres, a thought is thinking, realizing it. While in those spheres every thought can transform into a form, on earth this is not possible because it is inhibited by matter. We saw, however, that magical experiments (4.3.2.) can indeed be accomplished if the power of thought exceeds a specific limit. Then some persons, who know how to direct an abundance of subtle energy in a concentrated manner, can indeed stare a frog to death, make a compass turn, move a computer cursor, or realize other things. But if they possess such powerful energies, they are also capable of bringing about much more

practical things: for evil, but, let us hope, especially for good. We discussed the latter in the chapter on paranormal healings (4.3.3.).

I torment them as much as I can.

Raoul Montandon , *Maisons et lieux hantés*³⁷ (Haunted houses and places), mentions a testimony by Mrs. A. Morigret, in *Psychica* (15.03.1923).

Twelve years ago, we met a German lady at the court of William II. She confided in us that she had a young friend. As soon as she was alone, a man dressed in black would appear. He followed her every movement with his large, wild eyes. To distract herself from this torment, she traveled extensively. Yet nothing could relieve her of it. Whenever she returned to her room in the evening, as late as possible, the man would appear again and again. He would position himself at the foot of her bed and never cease staring at her. The young friend knew that my daughter is a skilled medium and asked me to speak to her about this. I advised against it. My daughter could barely control her numerous visions herself. I assured her that I attended spiritualist sessions myself and promised her that we would present this to our 'control spirits'. When we did so, the 'spirit' said that he would address the matter and advised us not to burden my daughter with it.

Later, when I was talking to my daughter, I saw her suddenly staring anxiously at a specific spot. She pointed her finger at a corner of the room and said: "There, a man dressed in black with wild eyes is staring at me." She tried to escape his gaze, but without succeeding. Thereupon, I suggested that she ask him who he was and what he wanted. She did so. The answer was: "I have had a very sad life on earth. A doctor had me locked up in a lunatic asylum, even though I was not mad. I died there. Since then, I have been sending my hatred to everything on earth connected with that doctor, including his granddaughter. I torment her as much as I can." My daughter immediately told him that such a thing was not only unwise but that it hindered his further spiritual progress. This message seemed to sink in with him. After a brief hesitation, he decided to put an end to his hatred. Then he disappeared.

For my daughter, the matter was settled with this. I told her nothing until I had received news myself from that German lady. And lo, a few days later she stood there. She looked particularly well and told me that she had received a letter from her young friend in which she wrote that the latter had been delivered from her terrible vision. Only at that moment did I tell her about my daughter's vision and the conversation she had had with the spirit.

The German lady then confirmed that the young woman in question was the granddaughter of a famous doctor.

Mrs. Schwarz

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross , **On Death and Life After** ³⁸; recounts. “ However, I have not yet finished telling my story about Mrs. Schwarz (6.1.2.). I must add that she died fourteen days after her son had finished school. As one of the many among my patients, I would certainly have forgotten her again had she not sought me out again.”

Mrs. Ross relates that one fine day she noticed a woman in the elevator who looked familiar to her, but that she could not immediately place the lady. “Her figure was very transparent, yet not so transparent that you could see everything behind her,” writes Ross. The woman, however, walked up to her and said: “Doctor Ross, I had to come back. Would it be alright if we went to your room together for a moment? I really won’t keep you long.”

And Ross continued to himself: “Elisabeth, you know you see that woman. And yet it cannot be true. You absolutely must touch that woman to find out if she is really there.” So I took hold of her to see if she would dissolve into nothingness again. I felt her skin to know if it was warm or cold. I even suppressed the thought that this apparition could really be Mrs. Schwarz, who had been buried a few months ago.

When we arrived at my door together, she opened it as if I were visiting in my own room. She did this with irresistible courtesy, tenderness, and love, and said: “Doctor Ross, I had to return for two reasons. One is that I wanted to thank you and Reverend G. (that was the Black minister with whom I got along so excellently) for everything you both have done for me. But the real reason why I had to return is to tell you that you must not give up your work on dying and death, at least not yet.” I persuaded the apparition to put a few words on paper for the minister. “You understand, of course, that I had absolutely no intention of sending those lines to my friend. But I needed scientific proof, for it goes without saying that someone who is buried can no longer write letters. And that woman with her so very human, no, non-human, with her sweetest smile, could read all my thoughts. Never before had I known with such certainty what reading thoughts was. She took the paper and wrote a few lines on it, which we have, of course, kept behind glass.”

The hitchhiker of Alba-la-Romaine

Our source is D. Audinot , **Les lieux de l'au-delà** ³⁹(Places in the Afterlife); this well-documented work discusses spectres, so-called “white women,” and “vanishing hitchhikers.” We will focus on a curious case of a vanishing hitchhiker. In the spring, during the red moon, in early May (note: the days of the so-called Ice Saints), motorists leaving the A6 motorway in Montélimar to cross the Ardèche via National Road 102 may sometimes have a very strange experience. Namely, an encounter with a shadowy hitchhiker who belongs to the most tenacious of her kind: she does not appear as a “white woman” but wearing a female motorcyclist’s leather suit. The apparition occurs in the late afternoon, just before sunset. This hitchhiker allows herself to be transported a good thirty kilometers. The phenomenon has been observed several dozen times, with the sequence exhibiting an extremely strict and systematic pattern. Audinot reproduces the report of Mr. Régis F., residing in Lyon, who published it in *Science et magie* . He claims that his story can be verified in the gendarmerie of Aubenas, which is well-informed regarding this recurring phenomenon.

“As a mathematics teacher at a lyceum in Lyon, I’m not exactly that superstitious,” he states. But the following happened to him in the spring of 1996. Every weekend, he drives with his wife along the A6 motorway, from Lyon to Montélimar.

“On a Saturday evening, we had just left the motorway and were crossing the Rhône when, around a bend, a hitchhiker in a leather suit shyly gestured to us with her hand. I stopped. She asked me where we were going. I told her. That seemed to please her, whereupon I let her take a seat in the back. By the looks of it, a very beautiful young woman with a pale, almost white face. Not very talkative. That is how I saw her fleetingly in my rearview mirror.” Evening fell. Mr. Régis switched on the lights and drove quite fast. At a certain moment, the passenger asked: “Could you slow down a little, sir? I am not feeling very well.” Régis slowed down, somewhat displeased. It was getting dark quickly, and he did not like driving along those winding, dark roads at night.

Ten minutes later, just past Alba-la-Romaine, she is back with a complaining voice, almost white in color: “Sir, I beg you, drive slower!” Régis continues: “I slow down even more, while my wife, sensing that I am boiling inside, places her hand on my knee to calm me down. We drive through Villeneuve at thirty kilometers per hour, accelerating slightly upon leaving the town. But—I swear to you—I did not drive faster than fifty or sixty kilometers per hour since the road does not lend itself to speeding. After

fifteen minutes, my hitchhiker is back, complaining quietly: “For the love of God, sir, please moderate your speed! I feel truly nauseous!” The hitchhiker adds: “Otherwise I will be forced to get out!” “What a whiner,” I say to myself as I drop back to forty kilometers per hour. Suddenly I hear something that sounds like a sigh; I look back in my rearview mirror and no longer see the hitchhiker. I stop abruptly at the edge of the road and look around: the sofa is empty! I look at my wife in dismay; she is just as surprised as I am. “She didn’t jump through the door, did she? Someone would have heard something like that!”

Surprised and a little anxious, I turn back and drive slowly to the beginning of Villeneuve-de-Berg. We encounter few cars. I carefully scan the faces of the people in the cars, but apparently our unknown lady is not among them. Nor is she on the side of the road! I turn around and drive with my lights on full blast and without making any noise to Aubenas. I stop at the gendarmerie. Two men listen without much surprise to my strange, rambling story. When I have finished describing the girl, they shake their heads, smiling: “Ah,” says one of them in all seriousness, “You are the third this year who ‘la gets to see “larva”. Since her fatal motorcycle accident three years ago on that same road, that girl shows herself every spring under the red moon.

Explanations

This story, which bears a perfect resemblance to countless others and many of which were recorded at the gendarmerie of Aubenas, allows for some interesting observations.

The “shadowy hitchhiker” died in an accident three years ago and met a violent death on that road. She fully fits the description of what was formerly called ‘ghost apparitions’.

Briefly outlined: It concerns people who have died suddenly and regularly appear around the place where they died, while perfectly materializing (note: becoming gross material) and dematerializing (note: returning to subtle material or even disappearing completely) so that they are capable of vanishing without leaving a trace.

The shadowy hitchhiker, once materialized, is completely and physically tangible and thus reveals herself in flesh and bone. She does not seem to realize that she is dead. Often, upon approaching the scene of her fatal accident—as is the case with Alba-la-Romaine—she expresses a unease that

she cannot explain further. She is therefore—at least temporarily—'alive'. She can open car doors. She appears either for an extended period or briefly. The latter sometimes for a few minutes and over a few hundred meters. The hitchhiker of Alba-la-Romaine was completely materialized during the thirty-kilometer ride, or for about twenty minutes. That duration—together with the frequency of her appearances on the same road—is very rare. The shadowy hitchhiker deceived the teacher and his wife. There is therefore no question of, for example, epileptic vision; such a thing occurs only in one person. There is, therefore, more than an individual objective experience.

In an introductory section as well as throughout the book with its few hundred cases, Audinot places very strong emphasis on the dynamic aspect. One apparition progresses no further than a fleeting shadowy appearance, while another materializes tangibly. The author also believes that the energy that makes the apparitions possible diminishes with the years and centuries. The author is so certain of his case that he invites every reader who wishes to verify the case of Alba-la Romaine to visit the road section indicated above “on a Saturday during the first days of May, on National Road 102 from Montélimar to Alba as far as Villeneuve-de-Berg”.

The Emmaus Disciples

Luke 24:31-35 tells the story of the two apostles on their way to Emmaus on Passover day. They were discussing everything that had happened, the suffering and death of Jesus . While they were discussing, Jesus joined them and walked with them. But the apostles did not recognize him. Later, when they invited him to eat with them, Jesus went to the table. After they had eaten, he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. But immediately he vanished from their sight. They said to one another, “Was it not heartwarming how he spoke with us on the way and opened the Scriptures for us?”

Besides the immense differences between the story of the hitchhiker and the biblical story, one also sees some similarity: from a subtle body, the gross material is materialized. Moreover, Christ takes a meal. Afterwards, the biological body is dematerialized again and seemingly dissolves into nothingness.

We find a similar story in *John 20:11* . After Jesus has died and been buried, Mary Magdalene finds his tomb empty to her dismay. The evangelist mentions: “Mary stood outside the tomb weeping . And as she wept, she

looked into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus had lain.” They spoke to her: “Why are you weeping so?” She answered: “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him!” After this complaint, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus asked: “Why are you weeping so? Are you looking for someone?” Because she thought it was the gardener then she said: “Lord, if it is You who have taken Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, so that I can have Him brought to me.” Jesus said, "Mary!" She then turned to Him and said, "Rabboni!" (That is Hebrew for: Master.)

And a little further on in *John 20:19*, the evangelist also mentions a materialization of Jesus : “On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together. Although the door was locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came . Suddenly He stood in their midst and said: ‘Peace!’” After With this greeting He showed them His hands and His side. Joy filled the disciples when they saw the Lord.

John 21:1-16, we also find a description of how Jesus , after his resurrection, came to the Sea of Tiberias and called out to some apostles who were fishing in their boat to cast the net “to the right of the boat.” After such a large amount of fish was caught, the apostles went ashore, prepared the fish over a charcoal fire, and all, including Jesus , ate of it. The apostles experienced Jesus as resurrected, but still active on earth.

A spiritualist incantation

We found testimonies from people who foresaw death, testimonies of the moment of dying, and examples of deceased persons who had not yet realized their death. So-called 'spiritism' teaches us that contact with the deceased is also possible. Nevertheless, many mantically gifted individuals will strongly disapprove of this. Many cultures warn us that summoning the dead can be very dangerous. One summons beings that one cannot always control and that can bring much harm. The same applies, for example, to widows or widowers who cannot 'release' their deceased partner, wish to draw him or her back to earth, and, for instance, erect a home altar with all kinds of decorations and flowers in order to worship their loved one as a deity. We now cite examples that have an exorcistic scope. Dr. Carl Wickland , in **Thirty Years Among the Dead* ^{40*}, tells the following story, which is typically spiritualist and provides an example of liberation according to the spiritualist method.

Miss L. was the young fiancée of a widower who, at the time, had occupied a floor with his wife in the same building where the young fiancée lived. The two women had been close friends. The wife died very suddenly, and some time after her death, the man became engaged to the young woman. Shortly thereafter, the latter began to exhibit mental abnormalities that became increasingly worse. In her normal state, she held the man in high regard, but when she came to see Doctor Carl Wickland, she developed a fierce aversion to him and maintained that she would rather die or go to a lunatic asylum than marry him. She had attempted to take her own life several times, but had seemingly come to her senses at the last moment each time and called for help.

The moment the patient entered the institute (note: which attempted to guide her), Carl Wickland's wife, clairvoyant, saw that the deceased woman was attempting to penetrate the body of the young fiancé. Once 'possessed' by the deceased woman, the fiancé declared herself mad. She longed to die, for if she remained alive she would have to marry 'that man'.

, Madame Wickland possesses the ability to attune herself to the deceased woman, to empathize with her axiomatics, and indeed, to a certain extent, to identify with the feelings and thoughts of the deceased lady. After considerable effort, the deceased lady could be convinced of her true situation and could even be brought to a form of repentance. This means that she realizes she wishes life well for the people on this side and continues her journey on the other side. This acceptance implies that she changes her 'attitude' and axiomatics in a way; that she 'converts' and releases her grip on "her rival," on the young fiancé. As a result, the fiancé recovered very quickly. She was soon able to leave the institution and married the widower.

So much for the heavily abridged text by Dr. Carl Wickland. The structure of the spiritualist incantation is clear:

1. It is assumed that the patient's mental, behavioral, and physical disorders are due to the spirit of a deceased person, which is not to be sought too far afield, namely within the circle of that deceased, and which is in some way involved in what the patient wishes to undertake or what concerns her.

2. Dr. Wickland's wife sees Miss L.'s aura and perceives the spirit of the deceased within it. Mrs. Wickland is guided and protected in this by a sound and reliable guardian spirit (also called a 'control spirit'). Furthermore, her husband, who is a physician, conducts the entire spiritualist experiment in an expert manner.

3. Not a heavy-handed and aggressive incantation (such as the exorcism of the Catholic Church does, for example, see 13.3.2.), but rather persuasion forms the core of the neutralization of evil. This persuasion is a proclamation:

a. You have died (more than one person does not realize this); you belong to the other world;

b. Your condition is due to your own mentality which binds you to earthly life (especially through unmortialized desires and wrong ideas);

c. Repent: let go of this earthly life and your entanglement in it, and turn your conscious attention to higher, heavenly realms and modes of existence by calling upon and following God and the blessed spirits.

The second death

people leave their physical body behind, while their consciousness transfers to their etheric body. The samples above bore witness to such a transition. Now, Van der Zeeuw, among others, states that one must also leave this etheric body if one does not wish to remain 'earthbound'. In **Clairvoyance in Space and Time** ⁴¹, he writes: "People who, upon passing, are still completely bound to the earthly sphere and its desires, take the etheric double with them; are therefore less ethereal and cannot rise as high due to their heaviness. Only when they have renounced their earthly desires will this double fall away from them. They will have to go through a second death, as it were, to detach the spiritual body from the gross material etheric double, in order to then be able to rise to greater heights. This etheric double remains behind and perishes. The height of ascent depends on the ethical level that this person has reached. It is reflected in his spiritual body. As soon as this encounters its own 'vibration' or 'specific gravity', it cannot rise any further. A person can never perceive higher than the height he himself possesses. Lower, however, is always possible because he has passed through this in the course of his evolution." So much for this quote.

Let us refer to the life dream of the young Indian (3.3.4.), where the guardian spirits command him that, in an out-of-body state, he must not go higher than the level he is currently at: "There are already enough beautiful and great things provided for you! Look around here: here you will find all the good gifts of God. Health, vitality, long life, and all the creatures of nature," thus stated his guiding spirits.

Let us clarify this rising and falling. Let us start with a submarine. If its specific gravity is very high, the boat will rest on the ocean floor. If it gradually loses ballast, it slowly floats higher until it eventually reaches the water surface. It can go no higher. A completely new vehicle is now needed to rise

even higher, for example, a hot air balloon. If the specific gravity of the latter is very heavy, it will remain floating on the water surface. If its specific gravity gradually becomes lighter, it will begin to rise, if necessary even to the stratosphere. To break free from there as well, yet another type of vehicle is required that can escape the Earth's gravitational pull.

The contemplation of ideas

In the previous chapter, the so-called Platonic ideas (5.1.2.) were discussed. For Plato, the ideas exist in eternity and possess a subtle life force. Albinos situated them in the high world of light as ideas of God. All ideas, as objective embodiments of all reality, are somewhere 'divine', but not on the extranatural level, but rather on the supernatural level. It is now very important for man to possess or reach that height, where he can come into contact with such ideas, where he can 'behold' them. They elevate the soul and enable him to make progress. If man subsequently reincarnates, then, still according to Plato, he possesses that memory and can realize something of it in this world. Both memory and the urge to realize them reinforce each other. That man then not only evolves in the right direction but also accelerates his evolution.

The situation is entirely different for people for whom higher ideas actually mean virtually nothing. They may well lead a life that gives them satisfaction, but that which could lead them upwards remains absent. A subsequent reincarnation will thus remain somewhat of a treading water, and it will take a great deal of time before they reach a higher ethical, sacred, and subtle level. Van der Zeeuw, oc, 135, writes: "If one is spiritually high enough, one ascends straight up until one has found one's own matter. This will then be that 'sphere' to which one belonged as an earthly man, or to which one has worked oneself up." It is good to read that one can work oneself up during life. Incidentally, the entire previous chapter was about that—about the evolution of man.

Numerous are the people who do not improve themselves.

Van der Zeeuw, oc, 135, states that most people are located in the lower realms. During their earthly life, they are not personally present there, but their deeds and thoughts do manifest themselves there in their true form. Furthermore, in oc 169, he writes that, viewed from an out-of-body state, it is dark on earth, even during the day.

M. Van Gestel , *'My child sees more* ⁴²*,'* quotes her daughter.

- "Mom, there is so much sadness here on earth; if I could give it a color, the earth would be brown-black. That other world is yellow, white-yellow. Yes, I get it. And now it is about bringing some of the yellow from the other world here on earth. Passing the yellow on to the people."

- "Will it never run out?"

- "No, there is infinitely much yellow and you may always receive it again".

Thus spoke the six-year-old clairvoyant Marieke, who, at her childlike level, articulated something of the Platonic world of ideas she experienced.

Elsewhere too, some people confirm, after having an out-of-body experience, even on a sunny day, that from their perspective, it is dark on Earth.

Van der Zeeuw, oc, 208 adds: "On earth I encountered many who are true demons in human form and I know then what awaits them". And further, oc, 217: "Only a few people on our earth are capable of perceiving the spiritual body". This opinion is confirmed by more than one Biblical seer. We will return to this later.

Let us summarize. Much can be said about dying. Many opinions, philosophies, and testimonies disagree with the nominalism that posits death is the definitive end. So many individual experiences bear witness to a subtle existence that becomes particularly penetrating and actual after leaving the body. People live on after death with their consciousness and their subtle bodies. They are not always prepared for this. A not insignificant number of them become lost in the world, which is so alien to them, and turn back towards the earth, something that can significantly slow down their further evolution. A number of others undergo the "second death," in which the etheric body is also left behind and consciousness withdraws into a finer and 'astral' body. In this way, one can focus on a further and higher evolution. Adherents of the doctrine of reincarnation will argue that the individual prepares himself in this way for a new and richer earthly life. At least as long as that is necessary and until the required 'earthly' lessons have been 'learned' and no further reincarnation is needed.

6.3. A descent into hell

A fictional story?

The term "descent into hell" has already been mentioned in connection with Jesus , along with the paranormal nature of His miracles, His resurrection, and His ascension (1.4.4. and 2.6.). According to some, it concerns a real event; others dispute its historicity and reduce Jesus ' descent to an edifying, yet fictional story.

We should also mention that in many non-Biblical religions, a 'descent into hell' or 'ascension to heaven' concerns the external nature, as distinct from the supernatural. The external nature is also layered and comprises higher and lower realms. It is clear that ancestors who wish the best for their descendants from the other world find themselves on a different and higher level of reality than malevolent spirits or even spirits atoning for their crimes in a much lower and darker underworld. Many cultures are indeed thoroughly convinced that the 'dead' somehow still exist 'somewhere' and exert their influence on their descendants. This was shown to us, among other things, by the story of the witch of Endor (1.4.2.). Also the works of Van Eersel *J'ai mal à mes ancêtres* (I have homesickness for my ancestors) and J. Herbert , *La religion d'Okinawa* (The religion of Okinawa) (2.5.) state that ailments of ancestors can affect descendants. According to both authors, these ailments are then remedied not by treating the living patient currently suffering from the ailment, but by curing his deceased grandparent. They illustrate this with a number of examples.

Below the ground floor

Such an out-of-body experience or a 'descent into hell' emphasizes the fact that Jesus or the seer, with his or her 'spirit' (that is: both the thought, the imagination, and a subtle soul-body), literally descends below ground level by means of a minimal out-of-body experience into the sphere of the spirits to be summoned or contacted. In Hebrew, one speaks of 'Sheol,' the underworld or the depths of the earth into which the souls of the dead descend and lead a shadowy existence. This “literally descending below ground level” implies, for example, that a seer indeed sees such an out-of-body body 'sinking' into the earth.

For some of us, the expression 'descent into hell' may still sound familiar. In the prayer 'the twelve articles of faith', also called 'credo' (Lat.: “I believe”), the following formulation appears in connection with the death of Jesus: “and I believe in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord, who descended into hell and rose from the dead on the third day”.

Similia similibus

Let us also refer to the ancient Roman liturgy, which states that Jesus destroyed death by dying himself and restored life by rising again. Every magician knows what that formula means. After all, only by repeating a process oneself can one, magically speaking, control that process. Many saints invoked for specific illnesses were actually carriers of that illness during their lives and overcame it “in the long run.” This essential similarity—

similia similibus—like attracts like, is precisely what enables them to cope with that illness now and assist other people with the energies thus acquired. Thus, in Conques, France, Saint Foy (Sainte Foy) is invoked against all kinds of insanities. This holy lady herself suffered from a form of schizophrenia, something that also constantly mobilized her energies in this regard. It is somewhat comparable to becoming immune to a specific disease by being able to produce the necessary antibodies through vaccination.

All shamans, for example, know that they can only overcome a disease after they themselves have suffered from it to at least a minimal degree. Hence, their severe trials. We will return to this later in this chapter (6.4.). Let us also consider Jesus' resurrection as a victory over death: the physical model represents the subtle redemption of man from a state which, viewed sacredly—from the standpoint of high life force or holiness—means more death than life. The following Biblical texts, among others, bear witness to this: *1 Sam 2:6* (the Lord brings death and life; He brings to the underworld and brings out again), *Wisdom 16:13* (You lead them to the gates of the underworld and You bring them up again), *Amos 9:2* (even if they enter the realm of the dead, My hand brings them out).

Let us take a sample here as well with regard to the reality of such descents into hell.

Waiting for a dream

Some people claim to experience a kind of descent into hell during a “more than” ordinary dream. Critics naturally argue that such experiences are 'merely' dreams, and are therefore based on deception. The question is indeed whether they are real (their existence), and if so, what they are (their essence). As is perhaps known, there are different kinds of dreams. The mantically gifted writer and psychiatrist Frederik van Eeden (1860/1932) distinguished twelve of them. Some dreams, experts state, are a representation of contact with spirits and their energies, and are considered occult initiations. Let us refer to the life dream of the young Indian (3.3.4.), in which, during his out-of-body experience, he was initiated by a number of guardian spirits and received higher energies to lead and protect his tribe. It is about such dreams that we are discussing here.

Eliot Cowan , **Spiritual Healing Power of Plants* ^{43*}, gives the floor to Dona Modesta, a herbalist from the Amazon region. She speaks of the dream that—so she says—brings her to the real world. Americans love to put everything in its own little boxes. For the Tarahumara or Raramuri (note: two Native

American tribes in South America), everything is interconnected, and you can't really put anything in its own little box. After all, that would mean killing it, cutting it off. We receive our basic education during our youth. No books are involved. We learn how to use certain plants as medicine, as food, or to make drinks from them. We learn that by imitating the example we are given. How to cultivate certain plants, for example. And if a Tarahumara wants to learn a little more than the average man or woman, he must make contact with the spirits and wait for a dream. That dream brings him to the real world. This here is not the real world. This is a flesh-and-blood world. The real world is the world where the spirit of Osha (note: her 'helper' in the world of plant spirits) comes and talks to me. The real world is not in the technology and all that books, but in our visions and our dreams.” So far Dona Modesta.

The Tarahumara or Raramuri call this “experiencing a dream-vision,” but they know very well that it is not just a dream as most Westerners know it. It is a dream that far transcends the reality of this world. Her assertion “this here is not the real world” reminds us of the cave myth and Plato’s theory of Forms (5.1.2.). Plato, too, stated that this world is not the real one, but merely the shadow image of an overwhelming reality on “the other side.” Furthermore, numerous examples of such astral journeys during a dream can be found in the literature. We referred, among others, to the Dalai Lama and to the story of Father Trilles, “an out-of-body magician” (6.1.1.). Let us mention other examples.

Your forefathers are in a meeting.

<http://www.firstpeople.us> mentions (in 2011) the complete book of Black Elk (Black Elk), *Black Elk speaks*. Black Elk (1863/1950) was a Lakota Sioux Indian who could hear psychic voices and see spirits as early as age five. However, when he was nine, he became seriously ill. His arms, legs, and face swelled to double their normal size. An inner voice told him that the time had come and that the spirits were calling him. Thereupon he left the constellation and was instructed “in the other world” by the guardian spirits of his tribe: “Your Grandfathers are having a council.” It is somewhat reminiscent of the Orishas of Santeria and Macumba, or of the court council of Yahweh (*Job 1:6*). Black Elk was initiated into the secrets of the tribe by the guardian spirits during his out-of-body experience. They taught him many things, predicted that he and his tribe were facing difficult times, gave him more than ordinary subtle energies, and taught him how to heal people with them. Black Elk remained in an out-of-body state for twelve days before awakening back into his body. It is the rule rather than the exception that an initiation is

accompanied by a serious illness. The biological body must adapt in a very short time to the effects of many subtle energies inherent to such an initiation.

Once an adult, Black Elk became involved in a number of battles against the U.S. cavalry, including the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 and the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890, where he was wounded. He remained the spiritual leader of his people and gained considerable prestige, even outside his tribe. From his youth, he remembered that the 'pale faces' had found a yellow metal "that they worshipped and that drove them mad." To extract all that gold, they built a railroad through the prairie. In the process, countless bison were slaughtered. He denounced the fact that the whites rarely kept their promises.

Eventually, the Native Americans received only "small islands" on which they had to settle, and their remaining land was taken away. He also recounts how Creeping, a medicine man, could cure snow blindness by singing sacred songs that he had received in dreams from his ancestors, and by blowing on the necks of the blinded people.

We know by now that in their axiomatics, "sacred songs" and "blowing on the neck" are merely outward signs of a ritual intended to increase power charge (1.3.). Anyone who would sing these songs or blow on someone's neck in such a nominalistic manner, and without contact with the guardian spirits, would of course achieve nothing.

Great wizards

According to Black Elk, however, the whites were greater sorcerers, for they had, for example, invented guns that could fire many times in quick succession, and they had built powerful locomotives with which they transported the yellow metal. As a result, they were ultimately more powerful. In the view of the Indians, and in that of many indigenous peoples, our white civilization possesses many powerful sorcerers who, with what they devise after much effort, achieve remarkable practical results. Only these whites do not know that they are true magicians. It seems like a confrontation between the sacred culture of the Indians and the profane culture of the whites. Yet the Indian punctures this all-too-profane image of the white. The Indian sees through the latter's unconscious depths better than the white. He brings to light ('apocalypticism') that some whites are greater magicians than the sorcerers of the Indians.

G. Graichen , **The New Witches* ^{44*}, writes in this regard: We practice magic all the time, every day, everyone. But the majority of people are unaware of it. There are great magicians in politics, in economic life, in industry, and also in science, but they do not know it. And if one were to tell them, they would dismiss it as absurd and ridiculous.

Let us refer once again to the so-called “occult status”, the “deeper self” of man, which we have already mentioned. Jesus also reproaches the Pharisees for being in a much worse state in their deeper souls than they let on (2.5.). And Father Trilles also stated that the formation of the ngil (3.3.3.) was much more thorough and reached deep into the unconscious layers of the sorcerer's apprentice than the all too conscious and superficial formation the children received during their religious instruction from the missionaries. We find a similar story in, among others, the santeria (3.3.1.) and the macumba (3.3.2.). To the outside world, one supposedly prays to a Biblical figure or saint, but in reality, one addresses one or another extra-biblical deity. Extra-biblical religion is in many cases rooted in a much deeper layer than the rather superficial veneer of Christianity.

A testimony

A contemporary who wishes to remain anonymous tells his story. “I am awakening, coming to consciousness, in my subtle body. I have left the body and find myself somewhere in a rather dark place right next to a long line of passing people. Their grey figures barely stand out against the dark background. They walk past blankly, indeed mechanically, and it seems to me that they do this constantly, that they are trapped in a cycle and do not have the strength of their own to get out of it. They are all deceased: they are no longer part of the physical world, and it all has something to do with the violence of war. Their faces are frighteningly grey and absent and expressionless. They look like masks. Only their eyes, which are eerily coloured, indeed have something phosphorescent about them, indicate that they are not robots. I see that they notice me. The pupils of their eyes remain fixed on me for a while as the people themselves pass by absentmindedly. It seems as if, through their eyes, I am making contact with something deeper within these people, with their essence trapped in those bodies. In a way, I 'know' that what I experience has a reality value.

Despite their grim appearance, I overcome a certain aversion to these figures; indeed, I am overwhelmed by a fiercely rising sense of empathy and pity. They are like an 'ich-nog-einmal', as Shopenhauer put it. I consciously fold my hands and pray a Hail Mary, slowly, with faith and conviction. I

pronounce every word with great emphasis, and in my thoughts, I ask heaven to have mercy on these soulless beings. And behold... suddenly, a handful of people standing closest to me burst apart, just like that, like soap bubbles. Nothing remains of them. It is as if they never existed.

At the same time, I notice small luminous points descending from the sky. They remind me of a so-called 'fairy wand' that we light at Christmas, which then burns out brilliantly, emitting many small sparks. And yet, it is all much finer, much more penetrating. From the brightness of those many small luminous points, falling like snowflakes into the night sky, I realize that it is still very dark where I am. Still praying, I look up. Far above my head glows a sea of light, indescribably beautiful... I long to go there. Immediately I hear a rustling, my whole body tingles (note: the result of an influx of higher energy; sensitives claim to feel this while praying as well, especially in their crown, where the crown chakra then opens), and heavenly music sounds. I have never heard such beautiful and sublime melodies in my entire life. I feel my out-of-body state rising, towards the light. At the same time, the sparks increase in intensity and number. It looks like fireworks exploding. It is such an overwhelming feeling that I think: it would be a shame if I were to wake up now. Immediately afterwards, everything fades and I truly wake up, disappointed. Perhaps I should not have thought the latter. Upon waking, I feel myself sinking very gently and gradually into my biological body. I notice how my subtle arms and legs slowly merge more and more with my physical limbs. At this, I feel them tingle softly. When this stops, it is all over. I become wide awake in my gross body and can now move my arms and legs again.

Note: "A heavenly music sounds," is how the dreamer experiences it. Let us refer in this context to 'the music of the spheres,' an expression which, according to M. Wildiers in the book of the same name: **De muziek der sferen**, we encounter in the works of Pythagoras ⁴⁵, Plato , and Cicero , among others , and which relates to a mantically audible order present in the celestial bodies and which, according to the testimonies, sounds like wondrously beautiful music. So much for this testimony.

Accept, purify, elevate

Here, too, one notices the power of thought: "I long to go there," which indeed happens, and "it would be a pity if I were to awaken now," which also follows immediately. As stated, this thinking is sufficient to make it actually happen. If this testimony is based on reality, it also says something about the power of prayer. It is not merely a form of concentrated attention, but

emotion also plays a role: a deep compassion takes hold of the 'dreamer' who has left the body. Moreover, prayer calls upon the help of like-minded beings: it is a matter of like attracting like, just as a vibrating tuning fork causes everything that has the same tone and can move freely to vibrate along with it.

This 'dream' can be regarded as a form of initiation. Something in the unconscious of the 'dreamer' is accepted: the line of people passing by. However, it is also purified: the empathetic attitude undoes an evil, so that it shatters as if it had never existed. Finally, something within the dreamer is raised to a higher level. The threefold nature of "accepting, purifying, and raising to a higher level" was discussed earlier (3.2.). We will return to it later in this text.

It is clear that, from a nominalist standpoint, one might dismiss such a testimony as unreal. For the 'dreamer', however, who experienced it all firsthand, it is an experience that stays with him for a lifetime, indeed as a pinnacle of his existence. The question of whether and to what extent reality is achieved here is entirely superfluous to him. His experience is overwhelmingly a given, not at all a requested one. The latter, however, becomes the case for a natural science that wants to see this substantiated for everyone with hard and irrefutable facts. But that is, of course, a completely different story.

Odysseus in the Underworld

In Homer's *Odyssey* ⁴⁶, translated from the Greek by Bertus Aafjes, we find a descent into hell described. Chapter VII is titled: "To the Realm of Shadows." Let us summarize. On the coast of an island, Odysseus and his companions pulled their ship ashore at a place designated to them by Circe, the goddess. This particularly beautiful sorceress gives Odysseus directions to "the entrance of Hades," where Odysseus intends to summon the dead. There, he kills a ewe and a ram, both black-haired, to consult deceased souls in the underworld.

Let us refer to the so-called "do ut des", "I give so that you may give" (3.3.1.). I, Odysseus, give to you, phantom whom I wish to consult, the blood of the animals. This blood is a carrier of subtle life energy. In this way, you can rise from your 'zombie-like' existence and, with that extra energy, regain your 'memory' of the 'upper world'. Thus, 'consciousness' in the underworld is not 'dead'; it is merely asleep. Spirits, situated outside of time and space, indeed do not know the limitations that a human being, who does live within

this time and space, possesses. In principle, the spirits are then clairvoyant, provided, however, that they possess sufficient life force. Hence the bloody sacrifice, blood as a carrier of that subtle energy. Such blood sacrifices are discussed further in the text. Let us also note the color of the ewe and the ram: black-haired, adapted to the somber underworld. The Santeria, among others, taught us that the colors of sacrifices to supernatural beings play a role: (3.3.1.). Red and white were the colors of the orisha Sango; Yemaya wanted blue and white, and Oshun desired only yellow chickens as a sacrifice. Such idiosyncratic demands simply characterize the beings of the supernatural.

Let us return to Odysseus and his descent into the underworld. Souls appear around the sacrificed blood. “When I have addressed the dead with my supplications and vows,” says Odysseus, “the souls of those who are no more come running. Young women, young men full of life, old people marked by suffering, gentle maidens whose hearts are brimming with recent sorrows, soldiers, once struck by bronze spears, with weapons to which blood still clings. All crowd together in great numbers around the sacrificial pit, with a chilling murmur. Yet, sword in hand, I do not allow the lifeless dead to approach the blood until I have consulted Teiresias .”

Pagan antiquity was indeed convinced that spirits, even out-of-body experiences of the living, are terrorized if threatened with a ritual sword.

Let me drink this blood .

Finally, the soul of the seer Teiresias reveals itself, recognizes Odysseus , and says: “Son of Laërtes, cunning Odysseus, with what intention do you leave the light of the sun to visit the dead and their lamentable dwelling? But in the meantime: withdraw from the pit of sacrifice, turn away your cutting sword, let me drink this blood, and I will tell you ‘truths’”.

Our contemporary spiritualists also summon the dead. However, they do not always observe the extremely precise magical precautions. It seems highly unlikely that Odysseus was unaware of these laws for contacting the dead. Such precautions have only one purpose: to preserve the life force of both those summoned and, above all, that of the one doing the summoning. If this is not respected, the consequence is that sooner or later one becomes exhausted and experiences all kinds of misfortunes. Archaic cultures possess a genuine knowledge regarding occult phenomena.

Odysseus sees the phantom (the manifestation of the soul) of his mother wandering. This 'wandering' already points to a lack of life force. A narrowing of consciousness, for example, is the result. "Teach me," he asks the seer Teiresias , "how she can recognize me." The seer answers with the great axiom of consulting the dead: "those among the dead whom you allow to drink of this blood will tell you true things. Those whom you repel will immediately flee."

Odysseus continues: "The shades of the dead gathered around me. Elpenor (note: a companion of Odysseus who had recently died in battle) was the first to appear. He had not yet been buried in the earth. Tears welled up in my eyes when I saw him. "Elpenor," I cried, my heart full of pity, "how did you get here into the realm of darkness?" Sobbing, he spoke: "It was my bad omen, it was the wine that proved fatal to me... my soul fled instantly to 'Hades' (note: the Greek term for the underworld). Do not forget me, do not leave me unmourned. And unburied..."

Odysseus continues: "I now sat motionless, waiting until my mother (note: she died during his years of wandering and is also in the underworld) drank of the black blood. Immediately she recognized me and said: 'You are still alive, child; how did you end up here, in this region of darkness and mists? This is no place for people who are still alive.'" Odysseus then asks his mother if his wife Penelope has remained faithful to him after 20 years of absence, which she confirms.

So much for this excerpt. It should be clear that Odysseus was a mantic seer, something that was required of a king in his time. In this way, he could guard his people against impending dangers. We still find such a sacred conception of kingship in a few places in the world today. The Westerner who sets aside or denies this sacredness closes himself off from the meaning of the customs of such peoples, so that much of their culture will strike him as completely nonsensical. We stated it earlier: whoever wishes to understand the religious person must not share his own (nominalist?) axiomatics, but rather the presuppositions (2.3.) of the religious person and empathize (2.2.) with his views.

Dante 's 'Divina Commedia'

Dante A. Lighieri (1265/1321), the great Italian poet , also visits an underworld in his ' *Divina Commedia* ⁴⁷ or 'Divine Comedy' (1307/1321), followed by a mountain of purgatory and finally a kind of paradise "in a hundred cantos". With this, he summarizes the prevailing ideas of scholastic

philosophy in a poem. As is well known, this philosophy upholds the Biblical view that reality is divided into nature, extra-nature, and supernature.

Dante 's guide on his visit to Hell and Purgatory is the long-deceased Roman poet Virgil (70-19), author of the *Aeneid*. This epic poem describes the deeds of Aeneas, a hero of the Trojan War. In the sixth canto of this epic, Aeneas also descends to the underworld and asks the ghost of his father to predict his future.

It was Dante 's great youthful love, Beatrice, who urged him to write his *Divina Commedia* . Beatrice had died at a young age. Dante foresaw her premature death in a vision. In his poetic work, she accompanies him as a deceased person into the other world. Let us quote from his famous ' *Canto 7*', his seventh canto .

“Oh, because I felt my heart break at that sight, I said: ‘Oh Master, explain to me what kind of people these are, and tell me whether these souls here to our left, whose heads are shaven, all belonged to the clergy.’ Virgil answered: ‘They are all people who were so blinded during their earthly lives that they did not know how to exercise moderation in their handling of their wealth. These shadows here, whose heads are not covered with hair, were clerics and popes and cardinals, in whom greed went beyond all bounds.’ And as I watched intently, I saw there in that pool people smeared with mud, who were completely naked and whose faces were contorted by rage. They battered at one another, not only with fists but also with heads and chests and feet, tearing each other’s skin to shreds with their teeth, moreover.”

Virgil, the good master, spoke: “My son, now you see the souls of those who allowed themselves to be overcome by their passion. And you must accept it from me as truth that there are still people underwater as well: you can see everywhere that they cause the surface to bubble with their sighs. Clinging to the mud, they say: ‘During the sweet life illuminated by sunlight, we were wretches, because we carried a smoldering fire within us; now we are consuming ourselves here in this black mire.’ They gurgle this mournful hymn out of their throats, for they cannot express themselves by means of perfect words.” Thus we walked between the dry rock face and the soggy marshland in a wide arc around the filthy pool. And as we did so, we kept our eyes incessantly fixed on those who were swallowing mud there.”

Dante says that the people in the underworld are 'naked', stripped of their life force and consequently lead an inhuman, indeed a zombie-like existence,

without uplifting energies. A similar nakedness was also experienced by the two women who had experienced a creepy out-of-body experience into a kind of underworld (6.1.2.) and subsequently confessed that, by “experiencing death already, they had stumbled upon that which they feared most”.

Let us recall that Van der Zeeuw states that an astral person can never ascend and perceive higher than the height he himself possesses. Lowering, however, is always possible because every human being has passed through this in the course of his long evolution. (3.3.4.).

The voice of H. Möller

We should also mention Möller's autobiography : *Einsamer Weg zu Gott*⁴⁸, (Lonely road to God). The writer claims to hear a voice of an impressive power from higher spheres, and she is at the same time a kind of medium for a soul from the underworld, a deceased woman who laments her miserable condition.

Frau Möller is a medium in a dual sense. On the one hand, like every human being on this earth, she dwells amidst the “earthly sphere,” and thus also amidst immature, evil beings who live purely demonically or satanically. On the other hand, she is also the medium of a high spirit from the sphere of the heavenly 'sons of God' or 'saints.' This guides her with an inner voice that she continues to perceive very clearly, even when she is in direct contact with souls that are very clouded and can normally mislead a medium. She is therefore a dual-valued medium.

First the voice from the darkness speaks, afterwards the higher power. “In my current situation, it remains a mystery to me why I have to keep listening through the crazy, exciting, narcissistic talk of other spirits. They strike me as incredibly pathetic: their talk is totally senseless. Give me advice as to the reason why I find myself here and cannot leave.”

To this comes the answer: “The High Power wishes to give the answer to your question; here is what He says: Without any strength, you feel yourself at the mercy of the chatter of wretched spirits, for you cannot escape their company. Reflect on the manner in which you lived on earth: with useless and senseless talk to pass the time, you have squandered your precious earthly life. For you found no time to ponder truly weighty questions. You spent your life completely embedded in the banal thought processes of the wretched, lazy man. Admittedly, you did not neglect your earthly duties—for you cared for the people entrusted to you—but the orderly, strengthening,

prayer life leading up to God was lacking. The result: in your current situation, you lack the world of lofty ideas. You have rejected the method of forming the soul; precisely for that reason, you now endure here the soul-killing, empty, confused talk.”

Note: “You are missing the world of lofty ideas,” the woman is told. It reminds us once again of Plato's theory of Forms. According to the heavenly voice, it is likewise intended that man make time to contemplate weighty questions about life and to cultivate a prayer life that leads upward. Apparently, precious earthly life is not meant to be allowed to pass by uselessly and senselessly. For the person who sets casual pleasure as the highest goal in life, such a judgment can indeed come across as harsh.

Cause and effect

J. Grant , **Winged Pharaoh** ⁴⁹, also describes a journey into the underworld. Because she establishes a causal link between the—in this case criminal—behavior of some people on earth and their subsequent stay in the underworld, we will return to this in the chapter dealing “causes and effects” (12). G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time** ⁵⁰, also states that he possesses the ability to step out into lower 'spheres' to attempt to assist people in their distress there. However, this concerns people who have not yet died and who are given the opportunity, through such an intervention, to reorient themselves, to 'convert'. Van der Zeeuw's view may once again illustrate that man, as long as he is incarnated, remains a citizen of two worlds.

The whole theme of 'out-of-body experiences' also raises the question of the reality value of the so-called 'descent into hell'. Nevertheless, a number of compelling testimonies can be found here as well. Moreover, they do justice to what the long tradition has always asserted on this subject. Furthermore, they are an integral part of many dynamically conceived religions. Many counsels and initiations take place thanks to contact with 'higher' beings, gods, ancestral souls, who reside in the extra- or supernatural realm. We bring this theme up again when discussing the 'supernatural' (13).

6.4. Mediators

Intermediate beings

What we see and touch “in this world” is merely the 'foreground'. Without any insight into its background, this world risks being interpreted as meaningless, or at least opaque and particularly superficial. That is one of

the reasons why mantically gifted mediators can be of some importance: after all, through an extra- or supernatural disposition and gift, they are more at home in that 'background'.

Santeria has the “mother of the gods” (3.3.1.) who attempts to mediate between the gods and the mediums. The Fang had their ngil (3.3.3.) as an intermediary between evil spirits and the members of the tribe. At the initiation of the Indian (3.3.4.) and of “the man in whose heart it is night” (3.3.5.), the guardian spirits announced themselves as mediators. They can also be priests, prophets, seers, and sages. They reveal, wholly or partially, what is hidden and mysterious to the ordinary person.

Thus, in the Bible, the Old Testament, the prophets are important intermediaries between God and people. In the New Testament, Jesus is the great mediator. But at the same time, God's mystery is revealed through intermediaries, mysterious beings who are “the messengers of God.”

The Book of *Job*, 4:17/18 warns against the lack of ethics of a number of intermediate beings: “Even in his 'servants' God places no trust. He catches his 'angels' in deviation.” The term 'servants' here stands for 'angels'. The argument is “a fortiori”: God’s angels, so 'close' to God, are already subject to deviations. How much more so than ordinary humans. This text teaches us not to be naive regarding 'angels'. Only God is infallible. All created beings are not, or not to that extent. Even if they are 'higher' or “closer to God”.

Such a revelation of what is hidden is called an 'apocalypse' in the Bible (1.1.). Thus the last book of the Bible is also called the 'Apocalypse', precisely because much is revealed in it about the end times.

Revealing what is hidden, however, entails great dangers for the one who 'reveals' and is intended only for persons who can handle the occult repercussions of such a revelation. Evil does not like having its own actions brought to light and thereby being more easily invalidated. Hence, it is not for everyone. Hence, also, the need for qualified and capable intermediaries. Throughout history, these intermediaries have held 'apocalypticism' in their hands, aware of the fact that it can ultimately be very dangerous for the unprepared person. In that context, many cultures know the term 'taboo'. We will return to this later (12.1.2.).

The integralist tendency

This particularly emphasizes the role of mediators between God and the

great mass of people. All truth, all authority, all interpretation comes from God, and this almost exclusively through mediators. Let us note the term “almost exclusively,” which emphasizes the exclusive character. These intermediaries are not so much founders of religions, prophets, or mystics, but rather the official mediators (Pope, bishops, priests). The rest of humanity, in a sense, has no direct contact with God. They 'must' obey the mediators; indeed, they must be forced to obey if necessary, and this by all means, religious and secular. Hence the centuries-long appeal to the so-called “secular arm” to bring large masses of people to obedience. Tradition, authority, dogma, and asceticism are taken up with particular strictness. A well-known harshness characterizes the integrist, which, incidentally, is found in all churches and religions. Many an outsider confuses such an integrist form of 'religion' with what religion truly ought to be. We wrote this earlier (1.4.1.): Religions must prove their worth, not by imposing their authority. That time is definitely over. Appealing to blind faith and blind trust is—like playing Russian roulette—asking for trouble. Peirce would certainly speak here of the 'authority method' (2.3.): a problem is responded to exclusively with a solution imposed by some authority or other. Ecclesiastical or political systems thus maintain an 'orthodoxy', a orthodoxy. In a world of voiceless and illiterate people, some appeal to authority could still be justified. Whoever wishes to speak authoritatively in our time must acquire authority, not authoritatively, but through “external durability”.

Civil servants

It should also be mentioned that many ministers of a religion not conceived dynamically very rarely possess paranormal gifts. Their training is primarily intellectual. They are civil servants, so to speak. They would be highly surprised if one approached them with a life problem and requested a paranormal solution.

D. Fortune , **Psychic Self-Defense* ⁵¹*, writes about this: “ The average clergyman is not very skilled in the technique of occultism and therefore understands little or nothing of his own religious practices. It therefore remains an open question for each individual clergyman as to which influences he brings to the altar and which forces, conversely, he brings back home. Someone whose consciousness has been exalted by religious rites, and who does not know how to reseal his aura to return to a normal state of consciousness, is exposed to a psychic (note: understand 'occult') invasion”.

The predominantly intellectual training of the average cleric, for example, contrasts sharply with the training of a shaman, marabout, medicine man,

sorcerer, or lama, where paranormal gifts are indeed required and developed, and where, in that magical realm, one attempts to achieve a concrete solution to a concrete life problem. We saw this, among others, in the Macumba and Santeria, where people are magically active to find a solution to the daily problems of the people.

Alexandra David-Neel , in **Magic and Mystery⁵² in Tibet**, speaks of her training to become a lama not so much of an intellectual study, but rather of an important occult initiation. “ Among the Tibetans, these initiations do not consist of the imparting of a doctrine or a secret, but of a transfer of an ability or psychic (note: 'occult') power, which enables the disciple to perform the special act for which he receives the initiation. The Tibetan expression “angkoer dei”, which we translate here as 'initiation', literally means “transferring power”. So much for Mrs. David-Neel . One notices that her description aligns very well with our theme of “the sacred” because it also concerns an increased charged energy.

The manner in which 'officials' fulfill their religious function, for example, also contrasts sharply with the conduct of Jesus . He laid hands on and healed the sick. Thus in *Luke 8:43/48* , where Jesus healed the woman suffering from a flow of blood. The same applies to His other miracles. The apostles, too, laid hands on and healed the sick. In *Jeremiah 18:18*, those who mediate between the whole people and God are called “priest, wise man, prophet,” and in *Matthew 23:34* , they are called “prophets, wise men, and scribes.”

Shamanism

A shaman is a kind of mediator between this world and the spirit world, with the aim of solving a number of practical life problems through this channel. As a result, he sometimes lives on the fringes of society. He attempts to rid people of their possessions by descending to the low level of the spirits causing these possessions. He tries to restore that disorder by 'converting' those spirits—albeit at their level—and bringing them into order. Shamanism originates in Siberia, among the Evenk, a tribe of hunters and reindeer herders (including the Samoyeds, Tungus, and Lapps...), and it can be found throughout almost the entire world: in Central Asia, Northern Europe, North and South America (among Native Americans), Korea, and among archaic tribes in Indonesia and Oceania. It is a phenomenon that is spread across the globe and, moreover, manifests itself in all ages. Shamanism coexists with all kinds of religions.

Manticism and magic

Gary Doore , in **La voie des chamans* ^{53*} (The Way of the Shamans), states that the term 'shaman or shamaness' primarily refers to the magicians and magicines among the indigenous people of Siberia and Mongolia. However, in a broader sense, it is used to designate anyone capable of manticism and magic thanks to a congenital or induced illness. New Age posits that anyone who allows themselves to be inspired by spirits is a 'shaman' or 'shamaness'. P. Vitebski , in **Les chamanes, Le grand voyage de l'âme**, also states this . ⁵⁴(Shamans, the great soul journey). The subtitle says a lot, because a true shaman performs cosmic out-of-body experiences, journeys into the underworld or into the celestial realms. The shaman also works with magical energies, enters a state of ecstasy, and causes healings. He possesses part of his magical power himself, but also receives it from spirits with whom he is in contact. This was shown to us by the life dream of a young Native American (3.3.4.) and the dream of Black Elk (6.3.). The shaman is capable of manipulating the sacred.

Let us read Bertrand Hell , **Possession et shamanisme** ⁵⁵(Possession and Shamanism). Hell is a professor of ethnology. He delved into shamanism and possession cults and sees two extremes within them. On one side is the shaman, who actively enters into contact with the spirits and controls them to a strong degree. On the other side, we find the possessed person, who is rather a passive and will-less victim of the spirits that control him. Between these two extremes, we find all gradations from purely active to purely passive. Hell describes many rituals that bear witness to capabilities beyond human capabilities. People sometimes speak of 'divine' interventions. Let us understand this 'divine' as 'superhuman,' for in the Christian interpretation, an immense difference remains between the level of these 'gods' and the Biblical Yahweh .

A terrible initiation

In essence, the calling to be a shaman comes down to this: in an altered state of consciousness, the shaman candidate is called by the spirits; he experiences an initiation during which he sometimes endures terrible pain for days. For instance, he says that he feels his body being cut into pieces, boiled, and eaten by spirits. Afterwards, if he survives his initiation physically and psychologically, his body is healed anew and the shaman feels reborn, but endowed with more than ordinary energies and supported by the spirits who, according to his paranormal experiences, ate his flesh. With their help, he can now solve many people's practical problems.

Due to the fact that he has endured such suffering and emerged from it much stronger afterwards, he has, in a sense, become immune to it. Otherwise, he does not survive it or is left with a form of insanity. Thus, if he has 'conquered', he is capable of experiencing the suffering of others and helping them, together with his spirits, to regain their health. It is a process of repeating it to magically master it.

The shaman or shamaness is thus a 'channel,' a medium for his or her spirits. Whereas non-initiates sometimes do not, sometimes do, survive the harsh initiation but with great psychic and physical damage, the shaman radically controls the incorporated spirits.

During ecstasy, the shaman's out-of-body soul travels into the underworld or into the heavenly realms (ascent to hell and heaven) to heal a sick person, for example. Such impressive magical feats were established by absolutely reliable eyewitnesses. Among them was Knud Rasmussen , an explorer born in Illulissat, Greenland, who led the fifth 'Thule Expedition' from Greenland through the ice fields of Canada from 1921 to 1924 to collect anthropological data on the Eskimos (the Inuit).

A sample

Let us read P. Chichmanov , *Dans la clinique de l'âme*⁵⁶ (In the Clinic of the Soul). The Tuva are a Turkic-speaking people, united in their own republic, located north of Mongolia in Southern Siberia. Their number is approximately 200,000. The capital is Kyzyl. The western Tuva are primarily cattle herders, the eastern ones primarily hunters. The report concerns the Tos Deer polyclinic in Kyzyl, which was able to come into existence because of the collapse of communism.

Let us convey something of the atmosphere prevailing in the clinic: "Heavy cloaks with long fringes and hairstyles of feathers adorn the 'doctors'. Here, both the soul and the body are cared for. Drums are played, and there is a scent of 'artichoke' (the gin of the taiga). In the simple waiting room, a few clients are watching TV . The bookkeeper sits at his table with the index cards of the various shamans in front of it . Every 'caretaker', every shaman has his own unique abilities. Some specialize in divination, others in the use of plants, and still others in funeral rituals."

Persecution

Professor Kenin-Lopsan , the specialist in Tuva shamanism, tells the story of his grandmother. Twice she fell victim to communism: five years of imprisonment in the 1930s, and fifteen years in a camp after the Second World War (1939/1945) because she had performed rituals on children. But she was revered and feared by her fellow prisoners, for her predictions, passed by word of mouth, made even the camp director tremble. She had predicted Stalin's disappearance. At a certain point, the camp doctor judged the camp director's daughter to be incurable and suspended her care. Whereupon the grandmother was secretly summoned to the sick girl. She succeeded in curing the child.

It is not surprising that Kenin-Lopsan himself became a shaman and historian of shamanism. He revived shamanism after spokesmen for communism had claimed that of the 700 shamans in 1931, practically none remained after the Second World War.

Ancient fortunes

For the shaman, this world and the 'other' world flow seamlessly into one another. Everyone can experience the influences—good and evil—exerted by the 'spirits' from that other world, in whatever way. But only the shaman is capable of making contact with those spirits in an orderly manner. Thus, he can 'travel' in that other world to negotiate with the spirits. If a 'soul' (understand: both soul and soul substance) has become lost in that other realm—which manifests itself through illness—the shaman can find it and bring it back. He can also guide the soul of a deceased person and convey their last will and testament. In addition to the contact shamans make with their spirits, clairvoyance is another characteristic. The shaman can know the past and reveal the future. He can influence weather conditions , 'make' rain, and calm storms. Behold, a sketch of the abilities that have given the shaman or shamaness a special social role since ancient times.

Conflict

In 1920, communism banned both shamanism and Buddhism by state decree. Both were cast in a diabolical light. Shamanism was “inexperienced and dangerous magic.” Shamans and shamanesses were imprisoned, locked up in a lunatic asylum, or simply executed. But communism was no match for their true calling. Kenin- Lopsan , for example, is allowed to engage with shamanism today in a 'scientific' manner. This enabled him to write down and preserve the 'algish,' the ritual poems used to summon spirits. He learned them from the last shamans and shamanesses who had escaped the communist 'purges.' Many who gave up shamanism under pressure now

continue the rites and healings. And this simply because it was impossible for the shamans to refuse their help to the sick or to fail to respect the last wishes of a dying person. A shaman ought to carry out his destiny, the mediation between people and spirits: his gift is first and foremost a duty. Whoever fails to answer such a calling from the spirits falls ill and may even die. Thus states Kenin-Lopsan.

Here we see a possible demonic and authoritarian trait of the spirits that inspire the Shaman. We will find this in all non-Biblical religions. And we add: also in Biblical religions in their abuses. Spirits, gods, or ancestral souls command a 'called one' and put him under such pressure that, if he refuses his calling, he can expect many problems, illness, and even death. As already stated, a certain demonism is not alien to the Bible either: let us refer to *Job 4:18* where we read that God does not even trust his own servants, and catches his angels in deviations.

Modernization

In 1992, Kenin-Lopsan Doungour founded the first shaman association. The cattle herders and hunters were uprooted from their nomadic existence and gathered in collective farms. Thus, real villages emerged, and the capital, Kyzyl, became a true city. In the time before the exterminations, the gifted lived in their tents amidst nature full of steppes, deserts, high plains, taiga, and hundreds of lakes. They were compensated with donations. By 1992, very few remained. The new shamans and shamanesses were often city dwellers. Most lived in Kyzyl. Whereas the traditionally gifted maintained individual practices, the new healers wished to act together, if only to thwart quacks. Thus, the associations were formed.

Nadia belongs to the Doungour Association and says: "Many patients donate gifts in kind to us, but we also need money to live. After the collapse of the USSR, there was chaos. We decided to set up a practice in the same house with a number of shamans and shamanesses. That did us good, both spiritually and materially. The expenses for the home, the costs for electricity, meals, and heating are now paid collectively. Traditional donations have been replaced by fixed rates."

Meanwhile, there are gifted individuals who wish to return to nature. Or there are those like Roza: she is dressed simply and regularly visits the large cities where she can be consulted.

The theme of 'mediators' or 'intermediaries' is actually a logical consequence of the previous theme, which dealt with out-of-body experiences. Mediators leave the body with the intention of mediating between our world and the world on the other side. Naturally, this presupposes that these intermediaries possess the necessary mantic and magical gifts to be able to mediate. That is far from self-evident in our culture. The situation is entirely different in those cultures where shamanism is still regularly practiced. There, the shaman is the intermediary par excellence for presenting many practical life problems to subtle beings and thus arriving at a solution.

6.5. Summary

This entire chapter dealt with the so-called 'out-of-body experience'. Quite a few people claimed, and still claim, that they can leave their biological body along with their consciousness. They then find themselves in a body of a much lighter and finer kind of matter. Some say that they experience an out-of-body experience spontaneously. A smaller number claim that they can induce it repeatedly, and indeed as a decision of free will.

Some experience an out-of-body experience in a life-threatening situation, during which they see their past life before them in an instant and down to the smallest details.

However, whoever is sufficiently gifted mantically can also perceive the death of a human being subtly. Indeed, the still-living person who has then left the body can perceive the dying process of a fellow human being even from the other world.

A number of mantically inclined people claim that they can help and guide the deceased who do not immediately find their way in the other world. Some even state that, in an out-of-body state, they undergo a descent into hell. In doing so, they claim to be able to contact deceased souls in the various layers of the underworld. Shamans go even further in this regard: they tell us that they not only perceive mantically but can also act magically as intermediaries. Through negotiations and sacrifices, they allegedly attempt to persuade 'gods' or other subtle beings—who hold people still living on earth captive from the underworld—to release their grip on those people. This could then, for example, result in a rise in water levels or the healing of those people. These are certainly remarkable testimonies that occur in almost all times and places.

It should be abundantly clear, however, that any nominalist axiomatics attributes not the slightest real value to any of this.

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