

Chapter 2: The Sacred and What Follows From It (72 p.).

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Chapter 2: The Sacred and What Follows From It

2.1. The sacred as the foundation of all existence

There is not much to say about the paranormal sanctity of a religion that views itself primarily as rationalistic and nominalistic. The 'sacred' possesses hardly any effective power there.

The situation is entirely different with a religion conceived dynamically . The previous chapter presented a number of samples in which the voice of Yahweh was heard or in which a reality was communicated to a privileged witness in striking dream images. For the religious person, the sacred reveals itself, as the foundation of the world and of life, in apocalypticism, in the experience of wondrous facts. Allowing this sacred to come into its own requires an empathetic attitude. Whoever closes themselves off to these experiences a priori , or whoever considers them impossible, does not do justice to what truly 'exists'. If a voice is heard or if a remarkable dream imposes itself, then that is not nothing. In logic, the basic axiom is known as: “what is, is”. This second 'is' is not a superfluous repetition, but emphasizes that one affirms what exists. The liar, among others, sins against this axiom. Of that which 'is', he says that it “is not”, or of that which “is not”, he says

that it 'is'. Likewise, he or she who reduces that which “actually manifests itself,” even if in a paranormal manner, to 'nothing,' does no justice to what truly 'is' and is therefore dishonest. If one wishes to understand the religious person, one must empathize with his situation, live a part of his life with him, and share his presuppositions, only to arrive at a value judgment afterwards. A judgment formed in advance, without wishing to take note of the objective facts, can be nothing other than a prejudice. We will dwell on this shortly (2.2.).

Delving deeper into axioms that may be different from our own makes us much more aware of our own starting points. We then compare them with those of our fellow man, refine them where necessary, and see the richness, and possibly the poverty, in them. Let us also briefly discuss these 'presuppositions' (2.3.).

Yahweh made Himself known through dreams, through His voice and His “inner word”. With Moses, however, He spoke “face to face”. This presupposes on the part of man a more than ordinary perceptive ability. It leads us to a form of paranormal experience, of 'manticism'. We ask ourselves whether, alongside the numerous abuses that exist with regard to clairvoyance, there is also room for a correct use of it (2.4.).

The Bible tells us that God allows an uninterrupted series of inspirations to come through “in the heart and in the kidneys” of man, in the conscious and the unconscious and subconscious parts of our deeper personality, of our soul. These are referred to by the term “inner word”. They are like “a fountain of living water welling up in our depths” (*John 4:13/14*). Let us examine those unconscious and subconscious layers in man (2.5.).

If allowing sacred matters to come into their own leads to wisdom, then a task follows from this: namely, engaging with that holiness, striving for wisdom. This also makes it clear that life is best not lived 'aimlessly' and 'without commitment', but that every human being has a whole evolution to go through. We will also dwell on this (2.6.).

And with this, the common thread of our next chapter is established. In what follows, we offer some introductory remarks regarding an empathetic attitude, our presuppositions, clairvoyance, the unconscious and the subconscious, and finally conclude with a number of reflections concerning our evolution.

2.2. An empathetic attitude

The axiomatics of the hunter

Anyone who goes hunting starts from the premise that game is present at the place where he is going to hunt. The focus of his attention, his 'intentionality' as it is called, is such that he looks for "all that is game". He owes his superiority over the non-hunter to this axiom. Like a detective, he sees much faster than the non-hunter which signs in nature are associated with animals or refer to them. Because he assumes that game is present, it is self-evident to him that he must keep quiet so as not to scare the animals away. For example, he will have to walk against the wind so as not to betray himself by his scent. Eventually, he will only be able to hunt specific animal species at dusk. If he does not do this, he will find little or no game. If he wants to be successful, he will have to become a hunter himself, a little. However, anyone who starts a priori from the premise that there is no game naturally feels no need to share the hunter's axioms, and runs the risk of finding no game at all.

Whoever empathizes with the hunter and yet finds no game will naturally have to adjust his axioms in accordance with reality. Only then, and not before, can he say that one should not hunt here, because there is hardly any, if any, to hunt.

The famous polar explorer, scientist, and diplomat Fridtjof Nansen (1861/1930), **Under the Eskimos**¹, recounts how Boas, an Eskimo, manages to catch a walrus after hours. These animals do not see particularly well, but they are familiar with the behavior of their own kind. Walruses lie resting on an ice floe for a while, after which they repeatedly raise their heads to check if they are being threatened. A grey mass that rests for a while and then also raises its head to look around is mistaken for a fellow walrus and is therefore harmless, even if that mass gradually approaches. An Eskimo who imitates this behavior—whoever empathizes with the mindset of a walrus by resting and occasionally raising their head—can approach the animal closely enough to subsequently kill it with a spear. The right mindset contributes to survival in these harsh regions, demonstrating that they can be—literally—of vital importance here.

The fellow man as "me one more time"

Understanding one's fellow man also presupposes an empathetic attitude. The German philosopher W. Dilthey (1833/1911), states in his **Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften**²(Introduction to the Humanities), that one can explain the data of natural science through experiment and mathematics, but

that the humanities, such as philosophy, psychology, art, and history, are not sufficiently accomplished by merely “a scientific explanation.” With regard to the humanities, he advocates a ‘*verstehende*’ —an empathetic and understanding method. This is based on direct human-to-human contact. ‘*Verstehen*’, ‘to understand’, ‘to comprehend’, is a re-enactment, a reliving, but in such a way that one becomes personally involved.

The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788/1860) already pointed out that we can interpret our fellow man—in Biblical terms, “the neighbor”—in two fundamentally different ways. For the cool, detached, and overly critical person, the neighbor is a “nicht- Ich ,” a “non-I,” but for the understanding person, that same neighbor is an “Ich -noch- einmal ,” an “I-once-again.” The same applies to the religious fellow man. J. Stalin (1878/1953) and his kindred spirits, or the Nazi who wanted to exterminate Judaism, saw in the fellow man a “nicht- Ich .”

When walking down a busy shopping street, one often pays more attention to what is displayed in the shop windows than to the people walking there. If, then, someone is suddenly hit by a car and left injured on the street, a number of bystanders become emotionally involved. They sympathize with the victim, share in his suffering, and want to support him in every possible way. From a previously “not-me,” the victim suddenly became an “me-again.”

Vladimir Soloviev (1853/1900), Russian Christian Orthodox philosopher, gives in his **La justification du bien* ^{3*} (The Justification of the Good) a beautiful example of an empathetic attitude, which he himself derives from Isaac the Syrian: “The heart of man overflows with love for the entire creation, for all that lives: for people, for birds, for animals, for the daimones . If the attentive gaze of man turns towards creation, then he is moved to tears and an all-encompassing and deeply felt tenderness takes possession of him. A sharp sympathy for the suffering of that creation penetrates deep into the heart of man. He cannot, therefore, see or bear that a creature has to endure the slightest evil, even the slightest sorrow. For that very reason he prays, moved to tears, even for the wordless beings, for the enemies of truth, for those who harm him. In prayer he asks that God sustain them and their grants forgiveness. He even prays for the crawling animals, with an all-encompassing tenderness.

Whoever does not share the life of their fellow man, to a certain, ‘understanding’ degree, whoever does not open themselves up to what is nowadays called “*participating*” The person who calls it “*observation*” escapes such a person that which only such empathy can give him. For the

experience of the sacred and the understanding of the religious person, this is no different.

The game of love

The fact that a scientific explanation is not always sufficient has already been discussed. For instance, a child can grow up convinced that his parents love him and that they love each other. Anyone who carries no love within themselves will also understand hardly anything of the lovemaking itself. Outwardly, a number of movements are displayed which, considered in isolation, say hardly anything about the inner feelings of both partners. That they are an expression of mutual affection, of a much more overwhelming and grander feeling that constitutes the essential core, escapes “cold scientific observation”. Anyone who is in love, who loves his or her partner with all their soul, knows that the feeling experienced in this regard rises miles above what is scientifically apparent.

Porn... or religion?

Let us illustrate the scope of a difference in axiomatics regarding the same given. In India, there are many believers who profess a form of Tantrism—an Eastern religion. In their temples, one finds, among other things, statues in which the female genitalia are displayed and worshipped. Copulating couples are also depicted, where even 'positions' involving animals are not shied away from.

Many Western Europeans, upon seeing such images, might initially dismiss it as banal pornography. And yet, the locals would be shocked by this particularly disapproving judgment. For them, it concerns the glorification of the sacred life force. And that is concentrated par excellence in the reproductive organs. To them, life and the creation of life is not merely a biological matter, but also and above all has to do with activating energies from 'the other world'. Thus, many house facades in Bhutan are adorned with images of the male genitalia. It is said that these contain life force, that they create life, and that they bring good fortune. For them, the good fortune that befalls a person in life indeed depends on the amount of life force he possesses. The depiction and glorification of such scenes is therefore a high religious, indeed sacred, matter. The local believers would be particularly indignant if we, Westerners, based on our preconceptions, were to label these expressions of their religion as banal pornography. One must indeed share their religious presuppositions—not our own—if one is to understand what they mean by them. If one fails to do so, one condemns oneself to an erroneous interpretation. Depending on the presuppositions with which one approaches

the images, whether as a rationalist tourist or as a local religious person, one is talking about pornography, or about... religion. The contrast could hardly be greater.

The little witnesses

Let us provide a biblical model. *Genesis 24:2*: “Abraham was at that time a very old man. To the oldest of his servants, the steward of his goods, he said: ‘Put your hand on my testicles (note: usually translated in Puritan terms: “under my hip”). I make you swear by Yahweh , the God of heaven and earth, that you will not choose a wife for my son Isaac from the girls of Canaan, the land in which I live.’ The servant placed his hand on the testicles of his master Abraham and swore the oath before him concerning that matter.” So much for the sacred text.

The testicles, the sex, or, as many an older commoner in Flanders says, “the gemacht, ” are, from a sacred perspective, so 'holy' and thus inviolable that they served as a kind of 'guarantee' at solemn, life-decisive moments. As here, where it concerns a future wife. It is a pity that the Puritan translation obscures the true and sacred scope of all that is sexuality. The inviolability of the oath is connected with the inviolability of all that is sexuality.

Pay close attention to the Biblical text: laying one's hand on the genitals amounts to swearing, not by the gods of the cosmos or by Satan , but by “the God of heaven and earth”. In other words: in that text, everything that constitutes sexual life, including the magical aspect—we will return to this in detail later—is not yet 'devilish'.

G. Welter , *Les croyances primitives et leurs Survivances* ⁴(Primitive Beliefs and Their Survival) emphasizes that the testicles are called, in Old Latin, ' test i culi ', small witnesses. The word 'te stis ', in Latin, indeed means 'witness'. The testicles were regarded as such witnesses that they were simply called “witnesses-in-miniature”.

How to hang a dead person?

Let us illustrate the scope of a difference in presuppositions once again with the following event. Let us read F. Bellotti , **Congo prodigieux**.⁵ (Amazing Congo) The story takes place in the former Belgian Congo. A resident of Bakumu (Kasai) appears before a Belgian judge following a murder. Dead calm and proud of his killing, he is brought before the court and says: “I was acting in a state of legitimate self-defense.” The judge replies: “But according to witnesses, you started it first.” The accused argues: “But he had two spears

with him.” The same answer keeps recurring.

The judge ends this monotonous debate. Believing he is delivering a just verdict, he decides, through the interpreter and his Negro -African helpers: 'Hanging'. The interpreter translates. All present, the African judges, and even the accused agree, clearly nodding their heads. At the end, however, the interpreter asks the judge: “Everyone agrees. Your verdict is just. But how shall we hang a dead man?” The judge understands nothing. He postpones the verdict and hastily asks the governor for advice. The latter replies: “But surely that is clear! Approaching a Bakumu with two spears is saying to him: ‘I have come to kill you in a duel.’ The accused was therefore in the right. Acquit him.” Thus spoke the governor.

One sees the major difference between local jurisprudence and law based on the Belgian model. Depending on the legal code used, and the axiomatics expressed therein, the Bakuma is executed as guilty or acquitted as innocent.

Ancient Greek religion

Let us return to the empathetic attitude as it can be shown in religion. Th. Zielinsky , *La religion de la Grèce* In this rare and uncommonly fascinating work, **antique** ⁶(The Religion of Ancient Greece) wonders where the essence of Greek religion at the time of Homer (c. 800 BC) is to be found. His answer is short and simple: 'everywhere'. But according to him, this requires a profound empathetic attitude. The introduction to his book already emphasizes this: “A person who possesses no artistic sensibility cannot understand Greek artistic sensibility. The same applies to Greek religion. Whoever possesses no religious sensibility will not be able to grasp Greek religion. Religious sensibility is the magic wand that begins to vibrate when it comes into contact with the pure gold of popular belief and that remains impervious to lead or alloys. Whoever possesses it will save himself and find his way through the labyrinth of legends and ceremonies of Ancient Greece. Without religious sensibility, however, even the greatest scholar will get lost in it.”

Bantu philosophy

That such an empathetic attitude is a far from simple task is concluded by, among others, Father Placied Tempels in his book **Bantu Philosophy** ⁷. Tempels spent thirteen years in the Belgian Congo as a missionary. He writes: “We all, missionaries, judges, rulers, all those who are leaders of the Bantu, or ought to be, we had not penetrated to the 'soul' of the black man, at least not as far as we would have liked. Not even the specialists. Let this now be a

regrettable observation or a repentant confession of guilt. The fact remains that we have not understood the worldview of the Bantu and that we were therefore unable to present the blacks with digestible food for the soul or an understandable spiritual synthesis. Of all the peculiar customs, the sense and reason of which we understand neither, the Bantu say that they exist to obtain life force.” So much for Father Tempels.

Incidentally, in his 70-page book, the word 'life force' is mentioned 156 times, which demonstrates that it is a fundamental concept. With this, the entire cultural outlook of the Bantu clearly reflects a dynamic view of life.

Let us also quote the Cameroonian philosopher Martin Nkafu : “ What place does God occupy for the African? God is not called into question. The question is not whether God is present, but rather what He does. Faith is a necessity. You cannot get around that. The real question is how I come into contact with God. You will not encounter an African who wonders, in pain, whether God actually exists. That God exists is a truth that we cannot change. I cannot discuss it. In Africa, you will not find books on the question of whether God exists. For us, God is a matter of course. Atheism or religious indifference does not exist in Africa.”

Let us emphasize this: the question is not whether God is present, but rather what He does. That is clearly a dynamic view of religion. Western discussions usually do not concern what God does, but rather arguments for or against His existence.

To illustrate this religious attitude, we provide the translation of the old African folk song “ Nkosi, ” written in Xosa. “sikelele Afrika”, omitting the repetitions. The reader can compare its content and religious character with their own national anthem for themselves.

“Bless, Lord God, bless Africa. Let its glory reach to the heavens. Hear us in our prayers. Lord bless us. Lord bless Your children. Come Holy Spirit. God, we ask You, protect our people. Intervene and end all conflict. Protect us, protect Africa. Bless, Lord God, bless Africa.”

Half a century with the Eskimos

P. Freuchen , **My Life Among the Eskimos** ⁸, also states that a truly empathetic attitude is no easy task. Freuchen shared life with the Inuit —as they call themselves. He married an Eskimo woman and had two children with her. He concludes: “Although I myself have lived among the Eskimos for more

than half a century, I do not believe that I have fully understood them. Gradually I began to realize that there were numerous things I had misjudged in the beginning. And after having spent about ten to fifteen years with the Eskimos, I finally became aware that I still knew practically nothing about them. Their soul possessed depths that were virtually impossible for a white man to penetrate.”

P. Duchaussois , *In the Ice Fields of the Arctic Circle* ⁹, strikes a very different tone regarding the life of the Indians and Eskimos in the far north. As a missionary—his book dates from 1927—he writes: “Describing the various uses of their sorcery would take us too far. Let it suffice to say that they often result in enmity and revenge, and are also not infrequently the instrument of despicable passions. To destroy this kingdom of Satan and put the Kingdom of Jesus in its place is the goal.” So much for this quote.

One can certainly ask quite a few questions regarding such a detached attitude towards another culture. To this missionary, the Eskimos seem to be a “non-self” rather than an “I-again.” How to understand these fellow human beings? How can one establish a good understanding with them in this way and build upon—accept, purify, and elevate—what their culture and religion already offer? How to empathize with their presuppositions and customs if the predetermined goal is to “destroy this realm of Satan”? What arguments does the writer possess to label that other culture as “this realm of Satan”? And what a wealth of ethnological data must the detailed description “of the various uses of their sorcery” have left us?

This lack of empathy stands in stark contrast, for example, to the dedication of Jozef De Veuster (1840/1889), better known as Father Damien, our 'greatest' Belgian according to opinion polls. He took pity on the leprosy patients in Molokai . He shared their lives, their worries, and... their disease there. He died at the age of 49. His self-sacrifice still fascinates many people around the world. He was canonized by the Church in Rome in 2009.

Local religion as a lie?

H. Kluin , **Het geestesleven der natuurvölker* ^{10*}, also mentions the contemptuous attitude of some 'missionaries' towards the Torajas , a tribe on Celebes (Sulawesi , in Indonesia). He writes: “So it was, whenever missionaries wanted to demonstrate the futility of the pagan gods and spirits. We summoned all the gods of the Torajas and challenged them to punish us for preaching the living God , but the Torajas told us that those gods dared not harm us, but they did harm them. After all, those gods had nothing to do with

us. The truth of the gospel must convince the native through the divine power of truth itself. Then he also learns to recognize his own religion as a lie.”

For these missionaries, it was clear that the local religion contained no 'truth' and therefore could not represent a valid stage in their religious development. We will see further that serious objections can be raised against such a detached attitude. As will become clear later in this book, it is also not very wise, from a magical standpoint, to punish the gods of the Toraja people for them, the missionaries.

The Archbishop of Milan, Achile Ratti (1857/1939) , the later Pope Pius XI , founded the Ethnographic and Ethnological Museum in Rome in 1922. He was knowledgeable in religious studies and forbade missionaries from destroying idols. He also instructed the seminaries to teach religious studies and to show respect for other religions and their customs. On the occasion of the Vatican Mission Exhibition in 1922, during the International Week for Religious Ethnology, he said regarding the artworks of pagan religions: “They are human documents, which one must not allow to perish.” According to W. Schmidt , *Travaux, quite a few Catholics have faits et travaux à faire*¹¹ (Completed and yet to be performed work) did not always bear witness to such a broad view of other cultures and religions as Pope Pius XI demonstrated at the time.

No Inquisition

Let us immerse ourselves—at least for the time being—in that religious world and only examine afterwards what it might mean for us. Specifically: if I identify with the religious person, and start from where he starts, empathize with his worldview and his presuppositions, only then can I determine whether his religion is logically coherent and meaningful. Only then can I understand what he does and why he does it.

Afterwards, I may ask myself in what ways our two presuppositions might differ. This can bring the personal axioms I uphold regarding life and religion more clearly into view, and possibly supplement or improve them. If necessary, I can point out logical errors to the religious person.

But that is something entirely different from immediately calling for a crusade or an inquisition. A judgment passed by an outsider, without examining the data, or without placing the data in their proper framework or context, can actually be nothing other than a prejudice.

Once again: one does not allow what 'is' to be what it 'is'. One then says of what 'is' that it "is not". Such a method has nothing to do with proceeding logically and methodically, but degenerates into an ideology. One prioritizes one's own standards and sees only that part of reality that corresponds to those presuppositions. In this way, one distorts reality until it satisfies one's own presuppositions, instead of bringing one's own axiomatics into alignment with what truly 'is'.

What is, is.

Logic and religion intertwine much more closely than is commonly thought. As already stated, logic has as its basic axiom: "what is, is." In this context, the second term 'is' is not a needless repetition of the first 'is,' but affirms "what is." One allows things to come into their own. The liar does not do this at all, and does so against better judgment. Whoever adapts reality to their own presuppositions likewise violates this basic axiom: one does not allow what truly 'is' to be what it 'is.' One then becomes, to use the words of G.F. Hegel (1770/1831), the leading figure of German Idealism, 'unreal,' and from an ethical standpoint, one is, moreover, not honest.

Let us summarize what our empathetic attitude tells us. Anyone wishing to hunt game should empathize with the hunter's world. Anyone wishing to understand their fellow man must, to a certain extent, identify with his world of thought and feeling. This attitude goes much deeper than what a scientific explanation can teach us. This applies, among other things, to the love we show our fellow man, but also to the sensing of religious experiences and the understanding of religious practices.

That it is not always simple is told to us by, among others, Zielinsky regarding Greek religion and Pater Tempels in connection with Bantu culture. Whoever starts from one's own prejudices runs the risk of failing to do justice to things and not allowing them to be what they truly are. That is a form of dishonesty and a way of thinking that does not reach the reality of the religious data. That is, at least, the view of the person who attempts to immerse himself in religion in an honest and serious manner.

2.3. Preconditions

An ABC theory

In our considerations regarding "what religion is not" (1.2.), we noted that Freud , Marx , Leuba , Nietzsche, Comte, and their contemporaries, among others, explained religion based on their own presuppositions. Their lack of empathy left them no room to penetrate to the essence of religion, to the

'sacred'. In this sense, the religious person will say that these materialistic thinkers are 'unreal'.

A. Ellis and E. Sagarin , *Nymphomania , A Study of the Oversexed Woman*¹²(Nymphomania, A study of the oversexed woman) discusses nymphomania, a sexual deviation. In short, it comes down to this: “If a woman gets into bed with a different man every night, then she is 'satisfied'. Yet she remains 'unhappy'”. The ABC theory attempts to explain this phenomenon cognitively. Here, the letter A stands for the given, for example, a disappointing course of events in one's personal life, something that, as 'evil', gives rise to distress and suffering.

The letter B encompasses the personal-individual axioms or presuppositions of someone confronted with the given A. These axioms are then expressed, for example, in phrases such as: “I never have any luck in love anyway” or “One way or another, I'll survive that.” The letter C stands for the ultimate reaction to the negative given A. C thus shows the form of behavior that reveals both the distress to be processed and the individual axioms—call them 'principles' or 'mentality'.

The given 'A' could, for example, be a serious illness. 'B' represents the preconceived notions of the person experiencing the illness. This could include something such as: “I find this so terrible that I will actually never get over it,” or “I do view this as a serious difficulty with many unpleasant consequences, but I will certainly be able to process it.” 'C' is then the result: in the first case, a life that is 'marked' going forward; in the second case, a life that manages to process the illness or setback reasonably well, and indeed may emerge from it psychologically stronger and richer.

Schematically represented: “A is interpreted by someone in terms of B such that C follows”. One sees that Ellis and Sagarin attempt to uncover the cognitive process in order to find the 'rational' “in all that emotion” and to activate this therapeutically. It is precisely a task for psychologists to fathom the axiomatics (B) and the cause (A) through those externally observable behaviors (C).

The authors distinguish two main types in the interpretation of a person. First, the rather healthy interpretation. In response to a serious miscalculation (A), a person judges: “I will get over that” (B) and acts (C) as “someone with a lot of common sense”. Calm and decisive, and convinced that they will get over it. Secondly, there is the rather neurotic interpretation. As a

result of the same serious miscalculation (A), a person judges: “I will never get over that” (B) and becomes upset, overstrained, and possibly loses control (C). Unfortunately, our society has countless people with severe emotional problems, people who do not always follow a healthy line of thought. It is in point B that they harbor false axioms. It was not what they experienced that decided the outcome, but rather the attitude with which they approached the situation.

One sees the difference, psychologically, between common sense and neurosis or nervous disorder. According to the aforementioned psychiatrists, it is largely concealed within the processing subject. It manifests itself in the distinguishable judgment.

'Sentences'

Ellis and Sagarin speak of basic judgments that we call 'sentences'. They themselves present samples of such demeaning sentences:

1. One ought, in all possible respects, to be thoroughly capable, adapted, and above all successful in order to be able to characterize oneself as a “valuable human being”.
2. It is terrible and disastrous when things do not go as one would like.
3. The problems and disorders of fellow human beings throw you into complete confusion. That is unavoidable.
4. As soon as something appears dangerous, whether in appearance or in reality, one must become “terribly worried” about it and constantly think: “It could end badly”.
5. There is always exactly one good, right, and perfect solution to human problems. It is disastrous when this one perfect, ideal solution is not found.
6. It is easier to avoid certain life problems than to face them bravely.
7. Human happiness depends on elements outside of him or her. He or she has little or no power over that which causes worries and anxieties, obstacles and disappointments.

8. A person's past is decisive for his or her personal behavior. An event in that past that made a deep impression will continue to exert its influence in later life.

9. It is essential for an adult to enjoy the esteem and affection of practically every person of any significance in their surroundings.

10. One must always depend on someone. One needs someone with a strong personality to lean on.

11. Some people are bad, cunning, and mean. They therefore deserve to be severely punished for that baseness.

“Sentences! Sentences!” Sentences that surface from the deeper soul, from the unconscious or subconscious. It is observed that they are many sentences that amount to: “anything that is practically unachievable”. That unachievability provokes failed attempts that nail the impression deep into the soul that one is “born for misfortune and failure”.

What one “makes oneself believe”

and Sagerin observe such negative judgments at work in the depths of the souls of, among others, socially self-destructive nymphomaniac women. We say “at work,” because those phrases like “I am a failure ” or something of that nature—these basic phrases are always short—act like powerful energies that exert a destructive influence. Among other things, and above all, on the faculty of judgment. They occur with clockwork regularity in the minds of quite a few neurotic people and destroy 'positive thinking' there. The latter, positive thinking, entails imagining a favorable outcome to various life difficulties. Behold, how the neurotic person fails to do precisely that and “deludes himself,” as authors put it.

The cognitive bias is seen in, among other things, neurotic judgment. According to ABC theory, every person lives with mostly unconscious or semi-conscious 'prejudices'; these are judgments preceding conscious judgment and the behavior stemming from it. Such cognitive biases are easily made in 'existential' situations, in circumstances that affect us very personally and touch us in our souls. A severe miscalculation of something for which one has committed oneself 'total' easily triggers such a cognitive bias.

One need only read, for example, E. Kübler -Ross , **Lessons for the Living**¹³, in which the author recounts her experiences with terminally ill patients.

One can apply the ABC schema here. Suddenly, death seems near (A). The reaction to this (B) often follows a sequence that brings 'prejudices' to the surface. This can consist successively of denial ("that can't be!"), anger ("who or what would do such a thing to me?"), bargaining ("Oh Lord, please grant me a reprieve"), and despondency ("I am doomed"). Finally, in the best case (C), acceptance follows ("I am dying now like everyone else"). Visible and tangible behavior reflects these 'little phrases', as Ellis and Sagarin state. These little phrases are a kind of personal-intimate axioms that help determine healthy or neurotic judgment.

If one examines a number of theories at their psychological root, one encounters such 'little sentences'. The philosophy one chooses depends on what kind of person one is, for a philosophical system is not dead furniture that one can put on and take off, but something that lives in the depths of the soul : the presuppositions expressed in such 'little sentences'.

One can speak of religion in a completely analogous way. If we represent the religious data by the letter 'A', the one's own presuppositions—religious or nominalistic—with which one approaches the data by the letter 'B', and the result, the reaction to this—belief or disbelief—by the letter 'C', then we have applied the ABC theory to religious phenomena.

Four methods to make a conviction come true.

Personal prejudices, some authority, or a personal preference often cause the starting presuppositions not to lead to the perception of the given reality itself, and make our axioms unreal. Let us delve into the work of Ch . S. Peirce (1839/1914), American scientist and philosopher, **The Fixation of Belief**.¹⁴ (Acquiring beliefs). In this, he outlines four methods to make a belief come true.

1. Method of self-will (' Tenacity '). To a problem, a given fact combined with a question, the self-willed person responds exclusively with their own solution. Thus, for example, economic problems are solved solely by free trade, neglecting other solutions. In this way, G. Galileo (1564/1642), Italian physicist and defender of N. Copernicus 's heliocentric system, 'solves' the problem of tides and astrology simply by refusing any investigation into the matter : "It must not be true". Ch . Alain , *L'effet lunaire*¹⁵ (The Moon Effect) notes that a biographer reproaches Galileo that such a method is "just as bad as superstition".

Peirce cites as an example someone who was a fervent supporter of free trade. To maintain and protect his views, he read only texts pro-free trade.

Or taken from real life: “Just admit that you are a stubborn person,” someone reproaches another. “What do you base such a claim on?” asks the latter. “I don’t need to rely on anything. You have always been a stubborn person,” comes the reply. There is absolutely no reliance on data. What is supposed to pass for truth is reduced to the cherished, individual notion that is put forward axiomatically—and apparently very idiosyncratically, indeed stubbornly. Any clarifying conversation thus becomes simply impossible. It seems like a form of projection: one’s own character trait is projected onto the one closest to oneself.

But it also contains a kind of tragic irony. It is reminiscent of the Ukrainian author Nikolai Gogol (1809/1852). He described the daily life of people and their sometimes appalling flaws and sins. Their behavior sometimes struck him as more caricatural. With much humor, irony, and even sarcasm, Gogol looked on, laughing because a caricature makes one laugh, but also weeping, for such behavior does not reflect what a human being ought to be. High reality is painfully distorted into a low caricature. Gogol spoke of “the tragic laughter
16” .

2. Method of orthodoxy (' Authority ')

A problem is responded to exclusively with a solution imposed by some authority or other. Some ecclesiastical or political systems thus maintain an 'orthodoxy', a right-believingness, according to Peirce .

'Authority' can also be embodied in a single person. One can speak with authority about a field that one masters thoroughly. The authority by which one is heard then flows naturally from the expertise one possesses. This legitimate form of authority poses no problem. It is a different matter with the person who possesses no expertise and yet arbitrarily wishes to attribute authority to himself. According to Th. Adorno , **The Authoritarian* Personality*¹⁷ (The authoritarian personality), the authoritarian person overestimates himself all too easily. In a number of cases, he is characterized by simplistic and unnuanced black-and-white judgments. His prejudice clouds his judgment. The personality of the authoritarian person is, in many cases, disturbed.

Overvaluing oneself usually goes hand in hand with the contempt of one's fellow man. The other is then, with Schopenhauer, a “nicht- ich ” (2.2.),

possibly a madman, a bad person, or a ridiculous individual. The authoritarian person sees the other merely as an object and does not enter into personal affinity with him. The 'scientist' who tears down every religious belief and suppresses it with means of power is also authoritarian. But equally so is the 'believer' who dismisses every scientific or personal investigation—as 'dangerous'—and, if necessary, reinforces this with means of power, is authoritarian. The Inquisition, now so lamented by the Roman Catholic Church, was a form of authoritarian method. There is no worldview that is not susceptible to distorted valuation, discrimination, and the exercise of power; quite the contrary. Biblically speaking, that is 'this world'. This arrogant attitude is perhaps also 'the' sin par excellence.

Let us not confuse 'orthodox' with 'sincere'. Sincerity is a subjective quality by which one reveals what one has within; one honestly expresses what one thinks inwardly.

3. Method of Preference ('A Priori') One claims to uphold free discussion, but adheres to what applies “a priori,” what applies “preferably.” This, however, is done without testing it against reality outside the closed sphere of discussion. Nevertheless, in contrast to both previous methods of forming opinions, the opposing view is accepted. Thus, according to Peirce, the nominalistically minded person accepts only those philosophical constructions that appeal to the taste of nominalist reason.

4. 'Scientific' method ('Reality') A problem is responded to by testing it against reality. What is real ('real') for Peirce? That which continues to exist in a lasting manner entirely independent of our consciousness, and which cannot be influenced by our consciousness either. In this, he shows himself to be a follower of Plato's theory of forms (see further 5.1.2.) and of medieval scholasticism. He calls his method pragmatic, result-oriented. Anyone who tests the same reality will therefore always have to arrive at the same concept or form (see 5.1.2.). For this reason, Peirce lists the “external” as the main characteristic of scientificity. permanency”, external durability, independent of our opinion.

In so-called 'phenomenology', data are allowed to come into their own, independent of any prejudice or preconceived theory. For Peirce, this method is therefore designated as a first step to inventory and investigate data. Phenomenology aims to accurately represent what presents itself, and only insofar as it presents itself. Without any prejudice, without any theory, without subjective considerations. Only the given item itself counts. What 'is'

must be allowed to come into its own. Regarding this, once the given item has been correctly grasped, one can formulate theories, discuss them, and test these theories against the data. Ultimately, “in the long run”, objective reality then reveals itself.

The mirror man.

As Peirce put it, obstinacy (“I stick to that through thick and thin”), orthodoxy (“we have always been taught this way”), and preference (“I am willing to discuss that, but I will stick to my individual opinion”) are sometimes quite at work in academic circles. One can agree with Peirce here and note that in a number of religious circles, or in the life of the average person, this is actually no different. These three unreal attitudes persist until the fourth attitude, reality-faithful inquiry, ultimately refutes the other three.

In this latter method, opinion (and the associated presuppositions) do not depend on “one’s own will,” “what others predict,” or “one’s own preference,” but on the given reality itself, on what truly ‘is.’ To quote Parmenides of Elea , founder of the Eleatic school (in Southern Italy, 540-...): “they think according to reality itself.” In other words, the presuppositions are adapted to reality itself, not the other way around. Thus, they are constantly adjusted until they are in accordance as accurately as possible with “all that is.” The person who proceeds in this way is sometimes called “the mirror man.” He reflects the data in a correct and pure manner. Speaking from the ABC theory, we could say that his B is such that his C becomes an accurate representation of A.

Given the very human tendency to uphold the first three methods, this fourth method is difficult. Many people interpret in a willful, orthodox, or biased manner, without objectively grasping the meaning of what is given. They project their own and subjective interpretation onto things. In this latter case, there is no question of ‘ grasping meaning ,’ a grasping of the meaning, which is an objective event, but rather of constructing meaning, whereby subjective presuppositions distort reality. Not everyone interprets truly “objectively scientifically.”

That concludes a greatly abbreviated outline of the four methods for solving a problem.

Curious fact

Peirce does not dwell on the fact that every person, if he is not careful, exhibits each of the four forms of opinion. In that respect, we are all equal. We hold opinions in such a way that we neglect every other point of view, if we do

not already stubbornly— tenacity —exclude them. We share convictions with others who have authority in our eyes, and thus we are 'orthodox'— authority —with others. Incidentally: as St. Augustine (354/430), the great Church Father of Patristics, of early Christian philosophy, noted, we have never tested the lion's share of our convictions ourselves, yet we 'believe' in them nonetheless. We hold propositions because they suit our taste: some preference—a priori—is the real 'reason'. We hold opinions that we base on our spontaneous experiences, on our own methodical testing— reality . This quartet is found among both famous scientists and ordinary people.

Fierce resistance.

In this context, let us listen to D. Servan-Schreiber , a French physician and psychiatrist, Director of the Medical Department at the University of Pittsburgh , USA. His story illustrates, in a rather tragic way, the power of a stubborn axiomatics in the medical world. In his book *Guérir le stress, anxiety and depression without medication and psychoanalysis*¹⁸ (Curing stress, anxiety, and depression without medication or psychoanalysis) he writes: “When great advances have been made, before a theory can explain them, they have systematically encountered fierce resistance on the part of established science. One of the clearest examples of this is the history of Doctor Philippe Semmelweis . He was the Hungarian doctor who demonstrated the importance of combating contamination (the absence of bacteria) during childbirth, twenty years before Pasteur ’s work . In the maternity ward where the young Semmelweis was an assistant at the time, more than one in three women died of fever a few days after giving birth.

Semmelweis had the exceptional intuition to propose the following experiment: all the doctors at the hospital, who often performed dissections with their bare hands, were to wash their hands with lime water (calcium hydroxide) before touching the genitals of the expectant mother. He had the greatest difficulty getting this idea accepted. The results of his experiment were exceptional. In one month, the mortality rate dropped from one patient in three to one in twenty. The main consequence of this experiment by Semmelweis was... his dismissal. His colleagues, who found this hand-washing with lime water tedious, organized a mutiny and secured his dismissal. Because no good reason could be found for such results at the time, Semmelweis was ridiculed, despite his brilliant experiment. He died, almost mad, only a few years before Pasteur 's discoveries .

Servan- Schreiber also describes his first encounter with acupuncture during his student days in Dharamsala , India. Depression was treated there

in that way. He did not pursue it at the time, nor did his Western colleagues. In 1980, he was a spectator when a woman in Beijing underwent abdominal surgery to have a tumor removed, entirely without anesthesia, via acupuncture. During the operation, the woman was constantly in conversation with the surgeon. Neither Servan-Schreiber nor his academically trained colleagues pursued it. It was “ trop loin et trop “Too far and too esoteric ,” he writes. For the third time, he is confronted with acupuncture when, four weeks later, he meets a patient of his on the street—to whom he had prescribed heavy, long-lasting antidepressants —healthier than ever. After some hesitation, the woman tells him what she had done. She had not taken his medication but had gone to an acupuncturist . The acupuncturist had cured her of her depression in just four sessions. Now he finally agrees, and allows himself to be treated with acupuncture as well. He describes his surprise when the acupuncturist is able to tell him details about his medical condition. Something for which Western medicine requires very sophisticated and expensive equipment.

He writes : “you used electricity to make your own journey”. The acupuncturist explains: “Ce que vous sentez , c'est the chi qui se déplace , qui est " Attracted by the needle " ("what you feel is the chi (note: the subtle energy) moving, being attracted by the needle"). Apparently, illness and discomfort are seen here as the result of misoriented subtle energy. The therapy consists of returning this energy to its proper place via the needles. Once the subtle form is 'healthy' again, this has an impact on the physical body, and healing is the logical and necessary consequence.

More generally, the author wonders what purpose all his hard-won medical-scientific knowledge serves if he cannot help people with it, or not as well as, for example, that acupuncturist can. Furthermore, he deplores the attitude of many academically trained colleagues who pay too little attention to a great many traditional and sound medical practices.

I didn't want to see.

T. Hayden , *The Child qui ne parlait pas*¹⁹ (The Child Who Did Not Speak) gives a remarkable testimony of the way in which her own preconceptions initially prevented her from grasping a given fact with truth. She is a highly renowned child psychologist. She cares for Jade, a child with many emotional problems. Gradually, Jade tells Hayden her horrific secrets. Jade speaks, among other things, of Tashee , a little child who, as a child sacrifice, met a gruesome death and of which she, Jade, was a witness. In an after-school conversation, Jade said: “Ellie took a knife. She plunged it into Tashee ’s

throat . Blood splattered out. Ellie caught it in a saucer.” Hayden wondered if one could believe Jade? Had someone actually killed a child and drunk the blood? How could Jade know the taste of blood?

Others than Hayden prioritize Satanism, with pedophilia and child sacrifice. The author herself says: “I believe in ‘evil’ but not in ‘an entity’ (note: here Satan worshipped by Satanists). Oh! After all, I know too little about that.” As a result, Hayden largely sticks to what the 'established' psychologists and psychiatrists believe. A certain open-mindedness—so she says—is necessary to 'believe' in satanic practices. “If Hugh (note: an acquaintance familiar with occultism) had not discovered that specialized bookstore, I would never even have considered Satanism when Jade spoke to me about the cat (note: which was also 'sacrificed') and the blood. This was partly due to my ignorance of the subject. Furthermore, there was a dose of blindness within me. I was accustomed to interpreting all behavior in terms of psychology or psychiatry, excluding any other interpretation. Moreover, there was—without a doubt—a certain refusal within me. I did not want to see.” “I was still young and my career was fragile. It seemed dangerous to me to jeopardize my reputation as a specialist .” (Note: she did not want to “make a fool of herself” in her circles by also investigating alternative, occult hypotheses.)

“ Taking Jade’s stories seriously inevitably led to prioritizing ritual abuses *with * torture by a group. Moreover: over the last ten years (1981/1991), a significant number of children have recounted scenes that bear a striking resemblance to one another; often, the corpses of children are discovered.” Rarely has anyone in the scientific world been as “honestly confessing” as Hayden .

Anyone wishing to know more about such bloody child sacrifices should read, for example, D. Cellura 's * *Les cultes de l'enfer** ²⁰(The Cults of Hell). This book demonstrates that such sacrifices occur in our time as well, indeed even to an increasing extent. It provides a great deal of information about these horrific practices and leaves little to the imagination. Animal mutilations and human sacrifices are apparently more than media inventions or horror literature.

An anthropological misconception

Let us give another example of a 'scientific' observation that illustrates the lack of an empathetic attitude. Franz Boas (1858/1942) was a professor at Columbia University. In his book * *The Mind of Primitive Man* * (1911), he argued that sexual maturation with its pubertal crisis—as known in the

West—is not a biological necessity, but is culturally determined. It is not heredity that matters, but the environment. According to Boas , it can therefore be different in another society. Meanwhile, it is known that both heredity and environment exert an influence on human development. In 1925, he sent a student, Margaret Mead (1901/1978), to Samoa to study the course of adolescence there. Boas expected Mead to confirm his thesis.

Mead , who herself enjoyed a liberal upbringing as a child, was only twenty-four when she set foot in Pago Pago , the capital. She stayed in Samoa for nine months, lodged with an American family, and did not know the local language. She interviewed some sixty Samoan girls about the relationship between “parents and children,” “boys and girls,” and about the local upbringing system. She concluded that there was no adolescent crisis in Samoa because upbringing there differed greatly from that known in the West. She stated that the people there had “no deep bonds with just one person.” According to her, genuine, sincere appreciation for both parents and sexual partners was a rarity. Relationships between partners, if they existed at all, were 'casual' and “free love” was generally accepted. Mead described life there as “a light and pleasant dance.” The girls slept with such a large number of boys that “deep commitment” to just one boy was rare. The emphasis lay—Mead believed —on the virtuosity in the erotic techniques. According to her, aggression, rivalry, and the drive to perform were non-existent.

Her conclusion: “Samoa is a place where no one is under pressure to get the best result out of life.” Her account appeared in book form: * *The Coming of Age in Samoa** ²¹. The reception was overwhelmingly favorable. Boas saw his presuppositions confirmed in this: a return to nature and to free love. It was our Western culture itself that, by its very nature, provoked the puberty crisis. Moral taboos suddenly seemed superfluous. The British philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell (1872/1970), an undisputed proponent of free love, also welcomed Mead 's work with great enthusiasm.

Derek Freeman (1916/2001), New Zealand anthropologist, published his *Margaret Mead in 1983. and Samoa*²² (*The Making and the Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*), (Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Origin and Destruction of an Anthropological Myth). The subtitle reveals the thesis, or rather the contradiction. For The New York Times, among others, Freeman formulated it as follows: “ Mead ’s theses are accepted by the established intellectual-artistic vanguard. All textbooks and encyclopedias reflect this. Those theses are untrue. The reality in Samoa is fundamentally different.” Freeman lived in Western Samoa and learned the language of the inhabitants

thoroughly. He even participated in meetings of a group of tribal chiefs. He states that the “free love” Mead spoke of is non-existent there. For instance, virginity is a high value in the indigenous mentality. Competition, including in the erotic realm, is just as abundant there as in a Western culture. Yes, the urge to attack is very strong. Murder occurs frequently, and Samoa ranks at the top in the percentage of rapes.

Mead described from the perspective of her prejudices, her “liberal upbringing,” and the expectations of her professor and her social circle. For example, she neglected the police records of her time, which she could have consulted thoroughly. She paid no attention to “archaic civility.” The local population does not so much give the objective truth in response, but rather those answers that appeal most to the Western interlocutor. In other words: the Samoan girls Mead spoke with wanted to “appear civil.”

Conclusion: the presuppositions on which she conducted her research meant that she had no factual contact with the data. As a result, she did not come to know the reality on Samoa and saw her prejudices confirmed. Mead published extensively on her free perspective. She died as an honored cultural anthropologist. Freeman published his book five years after her death.

For many years after the publication of Freeman’s book, a professor at a Flemish university continued to teach Mead’s view. When a student drew his attention to Freeman’s book, the professor replied: “I know that, but what Mead has to say is so important that I must discuss her view.” One might well wonder how honest and how scientific such an answer is.

Our reality is limited.

J. Sterley, a specialist in ethnomedicine and author of the book *Kumo, Hexer and Hexen in Neu-Guinea* ²³(*Kumo, Witches in New Guinea*) puts it this way: “Our presuppositions surround us like a shield behind which we perceive only what we can explain with our ‘vernunft’, with our modern, Western reason.” In other words, our axioms, our presuppositions of what is ‘real’ to us, limit our perception to what these axioms, these presuppositions, can handle. The rest falls outside of it.

Put another way: there is nothing as misleading as a prejudice, for one is all too easily inclined to adjust the facts to it, whereas it should be the other way around: adjusting the opinion to the facts. But then it is no longer a ‘prejudice’, but rather a well-founded ‘judgment’. Sterley spent five years investigating a part of New Guinea for plants *and* witchcraft. His conclusion:

“ By now I know that ‘our reality’ is a limited area and that we have no awareness of what takes place beyond our limitations.” Incidentally, this statement characterizes his entire book.

A witticism.

That scientific research is not always based on external durability, but also has to contend with idiosyncratic, orthodox, and biased opinions, is evident, for example, from the witticism in the preface to the book * *Varieties of Religious Experience* ^{24*} by the renowned religious psychologist and writer W. James (1842/1910). He says: “ Every new doctrine goes through three phases. 1. One attacks it by dismissing it as absurd. 2. Then one accepts it as true, but without much significance. 3. Finally, one acknowledges its true meaning and the opponents claim to have discovered it .” Although a witticism, there is nevertheless a grain of truth in it. Anyone who delves into the lives of famous scientists is soon surprised by the profound incomprehension they encountered in their scientific work and often still encounter (see under 4.1.).

Let us summarize this section on our preconceptions. The axioms with which we attempt to approach reality are often intertwined with a number of sometimes powerful prejudices, hidden deep within our psyche. Ellis and Sagerin schematized the course of our lives into a kind of ABC theory. And Peirce described four methods for realizing a conviction. When filled into the ABC scheme, it always involves four forms that can be placed under the 'B'. Our preconceptions can indeed mislead us into an idiosyncratic, an orthodox, or a biased approach. In doing so, they fail to do justice to the factual data, to what truly 'is'. Such prejudices dare to lead a particularly tenacious life. This is illustrated, among other things, by the story of Dr. Semmelweis and the resistance Servan-Schreiber himself encountered when taking acupuncture seriously. The testimonies of Hayden , Freeman, and Sterley also confirm the power of our preconceptions. They can be a difficult-to-overcome obstacle in perceiving reality. Their far-reaching influence is immediately obvious.

As a provisional definition of religion, we stated, according to the *Book of Wisdom* 6 : “That you may know wisdom and avoid errors.” A first step in this regard could be becoming aware of our hidden biases. They hinder or cloud clear and rigorous logical thinking.

2.4. Clairvoyance

Coming to know the sacred requires an empathetic attitude and realistic presuppositions. Many religious experiences involve a certain degree of mantic experience. We wish to discuss this further here.

The conscience

In the chapter on the religious person, Jesus' clairvoyance was discussed (1.4.4.). Prophets, too, heard a voice and had 'dream visions' in which Yahweh made his message known through an angel. Moses (*Numbers 11:29*) already sighed in his time: "If only everyone could be a prophet (note: a seer at that high level)." Understand: if only everyone could hear the voice of God , then one could proceed based on one's own religious experiences and be convinced of their validity.

Jesus, too, says that He continually hears the inner voice of His Father and always follows it. According to experts, for the ordinary person, this voice is first and foremost the voice of conscience. Everyone possesses it. This 'guidance' can intensify and take the form of counsel which, some say, is clearly audible internally. One can heed this, or one can ignore it and systematically repress or suppress it. The thinker Socrates claimed to possess an inner voice that never urged him to do anything, but did warn him of danger. Similarly, an immoral person experiences the voice of conscience but ignores or represses it. He will anxiously guard against his bad deeds coming to light, which demonstrates that he knows very well that he is making mistakes. Likewise, the liar knows the truth but does not want to acknowledge it.

The dynamicist view of religion takes these inspirations seriously. The nominalist or rationalist view of religion has a much harder time with anything that seems even remotely paranormal. Experience shows that there are indeed many abuses in this area as well, and that overly gullible people are considerably exploited. Let us delve deeper into this mantic capacity.

Religious seership

An extremely nominalist viewpoint is that all manticism must be relegated to the realm of fables. That is an unproven premise. Alongside the great deal of chaff, there is quite certainly some wheat to be found. It is this latter aspect that we wish to discuss. Let us recall that Jesus remained exceptionally humble regarding His clairvoyance and that He repeatedly forbade people from saying who He really was. This stands in stark contrast to the behavior of quite a few of our mantic —whether or not—gifted contemporaries who all too loudly claim to possess such gifts themselves. G. Van der Zeeuw , **Clairvoyance in Space and Time* ^{25*}, states that the number of true mediums in a country can sometimes be counted on the fingers of one hand. Let us keep this alarmingly small number in mind.

Max Heindel (1865/1919), the founder of the Rosicrucian Fellowship , a secret society, writes in his book *The Cosmogony of the Rosicrucians*²⁶ “No properly developed seer will ever exercise this ability for money or equivalent rewards; nor will he use it to satisfy curiosity, but only to help mankind.”

L. Bernard d'Ignis , *Traité pratique du désenvoûtement et du contre-envoûtement* ²⁷(Practical treatise on neutralizing a lot and casting a counter-lot) says regarding this: At the beginning of the 20th century , Jules Boucher wrote in his *Manuel de magie pratique* (Manual for Practical Magic): “Magic has always been a domain heavily exploited by quacks. In Paris, for every one valid seer, there are ten who are nothing but exploiters .” To which d'Ignis responds that the situation remains the same today. Moreover: we are worse off, because the media—television, radio, press—exacerbate the situation. It seems that true occultists are becoming rarer. The elders cannot find young people to continue “the tradition.” Practical 'knowledge,' true and conscientious occult knowledge, is being lost.”

JF Chandu , **Practical Pendulum Book* ^{28*}, states that as many as 9 out of 10 people can practice dowsing themselves, which is also a paranormal method of gathering information.

In R. Mlaker , *Geistiges In the case of pendulum dowsing* ²⁹(spiritual dowsing), this ratio is only one in a thousand. It should be clear that both authors apply different standards. Mlaker notes: “Man’s pendulum ability is connected with his spiritual development and is a gift from God . The higher a person stands, the higher the degree of his pendulum ability. A forced development of the pendulum ability is not possible.” Just as in the Bible serious clairvoyance is linked to God, so too does Mlaker seem , as one of the few, to situate the ability to dowse within a Biblical framework.

Regarding the moral and spiritual height desired and required to 'see' and to be able to bear this 'seeing', G. Weigl says in ** Die entschleierte Aura* ^{30*} (The Unlocked Aura): “We find seers from the earliest times, but not all of them stood at the same spiritual height. What was formerly called 'hell-seeing' usually means only astral seeing and not the seeing of spiritual connections in the world of light.”

The Bible itself gives us a splendid example of this seership , whether or not supported by Yahweh 's. Inspiring life force. And we would like to mention that below.

A lying spirit

Let's summarize 1 *Kings* 22 : One day, the prince of Judah comes to join Israel in a war against the prince of Aram. However, as was very customary then, and still is today, though cautiously withheld from public view, one first consults the seers— in this case, the prophets. In the biblical narrative, these can be subdivided into only one who is friends with God, the prophet Mikeas , and all the others , about four hundred of them, who are not and who can only 'see' when they enter a trance . The four hundred predict victory for the prince of Israel. Mikeas, however, does not. He responds in two stages. First, he ridicules the prince of Israel and says: “Go up; you will surely succeed in your plan.” The prince immediately understands the boastfulness and demands the real truth.

Mikeas becomes serious: “I saw all Israel scattered over the mountains like sheep without a shepherd, and Yahweh spoke: ‘They have no master; let them return home peacefully.’ I saw Yahweh on His throne. He asked: ‘Who will persuade the prince of Israel to go up to Ramah to perish there?’ Thereupon a spirit stepped forward. He stood before Yahweh and said: ‘I will persuade him. I will become a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.’ Thereupon Yahweh said : ‘Go, and you shall succeed.’ Now, Yahweh has now put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets, because Yahweh has decreed your destruction .” Thus the words of the prophet Mikeas to the prince who asked for truth and heard it in a harsh manner.

Mikeas receives a blow to the face from the prince. The prince cries out: “How could the Spirit of Yahweh have forsaken me to speak to you?” Mikeas : “That is exactly what you will find on the day that you hide yourselves and flee. Go , and you will see.” Mikeas is imprisoned. He repeats: “If you return unharmed, then Yahweh has not spoken through me.” Israel engages in battle and indeed loses the fight. The king does not survive. He is struck by an arrow in his chariot and dies. His chariot is stained with blood.

The Bible records the outcome: “They washed the king’s chariot with much water. The dogs licked up his blood and the prostitutes bathed in it.” For those familiar with magic—though this is not the case for many Bible scholars—this last sentence becomes particularly significant. The fact that prostitutes bathe in royal blood indicates that they perceive this as a magical blood ritual. The life force of a monarch is, in a sacred (not a desacralized) cultural context, much stronger than that of non-aristocratic people. By bathing in the blood, the prostitutes appropriate the life force present in that blood. We refer here

already to a Eucharistic celebration, where—in a bloodless manner—one shares in the life force of Jesus . We will return to this theme of “blood as a carrier of life force” in detail later (8.2.3.).

According to this biblical story, in the Israel of that time, of the four hundred 'seers', there was only one who, as the ending of the story shows, had the right intuition and 'saw' true to reality.

Although the 'lying spirit' acted with God's permission , it appears that such inspiring beings also dare to act arbitrarily. In the Old Testament, *Job 4:18*, we read: “ God does not trust even in his servants, and he catches his angels in deviations.” According to the Bible, not every inspiring spirit originates from the high world of light; quite the contrary. *1 John 4:1* warns us against this distinction between spirits: “Do not believe every spirit (note: principle of inspiration), but examine whether the spirits are ‘from God’ (note: in friendship with God).”

In the biblical story, there was only one God-friendly seer among four hundred other ecstatic seers, driven by intoxication and trance. One might wonder how the ratio stands for us today. If one examines the actual world, it will be far from favorable in our day as well. Among hundreds of dowzers, card readers, and other “seers,” there is often only a single truly God-friendly one . Furthermore: God-friendly seers tell us that continuous prayer to God is a necessity to avoid being erroneously inspired from moment to moment by some misleading 'lying spirit'.

A fortune-telling spirit

Regarding such inspiring beings, let us read *Acts 16:16/19* : On the way to that place of prayer, a servant girl approached Paul . She had a clairvoyant python spirit and earned a great deal of money for her owners with her gift of clairvoyance and her divination. She followed Paul, shouting constantly: “These men are servants of the Most High God . They proclaim to you the way to salvation.” She did this for many days on end. When it became too much for Paul, he turned around and said to the spirit: “In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her.” At that moment, he left. But with that, the woman also immediately lost her clairvoyant ability.

When her owners saw their hopes of income vanish, they seized Paul , dragged him before the praetories, and said: “These men are causing unrest in our city. They are Jews, and they preach morals and customs that we as Romans are not permitted to adopt or follow.” The people also turned against

them. The praetories stripped them of their clothes and had them beaten with sticks. After they had received a considerable number of blows, they were put in prison, and they ordered the jailer to guard them strictly.

If this passage corresponds to reality, then spirits, not situated in time and space, see hidden or occult realities more quickly and better than ordinary people. Thus, they perceive almost immediately the true nature of the apostles' message and the deeper calling of Paul. Let us also note that the owners of the clairvoyant woman saw their hopes of income vanish. Once the spirit has been driven out of the woman—or, more accurately, once she is no longer 'possessed'—she has lost her clairvoyance. That teaches us a great deal about the extent, or rather the lack thereof, of her clairvoyant gift. The spirit seized her peaceful self-possession “for many days in a row,” and Paul wanted to undo that.

Deuteronomy

The Bible, Deuteronomy 18:9 ff., mentions the following regarding such mantic practices: “When you have entered the land which Yahweh your God gives you, you shall not commit the same abominations as those of those peoples. You shall not find among you anyone who gives his son or daughter to the fire, who practices divination, enchantment, clairvoyance, or magic, who consults spirits and diviners, who calls upon ‘the dead.’ For whoever practices such things is an abomination to Yahweh your God. And it is because of this abomination that Yahweh your God drives these peoples out before you.”

Opponents of the paranormal see this as a clear condemnation of it and wish to banish all manticism and magic from religion. Proponents, on the other hand, argue that this condemnation applies only to “the atrocities of those peoples,” namely those peoples who contact beings that do not call upon Yahweh’s inspiring life force. They fail to see the evil inherent in attempting to solve people’s life problems with high divine energies. This view is reinforced, among others, by *Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira) 34:5*. “Divination, divination, and dreams: all vanities, unless they are sent as visitors of the Lord.”

It should be clear that for a nominalistically minded person, every form of manticism or magic is based on deception. To put it somewhat in Sterley’s words: “for such a person, his material presuppositions surround him like a shield behind which he perceives only what he can explain with his nominalist reason”. We will return to this in detail later.

Let us summarize. Clairvoyance can manifest itself through a dream, a voice, images, or intuitions . In principle, every human being possesses a form of manic as a “conscience” that “speaks.” High religious seership “face to face” with God or through His messengers is rather a great rarity. A God-friendly seer scrupulously shuns all publicity, as it burdens his seership in a profound way. Moreover, without solid contact with the Biblical God, reliable clairvoyance becomes an extremely difficult undertaking and opens the door to “lying spirits” of all kinds who only communicate what suits them. Many mediums allow themselves to be inspired by spirits that do not come from God’s high light world, and who do not always inform their medium in all freedom and selflessness. The Bible repeatedly warns against this “discernment of spirits.”

2.5. The unconscious and the subconscious

The Bible speaks of “the heart and in the kidneys” as the seat of the unconscious and subconscious of man. Apparently, religion is not only something of the conscious within us, but it also, and above all, influences the depths of the human soul. Let us delve into that .

The tip of the iceberg

A. De Groot , **Elementair begrip van de psychologie* ^{31*}, writes: “It is assumed that our behavior, in addition to what we consciously know, feel, and want, is determined to a significant extent by factors unknown to us. Depth psychologies presuppose a deeper motivation; that is to say, they assume that our behavior is partly guided by 'deeper' underlying motives that we ourselves do not know. These unconscious motives can be of many kinds: unconscious wishes, aspirations, inner conflicts, fantasies, or prejudices.”

The American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842/1910) lamented that man lives very superficially, and the Russian thinker A. Spir (1837/1890) wrote that while we control the nature around us, we are slaves to the inner depths of our soul . Many Greek philosophers, including Socrates , already emphasized the “ Gnothi” in their time. seauton ” , the “know thyself”. The opinion that man has extremely limited self-knowledge apparently rests on a very old tradition.

The religious historian M. Eliade , in **Méphistophélès et l'androgynie ** (Mephistopheles and Duality), states that the discovery of archaic and exotic cultures and the discovery of the unconscious and subconscious in depth psychology are forcing traditional humanism in the West to undergo a thorough revision. He writes: “It is not inconceivable that our era will go down

in history as the first to have rediscovered the various religious experiences abolished by Christianity when it triumphed (note: in its nominalist, not dynamist, view)".

In Anglo-Saxon countries (North America, England), it is believed that humans are predominantly conscious in everything they do or refrain from doing. The West (Europe, Asia), however, presents a very different view. There, it is emphasized that numerous unconscious and subconscious factors are at work, preventing us from always acting freely. Human mood, will, and striving resemble an iceberg, of which only the tip floating above represents conscious life. The greater part remains hidden and is influenced by the unconscious and subconscious.

Traditionally, it is said of what is unconscious that it has never been conscious. Thus, the functioning of many vital bodily functions also belongs to the unconscious. Of what is subconscious, it is stated that it was once conscious, but was subsequently forgotten. However, this distinction is not always easy to maintain. For instance, a yogi can slow his heart rate through thought concentration, demonstrating that he is in fact very consciously aware of how to deal with so-called 'unconscious' factors. And through a number of techniques, subconscious information can also be brought back into consciousness. The boundary between what is unconscious and what is subconscious does not always prove to be strictly defined, certainly not in the realm of chanting and magic.

Psychoanalysis

The oldest and most important school of depth psychology is psychoanalysis, created by S. Freud (1856/1939). He was a well-known Viennese psychiatrist of Jewish descent who brought the human unconscious back into focus. He became the founder of psychoanalysis. His principles are accepted by some, while they are fiercely contested by others. For him, too, the dream is the "Royal Road" to the unconscious. In his work ** Introduction to Psychoanalysis* ^{32*}, we read: "The first of the unwelcome assumptions of psychoanalysis is that psychic events are unconscious as such, and that only a few actions and fragments of the entire life of the soul occur consciously." According to Freud, most actions in life occur without conscious rational justification.

He gives a typical and striking example of this involving a girl who became paralyzed in her legs just before her wedding. She was forced into marriage against her will, and something deep inside her did not want to 'go to the altar'.

This reluctance turned out to be the unconscious cause of her paralysis. Once that became clear, the wedding was called off, and shortly afterwards the paralysis disappeared as well. Apparently, the unconscious deductive reasoning was made in the depths of the soul : “Whoever cannot go to the altar cannot marry. So if I cannot go, I cannot marry.” Logic, then, but apparently on an unconscious level.

J. Grant , in **More Than One Life** ³³, also mentions a similar case. A woman had become paralyzed in both legs within a relatively short period of time. This turned out to be of psychological origin. Under hypnosis, she stated that she suddenly realized the meaning of her paralysis. It was the only way she could avoid a forced marriage. When she realized this after her hypnosis as well, her paralysis disappeared after a few days.

One notices that in such conscious and subconscious processes, similarity and coherence play a role that should not be underestimated. For instance, a mother whose blond son has passed away will feel an intuitive sympathy for blond boys. A young man head over heels in love will cherish every object belonging to his beloved, almost as if it were the beloved herself. In this latter case, it is not about what bears a resemblance to the beloved, but rather about what is connected to her.

Accidental and non-accidental slips of the tongue

Let us also mention here the so-called accidental slips of the tongue, which spontaneously surface from our deeper psyche, but not without reason. For example: A lady to a psychiatrist who asked her for too much information about overly intimate events: “Do you undress (instead of dissect) every patient like that?” Or again: After a dinner, a gentleman’s plate has already been cleared. He does not know what to do with the peels of his apple and asks a graceful lady beside him: “May I lay my little buttocks (peels) on your little apron (plate)?” Such a slip of the tongue says a great deal about the man’s state of mind regarding this lady.

Sometimes one can also 'catch' oneself or others making an overly spontaneous remark that escapes the censorship of conscious thought and reveals much of the deeper inner life . And this subsequently, not infrequently, to the surprise of the one who uttered it. We illustrate.

A theatre group wanted to portray the theme of “evil” in various situations. The leitmotif was always an everyday, rather pleasant and peaceful situation, over which “evil” would suddenly take hold, causing the play to take a very

aggressive, indeed malicious, turn. For instance, a specific scene first showed a couple in love before the altar, ready to receive the wedding blessing and exchange vows. Until suddenly “evil” severely disrupted this sweet little tableau. The sublime organ music was drowned out by a firm and loud “sympathy for the devil, ” while many little devils also came to disrupt the wedding ritual. The bride, so in love, transformed into a wicked witch who showed more of her thrust-over breasts than before and went to meet the devils with her skirt lifted, making it clear what she desired of them. She further convinced them that she was particularly wicked and demanded entry to hell. After all, she had poisoned quite a few relatives to obtain money and power. After the play ended, most of the spectators applauded. A few deliberately refrained from doing so and looked around somewhat anxiously.

At the subsequent board meeting of the theater group, someone proposed—now that evil had already been addressed as a theme—to write a play in which “the good” could be highlighted in various situations. The spontaneous reaction of the board was forceful and clear: “No, that is not who we are.” The average person might not dwell on this statement, but sensitives and clairvoyants will speak of the particularly tragic situation of the deeper soul—the so-called 'occult status'—of those who react in this way.

Also a slip of the tongue like “da ersch (w) eint Er”; “there he 'disappears’”, instead of “there he appears” tells us much more, namely: someone is coming who behaves like “ ein Schwein ”, as “a pig”. Through such slips of the tongue, Freud saw the unconscious at work.

For non-accidental slips of the tongue, for example, we refer to the polygraph or lie detector. Anyone who deliberately makes a slip of the tongue, and thus 'lies', may exhibit physiological changes in the rhythm of breathing and blood pressure. This is revealed by the lie detector—though not without contradiction. These symptoms may then indicate that untruths are being told deliberately.

Plato 's depth psychology

GJ de Vries , *Plato 's view of man* ³⁴states that for Plato, the human soul consists of three distinct parts. First, there is the great monster, then the lesser lion, and finally the little man. The great monster has as 'values' an unrestrained sexual life and excessive eating and drinking. The lesser lion is focused on honor, possessions, power, and the drive for self-assertion. The little man cultivates as value everything that is truly valuable: higher ideas and an intellectual-ethical development. Plato calls this highest aspect of man

'little'. It is unique to the little man, and he must strive to hold his own against the great monster and the lesser lion.

Plato harbored few illusions about people as he had come to know them in Athens and Sicily. For him, man is primarily characterized by the smaller lion. The sole ruler or tyrant is predominantly controlled by his great monster, which strives for power, influence, and possessions, and which 'tyrannizes' him. It is precisely because of this that he is unfree. Tyrannical people want to assert themselves and know hardly any boundaries in doing so. The Flemish lawyer and politician H. Schiltz ³⁵(1927/2006) expressed it this way: "Give people absolute freedom with impunity, and they become beasts." Let us say that this certainly does not apply to 'all' people, but to 'not all,' to a number. Father Damien, who took command on Molokai, realized the highest expectations that the "little man" can achieve in a lifetime. We have, therefore, rightly crowned him the greatest Belgian.

The great monster and the lesser lion assert themselves more easily during our sleep. Then our spirit, our little man, has fallen asleep. During the night's rest, it no longer fully controls the immoral desires of the monster and the lion. These can then indulge themselves. This will become clear to us in the chapter on so-called out-of-body experiences (6) and through the story of D. Fortune and her vengeful demon (7.4.1.). The great monster satisfies his lusts and risks everything in that twilight state, feeling liberated and free from a great deal of shame and inhibition. The story of Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll, and Mr. Hide* will also illustrate this (10.4.). Therefore, Plato advises cultivating 'good' thoughts before falling asleep, renouncing all anger or resentment, and instilling the right measure in the lower desires. Whoever falls asleep angry prepares similar dreams for himself. And as will be discussed later, a number of them can have a profound reality value. Plato seems to warn us against an excessive expression of anger, as some psychologists or psychotherapists dare to advise us. We will discuss this further in this book when the moral taboos of religions are addressed (10.4.).

Plato seems to establish a form of depth psychology that, regarding feelings of value, certainly extends broader than, for example, Freudian depth. As is well known, Freud emphasized the sexual (eros) and the aggressive (thanatos) in man all too strongly. He, too, saw a tripartite nature in man. However, no monster, lion, or small man, but rather an 'Ich', an 'Id', and a 'Superego'. According to Freud, the 'Ich', or the independent principle within man, is controlled from within by the 'Id' and the 'Superego'. The 'Id' represents the genealogical inheritance in which the instinctual life is situated. The Superego

represents the socio-cultural norms, values, and ideals that, according to Freud, constitute the 'conscience'. They are imposed from the outside by the established society, which suppresses freedom and prohibits the expression of sex and the urge to kill. Behold the conflict. The 'Ich' must process the disagreement between the Id and the Superego. Thus, man actually stands constantly between two fires, the lower and the higher within him. For Freud, the suppression of the Id can be the beginning of a neurosis or a psychosis.

We see clear points of difference in these two tripartite divisions of Plato and Freud. For the Viennese psychiatrist, there are no higher values at all, no high ideas in themselves. Freud thinks in a strongly materialistic way. The norms to which a person must adhere are socially and culturally imposed and actually have a repressive effect on the instinctual drives. We find no reference whatsoever in Freud to that which transcends man. His 'superego' or 'unconscious conscience' is not the pure conscience that springs from our 'spirit', from the 'little man' within us. His conception of the so-called conscience regularly exhibits demonic characteristics. Man is primarily influenced and programmed by lower drives. According to Freud, societal norms inhibit this to some extent.

The “family unconscious”

L. Szondi (1893/1986), a Hungarian psychoanalytically oriented psychiatrist and author of **Schicksalsanalyse* ^{36*} (Analysis of Fate), devoted his entire life to studying the "fate" of man. In 1916, during the war, as a soldier in the trenches, he was shot in the back. The bullet lodged in a book in his backpack and thus saved his life. The title of this book was *Traumdeutung* (Interpretation of Dreams) by S. Freud. This curious incident set Szondi thinking.

He studied hundreds of family histories, including that of the Russian writer F. Dostoevsky (1821/1881). Szondi's main thesis states: the fate of an individual is largely determined by the family tree figures, by the ancestors, that is. He speaks of a “family unconscious” that imparts a mysterious purpose in the depths of the soul. Ailments and life paths of ancestors are easily passed on to one's own descendants. Profession, marriage, and friendships are determined by them. For Szondi, it is clear: life is much more than mere blind chance. The unconscious plays a major role in all of this.

P. Van Eersel, in **J'ai mal à mes ancêtres* ^{37*} (I have 'homesickness' for my ancestors), also argues that ailments of ancestors can affect descendants. In

her book, she gives seven specialists ample opportunity to speak on this subject.

J. Herbert , *La religion d'Okinawa* ³⁸(The religion of Okinawa) gives us a sense of what manism or ancestor worship might be. Okinawa (Ryu-kyu) comprises 73 islands and islets between China and Japan, of which a few dozen are inhabited. The local religion there is apparently ancient, as only weewomen are known there. as sacred intermediaries, who are called ' noro ' or ' tsukasa '. As healers, they work together with doctors and complement them. Herbert says of them : “They discover who the ancestor is that causes the descendant to suffer and teach the sick person how to bring the ancestor to peace. This occurs very frequently today (note: in 1975) with men or women who were killed during the war. Likewise with sailors or fishermen who have drowned. I have been told the case of a woman who had a 'sore throat'. Well, she had a brother who was killed during the war. She eventually discovered where he was buried. Thereupon she turned to the local noro who intervened. The woman recovered because her deceased brother was treated.” By way of speech, one could say: “She suffered because of her brother.”

The world of the dream

Let us remain in the world of the unconscious and illustrate its power. Trygve Braatoy , **From the Practice of a Psychiatrist* ^{39*}, recounts the story of a married woman who felt she was acting very coldly towards her husband. She had a very peculiar dream, which she confided to her psychiatrist. Braatoy writes: “G. (her husband) and I are sitting in a boat. He has a huge nail in his hand. I have to lie down on the bottom of the boat and try to pull the nail into a small ring. I beg G. to let me stop, but he wants to continue. The nail pierces my flesh and the boat as well. I am wounded. I am bleeding. The flowers we were wearing on our heads fall into the water. The flowers turn into hideous women's faces. G. notices that we are sinking, but fortunately I have a large quantity of putty with me to repair the boat.”

The sexual symbolism of this dream is so clear that even Freud's most vehement opponent cannot deny it. But there is more. The wife said that the act of marriage presented problems during the first wedding night and that her husband then had the audacity to remark that her predecessors had done better. She still remembers all those details but did not see the connection between her distance from her husband and his crude attitude at the time. When the doctor makes this clear to her and she understands it, she immediately feels relieved, and the fear she had felt for her husband until then suddenly vanished.

This dream illustrates for us an entire applied 'mythology', expressed in a complex and, for the time being, archaic style. It provides us with an example of spontaneous, almost magical poetry. The beginning is very conventional: the marriage boat. Then follows the sexual symbolism, the nail and the ring. Furthermore, there is the marriage running aground right from the start: the sinking of the little boat. Very poetically, the adversity takes the form of falling flowers. Joy and happiness sink away into the water. And the husband's 'predecessors' also find their place. The flowers transform into terrible women's faces. The wife is the first to notice the disaster. The putty says something about the artificial situation of both spouses.

This dream clearly shows us the imaginative capacity within humans. The dream seeks to bring the dreamer's situation to her consciousness in images, the only language the unconscious knows. Reality is indeed involved in this dream, but it does not simply lie within the presuppositions and the reach of hard science.

Braatoy also pays attention to subconscious associations. For instance, he writes: "But if a child experiences daily, for instance, that father sits swearing when he comes home from the office while wolfing down his soup, then it may happen that later in life one no longer likes soup, without knowing what the actual cause of this is."

The placebo effect

The Latin term 'placebo' means "I please". Emile Coué (1857/1926), a pharmacist, gained fame for the way he put the power of suggestion into practice. He published **Self-Control Through Conscious Autosuggestion* ^{40*}. He once had a sick man in his shop who begged him for a medicine that, however, could not be sold without a doctor's prescription. The man insisted so strongly that Coué sold him a bottle of distilled water instead and explained to him at length just how effective this medicine was. A week later, the man came to thank him. He was cured. Doctors are very familiar with this phenomenon. Based on that experience, Coué delved into applied psychology. However, such a suggestion does not explain everything. The placebo method works better with one doctor than with another. Even with the same doctor, it works one time and not the next. The procedure escapes rational reason and is therefore irrational and unpredictable. Exactly how the suggestion works is not entirely clear.

What is now called “positive thinking” in New Age circles is a reinterpretation of Coué’s method. We should also mention that the opposite, “negative thinking,” exists as well. Everyone knows people who constantly complain about themselves. They repeatedly bring up their own failures or hard days. It is clear that by constantly harboring negative thoughts, they keep many ailments alive and autosuggestively make themselves sick. We refer to the phrases in the ABC theory (2.3.). Freud once wrote a work entitled “*Die flucht in die Krankheit*” (Flight into Illness). It is possible that negative thinking is one manifestation of this.

We also mention Sandra Blakeslee, *Guérir Grace aux Placebos*⁴¹ (Cured thanks to placebos). We dwell so extensively on the placebo effect because it illustrates the power of the 'spirit', of the 'mental life', particularly clearly. Blakeslee tells the story. We are in 1957. M. Wright had been given up on by doctors in Long Beach (California) as a severe cancer patient. With tumors the size of an orange apple, he had only a few days left to live. Yet he learns that scientists had discovered 'Krebiozen', a horse serum, against cancer. He begged them to administer it to him. Dr. Philip West, his doctor, eventually gave in. On a Friday afternoon, he received the much-desired injection. The following Monday, a doctor found his patient rooted to the spot. He was out of bed safe and sound, laughing with the nurses. The tumors had melted away like snow in the sun.

Two months later, M. Wright read medical texts claiming it was a quack remedy. He relapsed immediately. “Do not believe what you have read in the newspapers,” said West, who then administered a dose of—what he called—“a new, twice as strong and improved version of the 'cure'”. It was, in fact, water. The tumors disappeared again. M. Wright radiated health for two months. When he later read a definitive report stating that Krebiozen was “worthless,” he died two days later. So much for Blakeslee.

How to interpret such facts? Some doctors familiar with the history of M. Wright dismiss them as “one of those bizarre stories that natural scientific medicine cannot explain.” After all, the very notion that a patient’s conviction can make a fatal disease disappear is ‘bizarre’. Yet, a number of scientists are beginning to take the power of the placebo effect seriously and are discovering the biological mechanisms that cause the quasi-miraculous effects of the placebo.

Studies continuously confirm the importance of “these lies that heal,” as Anne Harrington, historian of science at Harvard University, puts it. As true

medicines, they can cause side effects such as itching, diarrhea, and disgust. They can also alter heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, erections, and skin quality. One can disregard such facts or investigate them. Only this latter interpretation is the truly scientific one.

In the BBC 2 documentary, *The Power of Placebo*⁴² (The power of placebos) scientists delve further into the use of placebos . For example , fake surgeries were even performed on broken vertebrae. to relieve back pain and . Patients who underwent this sham operation under local anesthesia were given positive suggestions regarding the successful outcome of this surgical procedure. The conclusion was that the fake treatment was just as effective as an actual operation. This immediately raises the question of whether anything actually happens in the body, and if so, what it is.

It is known that there is less oxygen in the air at high altitudes. Therefore, mountaineers make do with extra oxygen in bottles. This oxygen ensures that a specific neurotransmitter, NPG2, is produced in the brain, allowing more muscle work to be performed with less pain. A hiker near the Matterhorn, who experienced muscle pain when he did not have extra oxygen, was given a bottle that, unbeknownst to him, contained no oxygen at all. Afterwards, it turned out that he had completed the entire mountain trek without muscle pain. Can this result be explained purely psychologically as a form of imagination? Or is there more to it? To gain more clarity on this matter, a brain scan was taken of the man. This revealed that his brain, without the extra oxygen, had also produced the same neurotransmitter.

The man's expectation had caused a measurable neurobiological and physiological change. This clearly points towards a connection between body and mind. However, the researchers point out the limitations of using placebos. For instance, they state that they do not heal a broken leg or shrink a tumor. Wright's experience, mentioned above, however, points to the contrary. He did recover from his cancer, and his tumors did disappear.

Because it remains “lies” that lead to healing, and people do not like to deceive patients, it was decided at Harvard University to set up an experiment in which the truth was told to the patients beforehand. “Look, for a few weeks we are not going to give you your usual pills, but a placebo, and we want to know how you react to that.” Even then, it turned out that those who took a placebo were better off than those who did not use a fake pill. When this experiment was stopped after three weeks, the patients' old complaints resurfaced. One patient said that she was desperately looking for her placebo, but that no one was allowed to sell her one anymore. The experiment, for

which permission had been granted by the government in the US, had ended. After all, fake pills are not an officially recognized medicine and therefore may no longer be prescribed.

The researchers added that placebos are more effective if the doctor has a good and empathetic attitude towards his or her patients and radiates great confidence. Non-Western cultures will immediately associate such charisma with a kind of subtle, beneficial aura emanating from the healer, which can significantly accelerate healing. Naturally, the patient can mobilize positive thoughts and, consequently, energies that contribute to healing. If one reflects further on this, one can see in all of this an indication that quite a few alternative healing methods may well possess a reality value that largely transcends the boundaries of hard medical science.

Max Heindel (1865/1919) writes in his book **The Cosmogony of the Rosicrucians**⁴³ that suggestion acts specifically on the higher, subtler bodies, something that has an impact on the biological body. He states that successful doctors use suggestion as a means to support medicines. The more a doctor can fill his or her patient with faith and hope, the sooner the disease will disappear. We will delve deeper later into the view of many philosophical and religious movements that hold that, in addition to his biological body, man also possesses a number of subtle bodies (9.2.2.).

A post-hypnotic command

People can “make themselves believe.” They “rationalize.” They provide a reason to rationally justify their behavior. But in a number of cases, it is not the real, underlying reason. Let us mention, for example, what is called the “post-hypnotic command” in the literature. Cohen , ** Psychology as Science Fiction*^{44*}, illustrates this. During a hypnosis show, a woman is instructed to thank the audience for their attention after her hypnosis, at the end of the show. Hours later, and seemingly long out of hypnosis and completely herself, the woman suddenly carries out this command as the evening concludes. The hypnotist asks her why she is doing this. The answer is: “Someone has to thank the audience, after all!” And she does so while having absolutely no knowledge of the real reason. Incidentally, it is well known that one can make a hypnotized person believe many things, for example, that distilled water tastes so bad that it is undrinkable.

Reincarnation.

The English clairvoyant J. Grant (1907/1981) , as a follower of reincarnation or re-embodiment , pointed this out in her book *More Than One*

Life ⁴⁵. that traumas sustained in a previous existence can carry over into the current life. For instance, she recounts the story of a man who was allergic to feathers. The event took place during the Second World War, when finding food was a daily problem. One day, J. Grant gave a visitor a slaughtered turkey. Normally, this would be a particularly welcome gift. However, the man was unable to accept the turkey. He felt a deadly fear welling up inside him. Joan Grant concentrated and 'saw' on another level of reality, the cause of this fear. The man, she explains, had been severely wounded on a battlefield in a previous life. His friends had been unable to deliver the 'coup de grâce' to end his suffering. While still alive, he was stripped of pieces of flesh by vultures until he eventually died. 'Something' within him had then 'learned' that touching feathers is tantamount to dying. And that 'something' in the depths of his soul wanted to avoid a repetition of such a misfortune. In his current incarnation, the man no longer had a conscious memory of this event, but his subconscious knew the lesson all too well: "if you want to live, stay away from feathers".

When Joan Grant told him what she saw as the cause, the man became deeply upset; he relived the entire event again, but this time very consciously and with all the painful emotions of that time included. Afterward, he understood what had caused that obsessive thought within him. And that disproved the chain of 'cause and effect,' causing his allergy to feathers to disappear. Grant concludes her story by saying that, on his return journey to London, the man could not resist opening the package containing the turkey while still on the train and stroking the feathers.

If one takes the doctrine of reincarnation seriously, there is a logical connection between the event on the battlefield in a previous life and the current allergy to feathers. From a nominalist standpoint, the theme of 'reincarnation' is, of course, nothing more than a foolish fiction.

Subliminal messages

Let us stay with the unconscious and the subconscious. Let us consult JP Régimbal , *Le rock 'n roll , (viol de la conscience par les messages subliminaux* ⁴⁶) (*Rock'n roll , (Rape of the conscience by subliminal messages)*). In the 1980s, there was a great deal of controversy surrounding so-called subliminal messages. These are messages, hidden in some pieces of music, that are supposedly perceived unconsciously rather than consciously. What is remarkable about this is that they are spoken from back to front. Normal hearing does not notice them, but the unconscious does. If one wishes to hear these messages clearly, the music must be played from back to front.

This is done, for example, with an old tape recorder that still has loose reels. Amidst the bizarre sounds that can then be heard, one hears specific phrases. According to Régimbal , such messages can be found in a number of songs. For instance, under more in the fragment from the song 'Stairways to heaven' by Led Zeppelin (3rd stanza): “There is a feeling I get when I look to the West. And my spirit is crying for leaving. In my thoughts I have seen rings of smoke through the trees. And the voices of those who stand looking”. This stanza contains the subliminal message : “I've got to live for Satan ”. In the album 'Killers' by the group 'Queen', in the song “ Another one bites the dust ”, one hears with 'reverse' listening : “Start to smoke marijuana ”. In the song ' Authem ' by the group 'Rush', the message upon reverse listening is: “Oh Satan... you are the one who is shining ... walls of Satan... walls of sacrifice ... I know you are the one I love”.

Needless to say, from a nominalist standpoint, this is utterly nonsensical. The idea that people could be influenced in such a way, consciously or subconsciously, may strike many contemporaries as highly implausible. After all, our culture is very attached to rational reason, to the malleability and autonomy of one's own life. As a result, it is difficult to comprehend that something like unconscious or subconscious influence could exist within man. That is, of course, everyone's democratic right. The ultimate question is whether that corresponds to reality. From the occult perspective, it is indeed a very different story. There, it is argued that “ the children of darkness” are far more enterprising in that magical realm than “the children of light.” And if such subliminal messages do indeed have an effect, what else is possible in that occult, magical realm?

A study conducted by the *United Nations* ⁴⁷concludes: “The cultural implications of subliminal indoctrination is a major threat to human rights throughout the world ” (“The cultural consequences of unconscious influence are a major threat to human rights worldwide”).

Ethnopsychiatry

With regard to the unconscious and subconscious in man, we also refer to so-called ethnopsychiatry . Our Western rationalist psychiatry, which works for us Westerners (if it works!), can hardly, if at all, be applied to other cultures. There, people much more readily resort to the traditional healers of their own culture, who attempt to help patients using traditional means, such as summoning spirits and performing incantations. In many cases, patients claim to be helped much better by this than by (some of) our psychiatrists.

The latter are said to be all too eager to eliminate the consequences of a problem, for example through pharmaceutical prescriptions for sedatives, without addressing the actual cause of the problem. Daryush, among others, claims this. Shaygan , *Le regard mutilé , Pays traditionnels face à la modernité*⁴⁸(The mutilated gaze, traditional countries, confronted with modernity).

A reader of the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps* , Thérèse Liechti , responds to an article in her newspaper with **Qu'est-ce que la maladie mentale?*^{49*} (What is a mental illness?) . She notes that psychiatry is very expensive. Despite unprecedented expenditure, the number of completely successful cures of individuals who “suffer from mental disorders” is unusually low. In 1952, the DSM (the American Bible for psychiatry) listed 112 mental disorders. Today, it lists 374.

Tobie Nathan (1948/...), *Le sperme du diable*⁵⁰ (The Devil's Sperm), introduces his book as follows: “Let us be loud and clear: Western psychiatry has proven incapable of safeguarding the health of members of traditional societies, neither in their country of origin nor in the country to which they have emigrated. That is a fact. But the consequences, both scientific and economic, are significant. As it stands, more than eighty percent of the world's population resorts to traditional therapeutic techniques such as shamanism, exorcism, manticism, and methods of paranormal healing.”

Vanity that blinds

Religion, too, has its unconscious and subconscious aspects. The Bible, *Psalms 19 (18)*, warns against committing evil unconsciously: “ Who, Holy Trinity , is aware of all faults? Purify us in any case from unconscious evil .” According to Christianity, the “Holy Trinity ” is the name for the rather mysterious bond between “three persons.” First, God the Father, the Creator of all that exists. Second, Jesus Christ, His 'son', and finally the Holy Spirit. These 'three-in-one' form, still according to Christianity, an inexhaustible subtle source of power. The unconscious and subconscious tendencies in man can surpass the conscious ones. In *John 8:44*, Christ says to the Pharisees: “You live from the devil, your father (understand: not My Father, the heavenly God). It is the desires of your father that you want to carry out .” Among other things, the Pharisees criticized the fact that Jesus healed a paralyzed man on a Sabbath.

For them, respecting the relevant legal regulations, which prohibit all work on that day, was more important than helping their fellow man out of his or her misery. Jesus tries to make it clear to them that, in their unbelief, they

are unfree. They do not realize that a hostile inner word resonates within their deeper soul. Jesus continues: "I, I speak as I have seen it with my father. You, you act as you have heard it from your father. You carry out the works of your father."

In other words: in the depths of the souls of the Pharisees, according to the Bible, an inspirer—a father—is at work, yet not the Biblical God, but Satan. And while the Pharisees consciously believe they are serving God, in fact, unconsciously or subconsciously, they are carrying out Satan's will. It is difficult to articulate a more thorough critique of consciousness. This lack of self-knowledge, this completely incorrect assessment of oneself, contains a great tragedy. Paul Diel (1893/1972), an Austrian-French psychologist and psychotherapist, speaks in his * *Psychologie, psychanalyse et médecine* ^{51*} (Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Medicine) of a form of vanity that has a blinding effect. One is so full of oneself that one never questions one's own presuppositions and actions. One "knows better anyway" and therefore considers any reflection superfluous. This arrogant attitude prevents further inner growth. People persist "in a petrified manner" in an 'anger' that usually remains unconscious. It remains remarkable that one consciously believes one is acting well, while unconsciously or subconsciously one is not doing so at all; indeed, that deep down one even achieves the opposite.

We will discuss this apparent contradiction further. According to the Bible, it can be interpreted as a kind of divine judgment that gradually penetrates the depths of man. The Pharisees can apparently be profoundly mistaken in assessing what is called their 'occult status': knowing the ethical level of their deeper and fundamental 'self'. Consciously, they believe they are acting rightly; however, unconsciously and subconsciously, they act completely wrongly. From this, it is clear that true religion is not a surface phenomenon, but a deep phenomenon, hidden in the unconscious. Biblically speaking: such religion is situated not so much in the intellect as "in the heart and in the kidneys." Once again, this demonstrates the necessity of becoming aware of our 'hidden' presuppositions. They, too—indeed, especially they—sometimes situate themselves on a level that is not or barely conscious.

Diel states that our self-knowledge is misled by falsehoods that we convince ourselves of. Our vanities, in particular, disturb our self-perceptions. Vanity, in Latin 'vanitas', means 'emptiness' and 'self-satisfaction'. The biblical book of *Ecclesiastes* and also *Psalms* 36 (35) warn precisely against that vanity, against a prejudice. One harbors a prejudice concerning oneself, such that one thinks that what is not there is there, and vice versa. It is an inadequacy,

a being below the ideal, which one does not, however, wish to acknowledge. It is an exaggerated opinion of oneself, an opinion that overestimates one's own true qualities. Understood in this way, vanity is the opposite of truth, especially with regard to oneself. To the extent that man is afflicted by vanity in his value-evaluating mind—and no one is completely free from this—he is inclined to interpret his value judgments determined by vanity as indisputable truths. And as a result, he wants to label the behavior that springs from it as infallibly correct. Diel says that it is not primarily sexual aspirations—which Freud posits—that disturb our self-knowledge, but our vanity. As stated, Freud saw eros, sex, and thanatos, the killing drive, at work within the depths of man. Our vanity implies that we are so full of ourselves that we do not come to critically examine our presuppositions. It is really not necessary, because “we are right anyway,” or so we believe. Any possible bias thus comes to light little or not at all.

This duality, the fact that people in their deeper 'self' are sometimes opposed to their 'superficial self', is also found elsewhere, including in S. Seligman, **Die Zauberkraft des Auges** . and *the Profession* ⁵²(The Magical Power of the Eye). This rock-solid work states that all cultures, from the earliest times, have clearly known that a person can be very good consciously and socio-culturally, while unconsciously carrying the “evil eye” within “heart and soul.” And unfortunately, radiating it as well. Which implies that one can cause a great deal of harm without knowing it. It should be clear from all this, as already mentioned, that religion concerns primarily a matter of the depths of our soul, less so of our conscious 'self'. It is not the case that one is an unbeliever today and a believer tomorrow based on rational considerations, or vice versa. No, religion concerns not only the intellect; the will, the emotions, and above all the unconscious and subconscious depths of the soul are also involved. We will return to this in detail later.

Manticism, as a key to the unconscious and subconscious

From what has been said about the unconscious and subconscious, our inner life seems to be a swirling world. In this, hidden influences and forgotten events seek to assert themselves in one way or another. They can thus thoroughly steer our behavior. And this, remarkably enough, usually happens without our conscious awareness. It requires laborious and prolonged self-reflection, sometimes with expert external help, to gain any insight and understanding into this. It demands a great deal of attention to get a firm grip on what might be harming us and to turn it to our advantage. Expert help can be sought through psychological or depth psychological means. Or we can go a step further and seek the advice of someone gifted in manic thinking. In all

these areas, we hope to find the necessary competence and integrity. However, experience shows that reality in this area can sometimes be misleadingly different (2.4.) and that our hope often remains merely a pious wish.

The term 'mantice' comes from the ancient Greek ' mantikè'. technè , the ability to act as a seer. An ancient Greek term closely related to this is ' mnèmosunè ', expanded consciousness. Thus one 'sees' "all that ever was, now is, and ever will be". One sees into the past, present, and future. Not merely isolated facts, but above all connections between many facts. One 'sees' what is connected to a fact; one sees the chain of cause and effect. Translating the term ' mnèmosunè ', as is usually done, as 'memory' is therefore largely incorrect. Homer and Hesiod , the oldest Greek writers, rely on such an expanded consciousness. Another ancient Greek term related to this is ' theoria ', entering into something in such a way that one understands the reasons for it. The Paleo-Pythagoreans , the Greek philosophers who preceded the thinker Pythagoras , placed ' theoria ' at the center of their philosophizing , along with Plato . Translating this using our current term 'theory' is only partially correct. A soldier on guard, a spy for example, engages in ' theoria '. This implies that he continues to 'follow' something, someone, or whatever it may be, in order to know thoroughly whether there is danger.

If one wishes to understand clairvoyance in the thorough sense, and attain its theory, then one must keep in mind what one 'sees', the expanded form of consciousness (mnèmosunè) and the fathoming degree of perception (theoria). Otherwise, one impoverishes a rich subject so that only nonsense remains.

I don't believe that!

Let us illustrate the existence of mantic giftedness with a text by a sound clairvoyant who denounces the blindness of quite a few representatives of the established sciences. Here is what Eliane Gauthier , **Voyants**⁵³(Seers) says: "In the realm of psychicism, the most enlightened and cultivated minds seem to reject evidence, arguing 'I do not believe in that.' Some scientists would never think of neglecting the accurate and objective observation of facts amidst their scientific pursuits. And yet, they mock everything that is 'paranormal.' When confronted with it, they lose all accuracy and condemn a priori (understand: axiomatically and without any investigation, based on prejudice) something with which they are completely unfamiliar. If, for example, they are told that an event predicted two years ago occurred, they become deaf or speak with firm conviction of quackery. If the stake still existed, they would condemn those who possess the gift to it. However, in

doing so, they would anxiously avoid any investigation into the existence or non-existence of this gift.”

Eliane Gauthier possessed, without knowing it, the gift that happened to be revealed and confesses: “I did not believe in it, but out of curiosity I did not leave it at that”.

She writes: “If, according to Freud, the dream is the majestic road to the unconscious, then clairvoyance can, in its own way, be a path that provides access to the invisible and powerful part of ourselves. That part governs our lives, often without us realizing it. In our deepest soul, there is someone who knows more about it than we do ourselves. Is that our guardian angel, or is that the demon the ancient Greeks spoke of? In any case: one must maintain the required silence to listen to that someone,” Gauthier emphasizes . Through meditative techniques, man attempts to quiet his thinking. To then examine which thoughts, images, or impressions spontaneously arise within him and what they wish to clarify. “Our unconscious wants to convey messages to us in fragments and pieces, and it expresses itself in images and symbols,” she writes. To this one can add the many little phrases that our 'inner word' literally prompts us, and which we discussed in more detail when mentioning the ABC theory.

Let us remember that the letter A stood for the given, B for our presuppositions with which we approach the given, and C for the final result: the given (A) as we see it (C) from our perspective (B). All people with sufficient introspection experience it, and all psychotherapy establishes it: if such phrases are negative, they can cause much harm. Note how those inner phrases are sometimes spoken: “I never have any luck” or “Everything always goes wrong for us.” So-called “positive thinking” aims precisely to make positively formulated phrases penetrate the depths of the psyche. For example: “Things are getting better for me in every respect every day.” True seers experience daily that such awareness is necessary. In this way, many signs, symbols, and scenes that surface can be linked together into a meaningful whole.

Gauthier posits that the one who 'sees' does nothing other than communicate to the one who consults what the latter actually knows, but without being aware that he or she knows it. She believes that within us all there is a hidden place where “all that ever was, now is, and ever will be” can simultaneously become clear to whoever has access to that place, namely the mantically gifted.

According to her, the gifted practitioner possesses the ability to reach the objective state of affairs by telepathically grasping the conscious motives and the unconscious or subconscious drives of the consultant. These often differ from what the consultant believes to know based on what he or she considers superficially evident. In this way, the client's unconscious and subconscious reveal themselves telepathically to the seer, who grasps, understands, and possibly even articulates them. It may happen that the mantically gifted practitioner does not immediately have a clear view of a situation and therefore asks the client to mentally reimagine the problem. If the client then recalls the images, it seems as if the mantically gifted practitioner not only sees this along with them, but actually perceives and feels more than the client themselves.

Gauthier establishes that such clear perception can occur directly and without any material object. Usually, however, an infrastructure—in French, “un support”—is necessary to reach the altered state of consciousness. In that state, the seer comes into contact with the unconscious of the person requesting a consultation. One chooses the structure that one deems most appropriate for oneself. This has no influence whatsoever on the nature of what the seer perceives. It can be cards, coffee grounds, or numbers as numerologists use them, or the rustling of leaves, or whatever else. Perhaps the term 'catalyst' is the best way to characterize the proper role of the structure. The catalyst helps to keep thoughts concentrated and sets mantic seeing in motion.

Our demon or guardian angel?

In the chapter on clairvoyance (2.2.4), we discussed the term “religious seership.” This implies that serious seership is linked to the Biblical God. “In our deep soul there is someone who knows more about it than we do ourselves. Is that our guardian angel, or is that the daimon of which the ancient Greeks spoke?” Gauthier wonders. In such a serious matter as giving mantic counsel to a fellow man, it is necessary to be inspired in the right way. One might ask oneself, with Gauthier, whether the best counsel is to be found with the demons in “the churning world in which so many hidden factors and forgotten events wish to assert themselves in one way or another” or with our 'guardian angel'.

To avoid being misled in this, one can appeal to a Biblical form of manticism. This entails that, as a seer, during mantic perception, one almost constantly asks for the guidance of the Holy Trinity through prayer so as not to be misled. One wishes to receive the right voice, the right inspiration, and

the right images, and not those of some demonic being. That this is not a vain thought was already taught to us by the history of the lying spirit (2.4), and will become abundantly clear further in this text.

Just as Mlaker situates dowsing within a religious framework, the same naturally applies to the entire domain of clairvoyance and manticism in general.

Let us refer, for example, to the Bible, *Daniel 2:20/23* . Daniel lives as a prophet and seer amidst non-Biblical seers, soothsayers, sorcerers, and magicians who work under the guidance of non-Biblical gods and goddesses. Confronted with an extremely difficult problem, the interpretation of the king's dream, Daniel turns to God and prays: "You reveal mysterious things and know what takes place in the darkness. With You is the light to be found." Daniel asks for insight to correctly interpret the dream (the given) (what is asked for) so that one arrives at a correct insight (the solution). Manticism, practiced in a Biblical, serious, and conscientious manner, aims to help one's fellow man envision and realize his future in a positive way, and this as the Holy Trinity foresees it.

It may come as a surprise by now that we are already suggesting a connection between, on the one hand, the insights that are "our own" and make themselves known in the depths of our individual unconscious and subconscious souls , and, on the other hand, that which is "not ours" and is possibly given to us by 'demons' or by "non-Biblical gods and goddesses." In a religion conceived dynamically, where subtle energies and information find their way in an unconscious and subconscious manner, the strict separation between what is strictly private and what is not cannot always be clearly delineated. We are influenced by others, both unconsciously and subconsciously. This was already clear in the chapter on dynamism and will become even more apparent when we discuss suggestion. We will also return to such insights and inspirations in detail, including when we address like seeking like and the so-called "harmony of opposites" in Chapter 11.

Let us conclude that numerous indications exist confirming the workings of the unconscious and subconscious. And this applies not only to depth psychology, but equally to spontaneous slips of the tongue or the study of genealogies. In the latter case, everything points to the operation of something like a "family unconscious," whereby, according to some, ancestors continue to actively influence their descendants in the present, in addition to their role in the past. The placebo effect and the post-hypnotic command further clearly

demonstrate that humans do not always know the true reasons for their behavior and are rarely aware of the influences they are subjected to. A significant step further is the assumption of the workings of subliminal messages or of possible connections between past lives and the present.

The fact that non-Western cultures benefit more from their traditional healing methods than from Western psychiatry also points to the influence that man undergoes from the depths of his soul and his culture, which should not be underestimated. Consciousness, held in such high regard in Western culture, may not stand as firmly on its pedestal as many a nominalist would wish. For many, the influence of the unconscious and subconscious might ultimately prove to be of greater importance than that of the conscious. Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees' overly vain behavior showed us this. Manticism also pointed to this. With regard to our theme, religion, the existence of our hidden 'depths of the soul' and the inspiring influences our soul undergoes, for better or for worse, will be discussed in detail later.

2.6. Evolution

Far-reaching autonomy

In the chapter on "homo religiosus", the "spirit / flesh" pair was mentioned (1.4.1.), related to the "sacred / profane" pair. Here, the term 'spirit' stands for "divine life force" and 'flesh' for a life devoid of it. In this context, man is repeatedly faced with choices. Does he sow in the flesh or does he sow in the spirit? His harvest will always reflect those choices. His evolution may be rather linear, or primarily characterized by trial and error. God has indeed granted man far-reaching autonomy.

Whoever considers the actual evolution of mankind sees that violence, for example, is not at all alien to it. The prophet Isaiah already expressed this in his time (*Isa. 24:1/6*): "The earth is defiled under the feet of its inhabitants, for they have broken the laws (note: the Ten Commandments, see 1.4.1)". If man crosses certain boundaries and turns away from God finished, then God says (in *Gen. 6:3*) that He no longer invests His life force in a sinful human being.

Profane and sacred history

O. Willmann (1839/1920), * *Geschichte des Idealismus* ^{54*} (History of the Idea), outlines the essence of Christianity. He mentions the great moments of 'sacred history,' as it was formerly called. There is sacred history that precedes and prepares for the coming of Jesus; there is the entry of 'salvation' into time with the public life of Jesus ; and there is the continuation of that same

'salvation' into the supra-temporal sphere. In addition, there is also a 'historical,' an earthly or secular side that unfolds in time.

Salvation history is first and foremost the history of upbringing. God nurtures with an eye to the future. However, it is then clear that beyond the profane history we all know, there is also a sacred or consecrated history. Two forms of history, and thus of evolution, are intertwined: a visible one and an invisible one. Both have points of contact. For instance, when Yahweh addresses the people through His prophets in concrete historical situations. "Thus speaks Yahweh," is the explanation. In this way, Yahweh makes history and guides it. In this way, salvation history arises in a very strict sense. Yahweh creates the entire reality, including man, and grants him far-reaching autonomy. Through wrong choices, man distances himself from God and from His life-giving force, whereupon God sends a helper: His son Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. The Bible recounts that Jesus suffered, was crucified, and buried. Immediately thereafter, He "descended into hell" and rose again after three days. Later, He ascended to heaven. Subsequently, on Pentecost, God sends the Holy Spirit. Finally, Jesus will return in glory at the end of time to judge the world. Behold the great points of contact between sacred history and profane history.

While a person lives through profane evolution and simply leads his life, he simultaneously evolves in a sacred manner. This can be constructive or destructive, depending on the ethical qualities he realizes or neglects in life. We have insight into our profane way of life, but hardly any, if any, into our sacred evolution. It is therefore so remarkable that mantically gifted individuals do have insight into the sacred level of their client. It seems like a contradiction, but viewed in this light, they know us better than we know ourselves.

the reality of the "descent into hell" mentioned above in detail in the chapter dealing with religious intermediaries and shamans (6.3.).

This universal or planetary history is set out in its fundamental lines in St. Augustine's work *De civitate Dei* (The City of God).

An individual sacred history

Man makes both a profane and a sacred history. His deeper soul is also subject to evolution. Usually, this is virtually hidden from the average person. But sometimes 'sacred experiences' can occur in someone's life. Often, these are not recognized as such, or their significance is only understood after a long maturation process. For others, such experiences are so impressive, so

overwhelming and profound that they are considered the highlights of life and even guide and direct the rest of their lives.

The Bible (*Mark 8:36/37*) likewise points to the exceptional importance of such contact with this 'sublime,' with everything that transcends this life: "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet loses his soul? Or: What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Jesus emphasizes this: there is no equivalent for the soul; it cannot be exchanged for anything. This striving for the higher is apparently so important to the religious person that there is nothing in this world that can compare to it. The constant focus on this, the realization that this higher flows through and overshadows the lower, ensures that difficulties are viewed and experienced from a completely different and broader perspective.

For St. Augustine , the great Church Doctor of Patriarchy, too, all history is in some way sacred or holy history. He goes even further and says that human action is virtually meaningless if it does not integrate itself into sacred history. His statement certainly gives food for thought.

So much more could be said about this theme of evolution, both individual and collective. We limit ourselves here to a few introductory concepts, but will return to them in detail in Chapter 5.

The religious person 'sublimates'.

William James (1842/1910), *The varieties of religious experience*⁵⁵ (Variants of religious experience) goes even further in all of this and, *despite* the many difficulties and worries that life carries within it, possesses a sense of happiness that transcends it all. It has directly to do with a religious awareness. He focuses on Christianity, but it certainly applies to a number of other religions as well. He puts it this way: "For religion, serving 'the highest' (the sublime, the holy, the divine) is never a yoke. Religion has left dull submission far behind. A willingness, capable of assuming every shade between joyful serenity and spirited delight, takes its place. While mere rational exhortation, typical of Stoicism for example, requires an effort of the will, Christian conduct is the result of inspiration by a higher-earth emotion (the sense of serving the sublime) that is present without any effort of the will."

James refers, of course, to the haughty—stubborn Stoic—effort of will. We find this "being happy in the absolute and the eternal" nowhere except in religion. This form of 'happiness' outwardly accepts evil as a form of sacrifice, but inwardly knows that evil has been overcome for good. To James, it is as if

the religious person experiences another and sublime world from very close proximity deep within his innermost being. Almost constantly, the Biblical believer feels and knows that the misery of this world will not and never will have the last word. It is certain for him: one cannot escape disappointments, not even the atheist, but the truly religious person 'sublimates' them through his contact with the sublime.

The unconscious and subconscious: summarized

The far-reaching autonomy that man possesses means that he is constantly faced with choices in life. Actual history teaches us that choices are not always ethically correct. This has consequences. A wrong choice might potentially yield an advantage for man in this world, but his sacred status will suffer, so that he actually takes a step backward in his evolution. From a religious perspective, man is indeed an inhabitant of two worlds: this world and the world "on the other side." Religions assert that that other side is far more important than this world. But that other reality remains rather hidden from the average person. The religious person views his entire life as an evolution towards the higher. He is acutely aware of the temporary and transient nature of events on this side and feels strengthened in his faith. He is firmly convinced that the miseries of this world do not have the last word.

2.7. The Sacred and What Follows From It: Summarized

This entire chapter treated the sacred as the foundation of all existence. Understanding the religious person presupposes an empathetic attitude and presuppositions that do not a priori deny the sacred. The religious data must indeed be allowed to come into their own. This leads us to religious clairvoyance and divination. Such a divining engagement with the data can open our eyes to the sometimes turbulent world of the depths of our own soul and the unconscious and subconscious tendencies: our "angels and demons." The Biblically inspired seer who wishes to bring revelation, 'apocalypse', and order into this will attempt to safeguard themselves through almost uninterrupted prayer to the Holy Trinity and seek to ensure a correct interpretation. Such mediumistic figures can thus assist man in his spiritual growth as a signpost and guide. Man indeed has both a profane and a sacred history, and he creates them as well. With the right choices, he does not live a life of non-committal and aimless aimlessness, but experiences an evolution for the better. He lives in this world, but knows himself to endure and be closely connected to the sacred.

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