

Text 3: Occultism: a new religion?

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3.1. Occult and occultism.

3.1.1. Paranormal phenomena.

It is perhaps best to start from the so-called paranormal phenomena. Something can be 'normal' (which appears ordinary to the average person on this planet; a much better definition of 'normal' simply does not exist!), but it can also be abnormal (with the pathological as the conceptual content) and paranormal (with the unusual (but not necessarily pathological) element as the conceptual content). A valuation is introduced into the paranormal domain by the conceptual pair 'katanormal' (kata: downwards) and 'ananormal' (ana: upwards): when awareness (degree of consciousness), control, and morality—or one of these three, for example—decrease, one speaks of katanormal; in the reverse case, one speaks of ananormal. Thus, possession is katanormal due to the decline of the three aforementioned aspects, but shamanism is ananormal, however much these two phenomena may resemble each other to superficial observers.

Paranormal phenomena can be classified into psychic, such as telepathy and clairvoyance, because these concern knowledge (// gnosis), and parergic, such as ghostly phenomena (think of Wilsele or Baal!) or teleplasma(ta), because these concern activity (// ergon). One can also speak of ESP (// extra-sensory perception, perception outside the senses; (// teleesthesia: aisthesis = perception) and PK (// psychokinesis, movement on

a 'psychic' (read: paranormal) basis; (// telekinesis: kinesis = movement), whereby, as in the previous terminology, ESP and PK are attributed to a factor PSI (// psi-function, the paranormal capacity in the psyche). We prefer—with, for example, H. van Praag et al.—the terms 'parapsychic' and 'paraphysical' because there are apparently phenomena that cannot be reduced to a psi-function (= paranormal capacity of the human psyche) and yet occur. However, we must immediately note—as indeed with the previous terms—that the two cannot be completely distinguished (although they are related, they are not identical).

Something like a throw of fate (*envoûtement*) is primarily psychological. For example, one applies mental concentration to someone to force them into their will; in doing so, paraphysical phenomena also occur (e.g., the subdued person falls ill). Thus, there is both a parapsychic and a paraphysical aspect here, as well as an intersubjective aspect (occurring between two subjects). The latter is also present in the paranormal writing practiced by spiritualists: one is actually writing together with another spirit (another subject).

Parapsychic phenomena include, for example, telepathy (someone experiences the inner life of another at a distance (tele-) as if it were their own), clairvoyance (formerly called television: tele- and visio, to see), the latter whether or not accompanied by the use of objects (photo, card reading, e.g.: clairvoyance tied to an object), and prophecy (e.g., having a prophetic dream). Paraphysical phenomena include, for example, ghostly phenomena (rain of stones, flying objects = kinetic phenomena; knocking sounds via tables, chairs, keyboards, statues, busts, soles of feet, etc. = acoustic phenomena), apports (an object or person suddenly becomes invisible (dematerialization), moves away or approaches, suddenly becomes visible again and is there or somewhere (rematerialization) (this while walls, doors, and closed windows are permeable); levitation (the opposite of gravitation); magnetism (healing magnetism, writing magnetism: in the latter case, the 'writer' feels a magnetic groove or opening on, for example, a yes-no board (*oui-ja* board) or a sheet of paper). These are so-called telekinetic phenomena.

There are also teleplastic phenomena (tele-; plasma = creation): existing material objects change (stigmata), non-existent material realities are created (materialization and dematerialization (disappearance), such as 'masses' coming out of someone's body, luminous masses as well, or flame writing; also shadows (phantoms) and doppelgangers ('angels' was also formerly said, as in *Acts 12:15*), i 'masses' in human form (bilocation: bis + location, being in two places at the same time).

A remark: such phenomena are easily labeled among the people as miraculous (= dynamic aspect in the history of religion) or even mantic (oraculous, i.e. revealing), especially if the social context is favorable; which proves how close paranormal phenomena are to religion; after all, religion is always based on a miraculous and an oraculous (oraculum: utterance of the gods) foundation.

Bibliogr.- Robert Tocquet , *Les pouvoirs secrets de l'homme*, Paris, Les Productions de Paris, Coll. 'J'ai lu', A 273, 1963 ; by the same author: *Les mystères du surnaturel*, id., A 275, 1963; both interesting because the author involves deception in each case.

- Yvonne Castellan , *La métapsychique*, Paris, PUF, 1955 (short historical overview).

- Renée Haynes, *The Hidden Springs (An Inquiry into Extra-sensory Perception)*, London, Hollis and Carter, 1961 (very solid and fascinating, at pp. 198ff. on Prosper Lambertini (1675/1758), the later Pope Benedict XIV).

- Dr.m.ed. Albert Freiherr von Schrenck-Notzing , *Grundfragen der Parapsychologie*, Herausg. Dr. Gerda Walther, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1962 (especially part 3, Spukphänomene, is fascinating and revealing).

This from a large mass of books and booklets, whether decent or not!

3.1.2. Related phenomena.

The border area comprises two areas:

- unpretentious, isolated phenomena;
- pretentious ones, which represent individual worldviews or social ideologies, both founded on a philosophical-theological basis or formulated in a doctrine.

(a). Isolated phenomena: pendulum work and dowsing; mesmerism (healing magnetism); suggestion (auto- and hetero-suggestion; hypnosis); somnambulism (sleepwalking: the lunator, for example, walks on rooftops in a sleep-dreaming state during a full moon); psychedelism (ancient India already knew soma, a drug with biochemical effects; // taking LSD). Knowledge of suggestion (influencing oneself (auto-) or another (hetero-) through visualization) is absolutely necessary for anyone engaging with occult or paranormal phenomena.

See e.g. Dr. Berthold Stokvis , *Psychologie der verbeelding en autosuggestie* (A signific-psychological exposition for psychologists and physicians with an

introduction on significance and modern conceptual criticism by Prof. Dr. G. Mannoury), Lochem, De Tijdstroom, 1947;

also: C. Baudouin, *Suggestion et autosuggestion (Etude psychologique et pédagogique d'après les résultats de la nouvelle Ecole de Nancy)*, Neuchâtel/Paris, Delachaux et Niestlé, sd. (about 'suggestion spontaneous, réfléchie et provoquée').

Also: ER Hilgard and JRHilgard, *Hypnotic Susceptibility, New York/Chicago/Burlingame, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965* (nature, characteristic phenomena, individual diversity, parameters and theory of hypnosis).

Apart from suggestion, magic must be known—preferably as thoroughly as possible by anyone engaging in occultism or the paranormal; this to expose deception (which is always the primary task of critical occultism or critical interest in the paranormal).

(b)1. More pretentious are knowledge of human nature in the form of characterology (phreno-, chiro-, graphologies) and depth psychologies of all kinds (Freud upside down; and then all the rest): knowledge of these is required as well (cf. animistic interpretation; cf. infra).

(b)2 . The so-called neo-sacralisms are doctrinally, philosophically and/or ideologically, and theologically substantiated, and fall into three major categories:

(Far) Eastern:

(1) yoga systems of all kinds, as well as theo- and, to a lesser extent, anthroposophy (H. Blavatsky, A. Besant; R. Steiner made a Central European variant of it) come from the Indian cultural milieu (Hinduism, Buddhism);

(2) Zen (Buddhism) comes from the same source, but is interpreted in a Chinese-Japanese way.

Broadly speaking, the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism lies in the fact that the Hindu accepts the unity of Atman-Brahman (soul - deity), whereas the Buddhist sets it aside because he thinks more secularly (emphasizing this world more than the 'other'). In both, reincarnation plays a central role, as does the sowing-reaping law, which revolves around greedy action that generates 'karma' (sinful result in the 'self' or soul) and has repercussions in the subsequent life (if necessary, in the reincarnated existence);

(3) Universalism, the world-man harmony based on 'Tao' ('Daode'), the 'Way', the manner in which one realizes harmony, with yin (the shaded side of a valley, the feminine receptive and fertile aspect) and yang (the sunlit side of a valley, the masculine fertilizing aspect) as alternants, comes from China, especially in the so-called sinistic form (one need only think of the I Ching or Chinese oracle book) and the Taoist form (Tao in the sense of the yin aspect experienced mystically).

(Near-) Eastern:

- astrology, dating from the Sumerians, comes from Mesopotamia (horoscopy, astro-analysis with astral mythology as a distant background).

- Gnosis, dualistic, if necessary monistic, that seeks to be knowledge that is unity with the deity and, through that unity, unity with and insight into the world and the universe and the soul, comes from the Hellenistic world.

- Biblical: Jesuitism (the Jesus Revival or raising of Jesus) in various forms; (Neo-) Pentecostalism (= Pentecostal Christianity, with its charismatic slant); (Neo-) Eschatology (end-time expectation among Jesus followers, Pentecostal Christians, and other groups: the expectation of Jesus' return as imminent) stem from the Judeo-Christian tradition of the Bible.

Besides these Asian-religious ('Eastern') neo-sacralisms and the biblically inspired ones, there is a third group, the esoteric-occult.

Spiritism, various forms of magic and mysticism, Satanism, and all kinds of 'secret societies' (so-called 'mysteries', to use the Greek word) are situated here. In a certain sense, we have occultism here in its purest form.

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- H. von Glasenapp , *Buddhism*; The Hague, Kruseman, 1971;

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- Carl A. Wickland, *Thirty Years Among the Dead*, London, Spiritualist Press, 1924 (first ed., 1971 (fascinating account by a physician who, in collaboration with his mediumistically gifted wife, healed the bound and

possessed for thirty years: things like 'unconscious mind', autosuggestion, and personality splitting seem to him to be ruled out).

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Here is a small selection from a huge stack of weeks and works on the principal neo-sacralisms of today. Quoted are those I have in my own hands (at least the principal ones!). The list alone gives a sense of how complex the subject is. A somewhat summarizing work is * JW Jongedijk,* * *Geestelijkeleiders van ons volk : en hun kerken, stromingen of sekten**, * Zomer en Keunings*, n.d.* , in which Quakers, Salvation Army soldiers, Moral Re-armers, Free Catholics, Christian Community members, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Sufis, Spiritists, etc., are discussed with an exposition and a conversation.

Note: Regarding the much-discussed subject of reincarnation, see a solid work: *Joan Grant/ Denys Klsey, Many Lifetimes*, London, Gollancz, 1972 (fourth edition), in which a physician-psychiatrist speaks who worked with his mediumistically gifted wife on a reincarnistic basis: cases are resolved after conscious-psychological, depth-psychological, and hypnotic data have been exhausted and only a 'retreat' to a past existence with a traumatic experience remains.

Technical terms.

'Medium' means:

- (1) scientific: material reality through which energy, matter or information travels (e.g. light rays through glass (rainbow colors of the spectrum);
- (2) hermeneutic (interpretative): the viewpoint with which one sees and judges the data (e.g. seeing the world through the medium of materialism).
- (3) anthropological: a type of person who acts as a mediator between two worlds (e.g., 'this' and 'that' world) based on certain characteristics (medially gifted; mediumistic; mediumism, etc.).

'Occult' means 'hidden', 'not (too) visible!'

This can be meant realistically (= objectively): the 'other' world with its processes, persons, and energies escapes the sensory-rational approach that grasps the data of 'this' world.

'Occult' can also be intended socially (= in relation to humanity): a 'secret' society withdraws from fellow human beings (esotericism), obscures itself, and is in that sense 'occult'. The practical and the humane meanings easily go together because occult activities are not (very) tolerated by established society. In that sense, occultism (associating with the other world through socially occult means) is always 'counterculture'.

The occult can be both medial and non-medial. After all, there are occult activities that take place without a medium: for example, when someone directly explores and influences the other (occult, in the real sense) world.

Let no one confuse 'occult' or 'medial' with 'spiritual'! Spiritism consists in viewing the 'other' (occult) world as populated with spiritual beings, 'intelligences', with personal character, 'spirits' (/ / spiritus), especially spirits of the deceased, 'souls', which make themselves felt or manifest themselves through media.

3.1.3. The conceptual pair 'animism/spiritualism'.

The problem is as follows. – On the one hand, there is telepathy and clairvoyance, and on the other, telekinesis and teleplasticity. These occur together, for example, in composite cases of phantom phenomena (which are therefore more than knocking sounds or hardly anything else). For instance, when one of two boys aged 13 and 14 is moved by 'fetch', it happens that the other immediately 'knows' ('sees') where he is and what his condition is. Now, these parapsychic and/or paraphysical phenomena are accompanied, if necessary, by ASC (Altered State of Consciousness), specifically in the form of so-called personality splitting: at first glance, it appears that one or both boys exhibit a different, second – hitherto barely or not at all noticeable – personality ("They are becoming very different"). "It is as if they have become someone else": think of someone who gets drunk (he becomes different!); Think of someone who immerses themselves in a theatrical role (they 'identify' with their role).

- The animist (who attributes everything to the 'anima' or his own (deep) soul) sees this as a splitting of consciousness (one and the same consciousness that develops more than one personality, but remains limited to one person).

The spiritualist (who attributes at least a part to spirits) sees this as the shining through of a new and different consciousness, specific to another person, namely one or more spirits.

Note: This paranormal and/or occult jargon should not be confused with that of religious historians, who use the word 'animism' (or even more broadly: animatism) to indicate that the oldest civilizations believed in the soul as a separate spirit inside and outside the body. That is to say, there, animism amounts to 'spiritism' (understood as belief in spirits)!

The stakes should not be underestimated: there is only a small difference between revelatory spiritualism, which regards religious texts coming through spirit media as 'revelations' on the one hand, and, on the other, a prophetic religion such as that of Zarathustra (Persia), Akhenaten (Egypt), or Abraham and Moses (Israel), which accept revelations through 'prophets' as coming from Ahura-Mazda, Aton, or Yahweh.

The contemporary parapsychologist-animist will regard such mediumistic texts as originating from the unconscious or subconscious soul of the prophet, nothing more! The spiritualist—and more broadly: the one who accepts persons from the other world: souls, pure spirits such as demons and angels, a personal god (theistic religion)—will attribute those same mediumistic texts, naturally not without further ado, but certainly on principle, to extraterrestrial beings who reveal themselves through the unconscious or subconscious soul and, to a certain extent, colored and influenced by it. The oracular (= mantic) or revelatory aspect of religion is intimately connected with the position taken regarding 'animism/spiritualism'.

Now, there are various reasons and/or drives for being animistically (psychological, depth-psychological, purely parapsychological in the sense of metapsychic) inclined. The two most striking are:

(i) accepting only impersonal factors as an explanation for processes; which scientists, especially natural scientists, like to do (the more impersonal their universe turns out to be, the more plausible it seems to them!), - out of a sort of 'scientism', therefore.

(ii) assuming, as metaphysical (i.e., suprasensory) factors alone, an a-personal primordial ground that suddenly explains everything; which is what the religions above the Hindu-Kush mountains (Afghanistan) like to do, which posit an eternal world law as an explanation of the universe (the more 'negative' the theology (insofar as there is one), the more plausible it seems to them!). In both cases, a personal being situated in the other world seems improbable: such a mentality is, of course, hardly revelatory-spiritualist or revelatory-religious. The 'ego', or the 'alter ego', is the great problem, whether occult or not.

The same small difference between revealed spiritualism, on the one hand, and belief in angels and devils, on the other, exhibits the same motives and drives.

As early as June 29, 1973, and November 15, 1972, Pope Paul VI emphatically stated that the traditionalist Catholic recognizes 'evil' as a profound and very extensive factor at work in the universe; that he, furthermore, attributes a distinct and irreducible function to the morally bad nature of earthly humanity; but that the devil (Satan and his henchmen):

- 1/ a real, existing
- 2/ extensive and
- 3/ is personal reality.

A so-called devil-free Catholicism based on secular theological grounds is therefore ruled out. A similar theme is expressed in books such as * *The Exorcist** (P. Blatty) : phenomena such as the inner word (= inspiration but paranormally clear) of the devil, when one connects with him (acting together with a demon based on an agreement), and such as bondage and possession (the completely catanormal gripping by a satanic spirit) cannot, upon closer inspection and without the impersonal prejudice mentioned above, be explained purely animistically.

3.2. Occult and religious.

The starting point is the so-called 'two-worlds hypothesis': it is assumed, both among occultists and religious people (at least in the traditional sense, i.e., from before secularization), that there are two worlds: 'this' world, accessible through the ordinary senses and reason proceeding on those sensual data, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the 'other' world, accessible through the paranormal senses (clairvoyance, clairaudience, for example) and transcendental consciousness ('transcendental' in the sense of that which transcends both the senses and every finite reality) and the reason proceeding on that basis.

Let one observe closely: both worlds are grasped rationally, but at one time it is a reason (ratio) that accepts only sensory data (with an accompanying transcendental consciousness, if one accepts such a thing, mind you!), at another time it is the same reason, but a reason that also accepts paranormal data together with the accompanying transcendental consciousness. This is not necessarily a case of (flight into) 'irrationalism', as hasty scientists and materialists imagine. If occultism and religion (at least in the traditional and neo-sacred sense) share the concept of an 'other world', then they do not necessarily share the concept of 'holy'. Without something holy, there is no religion. What is 'holy'? Is holy everything that is serious? And this is threefold:

(1) in the objective sense: that which commands respect and calls to seriousness because of its own reality;

(2) in the moral-subjective sense: that which exhibits conscientious conduct (and thus commands reverence); e.g. God is holy; the 'saints' are, because their authority is conscientious;

(3) that which is consecrated, which is 'holy' by agreement and demands reverence (holy oil; a sanctuary, etc.). The first (objectively ontological) holiness stands or falls with an order in the universe: conscientious conduct consists precisely in doing justice to the serious order of the universe; God is the first to take that order seriously and to respect it in his conduct; He is therefore holy in conduct in the 'first' sense; but as the foundation of the inviolable order of the universe he is objectively (by his own reality) holy in the 'fundamental' sense.

Well then, the hidden, the otherworldly, the occult is not necessarily 'holy': satanic spirits, for example, are indeed otherworldly but (behaviorally) unholy! Mental influence can be practiced in the form of both black magic (malicious) and white magic (morally superior)—as the magicians among the Medes and, later, among the Persians already taught us—: mental influence is 'neutral'; it can be adopted irreligiously, even anti-religiously! One need only think of what in the Hellenistic period was called 'goëtia' (low-minded) and 'theurgy' (superior). On the other hand, the other world, by virtue of its key role in our existence, is objectively serious to a high degree and, by virtue of its hiddenness, intriguing, indeed threatening and, therefore, serious: one cannot completely dissociate the sacred from the otherworldly (understood in the objective sense).

Conclusion: Religion, which is essentially reverence for and regard for the sacred, is never far from occultism, which is essentially dwelling with the otherworldly. Occultism, mediumship, mysticism, magic—they are in fact inseparable from religion, however distinct they may be from it.

- Naturally, as already mentioned in passing, religion is taken here either in the traditional (i.e., sacred) or in the neo-sacred sense. After all, there are three main types of religion: the traditional, the secular, and the neo-sacred. Secular religion has gone through a process of secularization. Secularization can be understood in three ways:

(a) objectively (real): one desecrates reality (desacralization) insofar as it is truly or falsely holy (the nihilist desecrates not only hypocrisy, but also genuine holiness!); whoever, for example, understands 'Boss in one's own belly' as erotica and sexuality has nothing to do with high seriousness; desecrates like a nihilist. Something else entirely, of course, is to regard provisional 'holiness' (ancient taboos, as people like to say nowadays) as non-existent: one need only think of former scruples that no longer make sense.

(b) Sociological secularization: what formerly belonged to the clergy is given to the lay person (laicization), e.g. church property is secularized.

(c) Theological secularization: God places this world, indeed creation, which was naturally considered God's property (and therefore not released), at the disposal of man (thereby 'emancipated' and 'of age').

- But secularization has a second aspect: the other world is disregarded as non-existent (that is the radical degree) or, at least, it is bracketed as unimportant (yes, harmful) (that is the less strong degree).

The radical degree can be seen, for example, in ancient Greece in Sophistication, the less radical in Aristotelianism, whereas Platonism takes the other world seriously both as existing and as important.

This threefold stance occurs among us as well: the Marxist and Humanist regard the other world as non-existent and, naturally, unimportant; the secular theologian regards it as (perhaps) existing but in any case unimportant, so that 'religion', in his language, takes on a pejorative meaning; the occultist considers the other world important.

Secularized religion (worldly faith) thus rests on, on the one hand, desecration (real, certainly to the minimal degree social (anti- and anti-clericalism); theological) and, on the other hand, on worldification as 'Verdiesseitigung'. Ancient religion did not do this: it was 'sacred' in the sense that it placed both the other world and the sacred (in the threefold sense) at the center. Neo-sacred religion connects with ancient, traditional religion (historical principle), but it has gone through secularization, so that it is no longer traditional—but neo-sacred.

Thus, for example, she accepts the material desecration of false holiness; also social desecration (de-clericalization); also the theological (maturity and emancipation of modern man). But she rejects the desecration of the truly

sacred (nihilism); also secularization understood as *Verdiesseitigung*, as one-sided or, certainly, absolute attention to 'this' world.

- Well, earthliness (*Verdiesseitigung*) most certainly, but not necessarily nihilism, are incompatible with occultism: the Satanist (cf. Anton Szandor La Vey and his Church of Satan in Los Angeles, 1966) is otherworldly, but, fundamentally, a nihilist! Yet occultism, generally speaking, is paranormal, mystical, and magically oriented, and thus more or less religious.

Bibliographical note - Regarding secularization or desacralization of religion, especially Christian religion, see:

- PL Berger, *The Heavenly Baldball*, Utrecht, Ambo, 1969 (previously sociological);

- Dr. Sperna Weiland, *Orientation (New paths in theology)* an attempt to let inspiration speak for people for whom traditional conceptions of faith have become unclear, or have disappeared entirely) , Baarn, Wereldvenster, 1966 (first ed.);

-id., *Continued Orientation (New Paths in Theology: On Paul van Buren, Harvey Cox, Dorothee Solle, Richard Shaull, J.B. Metz, J. Moltmann and the Encounter with (Neo-)Marxism)*, Baarn, Wereldvenster, 1971 (both of the latter works are like the 'bible' of secular theologians!).

id., *The End of Religion* (Further along the trail of Bonhöffer), Baarn, Wereldvenster, 1970 (more systematic).

Both authors are Protestants, and liberal ones at that, not orthodox: the Bible is subjected to free inquiry in a secular sense. Protestantism has, moreover, been strongly secular from the very beginning: figures such as Locke (rational-secular), Schleiermacher (romantic-secular), and von Harnack (modernist-secular) have formulated classical liberal secularism in various variants (Locke: from faith to reason; Schleiermacher: from salvation to the ideal; von Harnack: from the Bible to science); others such as Barth (neo-orthodox-secular: back to the original Orthodox, but within a secular perspective), Bonhöffer (post-Christian-secular: the non-religious interpretation of the Bible), Hamilton, Altizer, Keen (radical 'theology' of the 'death of God'), and Moltmann (political theology) have advocated a more existential (and twentieth-century) form of secular Christianity. Our Catholic secular theologians usually translate such Protestant-secular insights into 'Catholic' language.

-Regarding demythologization (i.e., the elimination of mythology in religion), see: Jan de Vries , **Forschungsgeschichte der Mythologie**, Munich/Freiburg, K. Alber, 1961 ; the application of demythologization to the 'kerygma' (message) of the New Testament is discussed in **Kerygma und Mythos (Ein theologisch Gespräch)**, I, Hamburg-Bergstedt, Reich, 1967 (= fifth ed.; first: 1948). Central here is Rud. Bultmann: "The worldview of the New Testament is a mythical worldview. The world is presented as being composed of three levels: in the center the earth, above it heaven, below it the underworld. Heaven is God's dwelling and that of the angels; hell is in the underworld as a place of torture; but the earth is not earthly; it is the sphere of operation of supernatural and extraterrestrial powers." Behold Bultmann's conception of 'myth' in the Gospel. "The representation of salvation history corresponds to the mythical worldview: the end times have now come, and thus God sends his pre-existing Son who initiates the end times in death and resurrection."

Bultmann's problem: how can modern man, thinking secularly for the sake of science and intellectual maturity, still give 'meaning' to such a thing? One can measure the effect of such a demythologization on the Gospels by means of a book like * RAA Mourits *et al.**, **Evangelie zonder masker**, Tielt, Lannoo, 1971 (thirty contributions that strip away the age-old sacred 'mask' from the Gospels). The difference with the orthodox and with the neo-sacred interpretation of the Gospels only becomes apparent when one compares this work with something like * A. Ory*, **Romphaia** (*Mary in the light of the functional_exegesis*), Marquain, Hovine, 1973 (It should be noted that 'functional' exegesis (= textual interpretation) would already be rendered just as well by 'neo-sacral' exegesis; for that is essentially what it is).

- 'Myth' is one aspect of the archaic (= ancient) wisdom of the primitives that is both gnomic (proverbial) and mythical. Myth is a story, specifically about an exemplary divine act situated 'in principio' (in the beginning, i.e., in the origin, both diachronically (= at the start of world, humanity, and universe history and repeated time and again since then) and synchronically (= a continuously present, 'eternal' source from which universe, world, and humanity originate)), an act that is situated in a world- and philosophical context and that is sacramentally made present and depicted by the story itself.

Without an understanding of holiness and otherworldliness, myth is meaningless. It therefore stands central to religion and occultism. It is also their great problem; for, since ancient Greek philosophy, 'rationality'

(understand: the persistence of reason (= ratio, logos) based on sensory experience (thus sensualist rationalism)!) has been the dominant force in our thinking and life: the Euhemerists reduce mythical data to purely human ones (the specifically mythical is 'nothing'); The allegorists translate the myth either naturally-cosmically (the myth offers us personifications of natural forces (= naturism)) or psychically-humanly (the myth is a projection (= casting out, externalizing) of soul aspects); in other words, they see in it symbolizations of 'something else' (the specifically mythical is something 'symbolic'). But of the 'actually irreducibly mythical', nothing or not much remains in those two cases.

This does not alter the fact that demythologization is a real problem, even for those who think and live religiously or occultly: when one hears occultists and religious believers at work, one asks the question: "What is the share of symbolism and fantasy in what they claim and do?" When one reads a great deal of contemporary literature on occultism and neo-sacralism, one shakes one's head at so much 'mythology' in the style of Hesiod (if only it were as sound as Hesiod did it!). Critical occultism cannot possibly ignore the question of demythologization.

- Simply that the answer is not entirely possible outside of every occult and neo-sacred experience (and the rational processing thereof). Something that our sensualistically inclined demythologizers like Bultmann do not seem to suspect! They know only one type of rationality, namely the sensually substantiated. It does not seem to occur to them that an occult substruction, a neo-sacral substruction of rationality, is possible. It is that substruction or question of substantiation that takes the leading role.

For the (primitive) religions see PW Schmidt , *Origine et évolution de la religion (Les théories et les faits)*, Paris, Grasset, 1931 (this booklet is still relevant, although it needs to be improved).

- P. Schebesta, *Origin of Religion (Results of Prehistoric and Ethnographic Research)*, Tielt, Lannoo, 1962 ;

- Dr. P. van Baaren, *Doolhof der goden (Introduction to Comparative Religious Studies)*, Amsterdam, Querido, 1960 : without religious-historical insight, I do not quite see how one can clearly grasp the relationship 'occultism (magic, mysticism) / religion'.

Regarding the ancient cultural stage:

- ER Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1966 (very solid; philological).

- R. Flacelière, *Devins et oracles grecs*, PUF, Paris, 1965.

- KHEde Jong, *De magie bij de Grieken en de Romeinen*, Haarlem, De Erven F. Bohn, 1948 (naïve faith; disbelief; turning point; new faith; philosophically substantiated faith: behold the stages the ancient Greek-Roman world went through regarding magic; pp. 129/151 gives excerpts from the famous 'papyri magici');

- GCJ Daniëls, *Religious-historical study of Herodotus*, Antwerp/Nijmegen, 1946 (H. 'views on miracles and omens as a guide for understanding history; the hermeneutics or art and science of interpreting oracles is particularly fascinating).

- Regarding the crisis of metaphysics (i.e., the banishment of metaphysics as a method of knowledge from our (religious) worldview):

- M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?*, Frankfurt aM, Vittorio Klostermann, 1949 (existential-phenomenological and fundamental-ontological);

- Max Müller, *Crise de la métaphysique*, DDB, 1953 (Heideggerian influenced); in my view, the most thorough remains

-Dr. Otto Willmann, *History of Idealism. 3 Bde*, Braunschweig, Vieweg, 1907ff; also thorough:

- Karl-Otto Apel, ed., *Charles S. Peirce, Schriften I (Zur Entstehung des Pragmatismus*, Frankfurt aM, Suhrkamp, 1967; *id., Schriften II (Vom Pragmatismus zum Pragmatizismus)*, id., 1970.

Why is the (crisis of) metaphysics discussed here? Because, after the crisis of myth, it is a part of desacralization, or secularization, respectively! Its starting point is what the Greeks called 'sophia', that insight into reality that is mystical, rational, and ethical:

(a) mystical: Contact with God, contact with the supersensory world is the foundation;

(b) rational: insight into and articulation of the structure of things is the second aspect;

(c) A conscientious attitude towards the consequences contained in the mystical and rational aspects is the third aspect. The mystical aspect is either distorted or abandoned by monism (assuming only one type of reality, especially regarding the monotheistic foundation of wisdom) and by (sensualistic) rationalism. The rational aspect is obscured by empiricism, sensualism, and materialism (they do not assume, or do not sufficiently assume, suprasensory principles). The ethical aspect is abolished by autonomism (man as a meaning-giver not heteronomous but autonomous, which is carried out most purely in nihilism). Metaphysics always exposes a threefold nature:

- (a) an insight into nature (what the Ancients called *fusikè*;
- (b) a structural insight (what the Ancients called *dialektikè* (or also *logikè*);
- (c) an insight into origins (what the Ancients called *theologikè*).

The first – *fusikè* – was developed by the Ionian philosophers but coincided with the third – *theologikè* –: they regarded the primordial ground of nature as material, living, divine;

The second was put forward by the Pythagoreans (*mathèmatikè*), by Parmenides (and the Eleatics) and by Plato (*dialektikè*), by Aristotle (*analutikè*): mathematical structures (Pythagoras), ideas (Plato), 'forms' (Aristotle) reveal the order of nature to the mind;

The third was elaborated by the Ionians, by Parmenides (the One), by Plato (who coined the word 'theologia'), and by Aristotle (who calls the 'first philosophy' a '*theologikè*') (in Aristotle united with an insight into nature, which represents the first aspect). Metaphysics seeks an explanation of reality, i.e., sufficient reason or ground; — what C.S. Peirce calls abduction in distinction from deduction and induction. But then sufficient reason not positively shared, but supra- and extra-sensory. Here we have it again! The so-called 'principles' (= *principia*, *archai*) or causes (= *aitia(i)*, *causae*) are to be situated in another, preferably supra-sensory, divine world. Which brings us into religion and occultism! The suprasensory is threefold: the ideas (concepts that constitute the structure of reality (/ / *mathèmatikè*, *dialektikè*, *analutikè* or *logikè*), the deity (/ / *theologikè*), the general (= transcendental) 'being' (/ / *ontologikè*). which prompted Heidegger to coin the term 'onto-theologica' (and which is accurately represented by it)! Something with which modern secular man, of course, can do nothing or not much!

Note - Regarding the relationship 'Occultism/religion' see :

- JB Rhine , *Le nouveau monde de l'esprit*, Paris, Adrien - Maisonneuve, 1955, pp. 222/244;

- OWC van Willigen van der Veen, *Parapsychology and its significance for the Christian faith*, Leiden, Stafleu, 1947 (introduction by Tenhaeff);

- Rev. H. Bax, *Geloof op grond van ervaring*, Delft, Gaade, 1955 (feels Kantian);

- Jean Prieur, *Les témoins de l'invisible*, Paris, Fayard, 1972 (introduction by Gabriel Marcel; 'Christian' (= Christian but on an occult basis).

3.3. On the relationship 'ethics / religion / mysticism / magic'.

"Gräbner's view that in a primitive society everything is interconnected is true, but the reverse is also true: far-reaching separation and specialization already occur in a primitive culture. Religion, magic, mysticism, and hubris occur in every religion." (*HF Jans, ed., Ethnological Encyclopedia*, Zeist (De Haan)/ Ghent (Daphne), 1962, p. 32) 'Hubris' (= transgression of a moral-legal nature) here stands for the (negative form of) ethics. This is, in a certain sense, the broadest: doing full justice in conscience to what imposes itself as a duty or ideal. However, before desacralization, or secularization respectively, ethics was religiously, magically, and mystically substantiated. Only the modern 'autonomous', indeed, nihilistic human being knows 'pure' (= nothing but) morality, conceived without religion. So that archaic-sacred and neo-sacred morality are religion-bound.

- Religion is adopting an attitude of reverence (re-spectus instead of despectus, in Latin) and of attention (re-ligere instead of neg-ligere, in Latin) towards the other world and/or the sacred (it is morality in relation to the Beyond and holiness).

- Magic is adopting an attitude of self-control, asserting oneself, acting (magic, // maha (great, impressive, mighty), // mag-nus (Latin), // power) in relation to the Beyond and holiness; this by no means necessarily implies a lack of reverence and conscience, for ability and power can be exercised very reverently (religiously) and conscientiously (ethically). One need only think of the white magic of the Medes and Persians, of the theurgy of the Hellenistic theosophists, distinguished from black magic and goety (which are hubris).

- Mysticism is 'mu-ein' (// mu-stikè, mu-stèrion), introspection and restraint that initiates into the other world and the sacred. This, too, can be true and false mysticism (mysticism) (conscientious or hubris). Just consider, for example:

- A. Poulain, *Des grâces d'oraison (Traité de théologie mystique)*, Paris, 1901, 4 apart from the graces of 'exdèiques' (revelations and visions): the 'discernment of spirits' is an ancient theme.

- See also Dr. John Verweyen, *Die Probleme des Mediumismus*, Stuttgart, Enke, 1928, S. 71ff. (*Mediumnismus und Magie*); also S. 13ff:

“Mediumismus, als allgemeiner Okkultismus wie als Sonderform des Spiritismus, gehört, als Teilerscheinung einer geistigen Strömung der Gegenwart an, auf die die worte wie Mystik und Mystizismus hinweisen.” (S. 13) . Here the word 'mystical' is apparently used broadly. Verweyen 185ff discusses the negative attitude of the Biblical tradition towards occultism (*Isaiah 8:19; Deut. 18:9/14; 1 Sam 28* (Witch of Endor), etc.).

Ancient Christianity, the Middle Ages, and Protestantism (very emphatically) follow the same negative attitude. To this we respond as follows:

(a)1. anyone who examines the facts even slightly objectively will soon find that there is good and evil in occultism and neo-sacralism;

(a)2. “From a religious studies perspective, it is inadvisable to use the term magic in a negative sense, since in primitive and ancient religions magic only exceptionally comes into conflict with the gods.” *HF Jans, Volkenkundige Enc., pp. 33/34*);

(b) Here, therefore, the age-old rule applies: “Whoever, for seriously well-founded reasons, believes he may deviate from Biblical and ecclesiastical guidelines, may do so insofar as he does not fundamentally call into question either the Bible or the Church, or practically jeopardize them.” This does not mean that the directive of the Holy Office in Rome of April 24, 1917 (prohibition of participating in spiritist sessions) should simply be disregarded (The Exorcist, and all those who are professionally aware of the risks that spiritism entails, especially for young people, are there to urge extreme caution).

Whether the ban confirmed by Pope Benedict XV on the Holy Office becoming a member of the (modern) Theosophical Society or reading books is of no use whatsoever: it already requires serious insight to see clearly as a Catholic into the metaphysics of Theosophy! Which does not mean that, since the Second Vatican Council, there has not been a turning point, of course, regarding the Church's 'prohibitions'. And, although it is a fact that the Protestant rejection of 'religion' (in Karl Barth's sense) and 'occultism' is a consequence of the ('nature') pessimism of the Protestant reformers (human 'nature', certainly in religious and occult matters, is a deeply fallen (// original sinful) nature; as proof, the pagan religions and esotericisms! - pessimism that the Catholic Church has never endorsed, incidentally), there is nevertheless truth in it: the a- and immoral in man lies deep (in his unconscious soul) and demonism and Satan are always somewhere in the background in all-too-human religions and occultisms, possibly, indeed probably.

3.4. Superstition.

See P. Bauer, *Horoskop und Talisman (Die Mächte des heutigen Aberglaubens und die Macht des Glaubens)*, Stuttgart, Quell, 1963. This is some of the best I have found on the subject. Belief, disbelief, and superstition wrestle with modern man: thus begins this book, which is well-documented and covers just about the entire occult domain.

Verweyen, *Die Probleme des Mediumismus*, Stuttgart, 1928, pp . 80ff, states that superstition, conceptually speaking, has two contents:

(a) due to a lack of sense of reality, mistake something for real that is merely an illusion (Sein/ Schein);

(b) due to the same defect, to expect something from something (an action, for example) which it cannot perform. If the mere concept is clear, its application is all the more difficult. Why? Because the word 'reality' is ambiguous: what is called 'utopia' today is sometimes 'reality' tomorrow! Applied here: what the religious, the mystical, the occult-minded person experiences and manipulates as 'reality', the (sensualistically inclined) rationalist labels as 'delusion' and unreality. So that what is superstition to one is experiential and practical evidence to the other!

The Renaissance in its secularism, and the Enlightenment even more so, embrace a sensualism, a 'belief' in the five senses that, for the religiously, mystically, or occultly inclined person, is truly 'superstition'. Why? So that

these secular-thinking movements—which have exerted such profound influence on our Western culture—operate, if not theoretically, then at least practically, as if the five senses were the sole and all-encompassing form of contact with reality. That 'latius hos', that transgression of the real possibilities of the senses (that is precisely sensualism!), is the great, usually unconscious, superstition of our dominant culture. This also fundamentally changes the periodization of cultural history.

(a) The 'enlightened' mind (18th century) regards religion, mysticism, occultism (magic in particular and belief in spirits, etc.) as low stages of development, as outdated and atavistic ('archaic', 'mythical', etc.) phenomena: a 'advancing' humanity of 'strong minds' evolves towards irreligion, demystification, magiclessness, etc.

(b) The neo-sacralist sees in religion, mysticism, occultism a fundamental form, an 'archetype' (// Jung), a 'deep structure' (// Chomsky), a 'perennity' (Otto Willmann, // Steuco, Leibniz) which is present in all cultures and cultural stages in varying forms, types, surface structures, temporal phenomena surrendered to poly-interpretability: there is at most primitive, ancient, medieval, modern religion, mysticism, occultism; there is Asian, Western, etc. sacrality.

Bibl.- Reference is made to: *K. Leese, Recht und Grenzen der natürlichen Religion*, Zürich, Morgarten, 1954 (a major and thorough onslaught against the so-called 'natural' (read: 'rational') religion as we know it from the Stoics to the Enlightenment, in the name of a 'Mystic of the Vital Powers' in the wake of Herder (1771/1776: Bückeburgerzeit),

- Schleiermacher (1799: *Reden Über die Religion*, // romantic theology with its historical revelation, its individuality, its intuition, its feeling etc., but interpreted very vitalistically);

- Theodore Roszak, *The Rise of a Counterculture (Reflections on Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opponents)*, Amsterdam, Meulenhoff, 1971 (= first ed.), especially 7 (The Myth of Objective Consciousness), but all chapters from 4 (Journey to the East: Allen Ginsberg and Alan Watts), 5 (The Counterfeit Infinity: Psychedelic Experience), 6 (Exploring Utopia: Paul Goodman), 8 (Eyes of Flesh, Eyes of Fire: Science (flesh)/ Shamanism (fire));

- H. Van Praag, *Telepathy and Telekinesis (Parapsychology and Paraphysics)*, Baarn, Meulenhoff, 1973 (and the following volumes);

- A. Koestler, *Les racines du hasard*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1972 ; Sheila Ostrander, Lynn Schroeder , *Parapsychological discoveries behind the iron curtain*, Haarlem, Gottmer, 1972 ;

- H. Cohen, *Psychology as Science Fiction* (New findings on dreams, meditation, hypnosis, LSD), *Meppel, Boom, 1971* (the so-called ASC psychology).

A response (very partial and, naturally, politically and theologically substantiated: *Politics or Mysticism ?* in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, DDB (Emmaüs), 1973. A parallel regarding counterculture is C.A. Reich, *Flowers in Concrete (The Greening of America)* . How the revolution of the youth tries to make America livable), Bloemendaal, Nelissen, 1971 (the pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial eras; consciousness I, II, III; clearly parallel to Roszak)

3.5. Initiation.

The initiation aspect is essential. In-'consecration', entering the 'consecrated' (sacred) domain. Initiation, initiation.

(a) Cognitive: one comes to know the sacred and the other world through contact.

(b) Social: one is admitted into a group that possesses tradition and that initiates (usually in degrees and through rituals). The social is the best framework for the cognitive type of initiation, given the danger and lack of means of the neophyte. One need only think of the mystery religions of antiquity, of the initiatory secret societies (e.g. Amorc Rosicrucians).

What seems fundamental is the following: since the sacred and the other world are a reality that is not all that clear, and is moreover complicated, pluralism is natural and inevitable as a reaction to it. That which Peirce (and in his wake, but differently, less logically, William James et al.; the so-called pragmatists) observed so sharply: the overdetermination (i.e., the composite, complex nature) and the ambiguity (i.e., the possibility of interpreting in more than one sense: man is a 'sense-giver' or interpretant!) of religious, mystical, and occult things brings with it 'faith'.

What is faith? It is moving within that not-so-clear domain, proceeding from hypotheses (one supposes, for example, in the case of phantoms, that

an impure, lower spirit is at work... without seeing it in a direct paranormal manner) and observing the result of the intervention applied within it (e.g., phantoms usually cease when one performs exorcism and questions the spirit regarding its own condition and its ghosts). In other words, what Kierkegaard says of God, namely that the 'leap' of faith—and not modern philosophical or scientific reason, which is merely sensually substantiated—offers access to his existence and his essence, applies, *mutatis mutandis*, also to the entire occult, mystical, and religious domain.

Since the Sibyl, according to Heraclitus of Ephesus, “oute legei” (does not expressly and fully pronounce), “oute kruptei” (does not totally conceal), “alla sêmeinei” (gives but a sign—between 'legein' and 'kruptein', thus, in terms of degree of evidence), the stakes are therefore merely a belief, which can differ entirely from naivety—mentioned in passing—the cognitive (= knowing) and/or acting ((in)acting) access to what she says in the oracle. Now, that intermediate evidence of the oracle can be established as a general character of religious, mystical, and occult matters.

- This implies that a highly individual decision always stands at the beginning, the middle, and the end: by 'believing' (in the sense mentioned above), one detaches oneself from the average European intelligentsia, with all the consequences that entails. Kierkegaard, too, places 'the individual' (as opposed to the species (// Hegel)) at the center of belief in God. Occultism is a most individual decision, which man must make alone and not as a follower.

This belief can be diminished but not removed by paranormal giftedness, namely by the development (spontaneous or evoked) of mediumistic gifts. One is then 'medium', 'sensitive', 'sensitive'. For the mediumistic person, the occult nature is, of course, diminished, but, given the overdetermination (complexity, lack of clarity) of the other world and the sacred, concealment substantially continues to dominate and, thus, 'faith' is the rule. Faith remains required for that which even the sensitive person does not see! The critical occultist, in particular, realizes this very well (which the naive occultist often forgets!).

- H. Blavatsky, **Isis Unveiled**, discusses the “mediumship/adeptship” pair, in which the medium functions as a passive instrument (// katanormal), while the adept acts as an active, self-controlling mediator or explorer and agent (ananormal). This can be clarified if we compare, for example, trance (= rapture) with disarray (such as in the medial inner word

advocated by Helene Möller, **Einsamer Weg zu Gott**, Liestal, Wegwart, (Switzerland), 1960 ; see also Gab. Bossis, **Hij en ik**, Bilthoven, Nelissen, 1959 ; *Jakob Lorber's oeuvre*, LorberVerlag, Bietigheim (Württemberg) ; even *Compare Thomas à Kempis , The Imitation of Christ*, III:2/3).

3.6. The inner word

In particular, the inner word (H. Möller) comprises the following sequence (order):

- (a)** one invokes a higher spirit (Raphael);
- (b)** while one calls upon him (i.e. appeals to him to reveal himself), one holds the hand ready to write: at a certain moment one perceives a magnetic field which concentrates in the tip of the writing instrument, as a groove that has the shape of letters, words, sentences, texts (= collectively writing phase);
- (c)** after a while one realizes that, while writing together magnetically, one has thoughts (thought contents) in one's head through inspiration (= inspiration phase), which end up on the paper;
- (d)** after a while longer one can listen: between the ears, in the head as it were, one then hears a soft voice (resembling the speaking we practice inwardly when we speak to ourselves, for ourselves, in all silence, e.g. when we formulate a mathematical problem inwardly) which clearly comes from a being other than ourselves (conversation phase);
- (e)** after some time one realizes that the one who co-writes, who speaks to us inwardly and inspires, also acts within us and around us: one realizes that events, persons and the encounter with them, books, etc., present themselves or come within our reach and that, according to a 'striking coincidence', this fits the circumstances a little too well; that is the guidance emanating from the spirit; but .. this spirit may, if necessary, be a satanic spirit that speaks to you purely or inserts its inspirations among those of a good angel or spirit or exerts a psychic grip on you; then one is faced with the problem of the discernment of spirits, - a very troublesome and difficult problem that often takes years and the greatest caution and knowledge (not to mention prayer and contact with God) (= cooperation or opposition phase).

In any case, this inner-voice method (for it is a method: many people across the globe have experienced it (spontaneously or provoked)) has the great

advantage of not being an actual ASC (a change in consciousness resulting from abandoning the everyday awareness one has of oneself and things). The clear critical mind can function fully, and the substance upon which it operates—its texts—is essentially subject to verification (truth criterion: they are true or false; well-being criterion: they have a constructive and improving effect (// abnormal); one feels comfortable with them; which then means that one possesses a good, God-friendly guardian spirit).

Bib.- Besides H. Möller's works see: GCJ Daniëls , *Religious-historical study on Herodotus*, Antwerp (Standaard) / Nijmegen (Dekker), 1946 (very instructive for the analysis of received texts that resemble oracles).

We were asked to speak about: Occultism, a new religion? As you can see, it is a very complex question that requires a nuanced answer. If that answer is to be culturally and historically sound, then it becomes fascinating, but also complex. We wanted to outline many aspects. We wanted to answer the question regarding literature by means of a bibliography. Mind you, the literature cited is far from complete—I wonder who would know the entire literature on the subject; even a team would struggle!—but it is serious.

The rise—in America, in Europe, elsewhere—of neo-sacralisms galore, especially among intellectuals and the youth, is beginning to pose a serious problem for the churches and for academic circles (in each case differently): the classical spiritual counselor, the humanist counselor, the physiotherapist, the doctor, the psychiatrist, the lawyer—indeed, who among them?—is confronted with a counterculture (Roszak, Reich). Without insight, all these people—one add the parents whose daughter one day says, “I am not on earth for the first time” (reincarnation) or whose son says, “I have been practicing spiritualism for a while,” or who are confronted with psychedelic problems—all these people will react incorrectly!

The blow will hit neo-positivist and Marxist intellectuals particularly hard, for with their usual self-assured aggressiveness—with which they feign 'esprit fort' and insist on dismissing everything as nonsense, infantilism, fanaticism, schizophrenia, ideology, alienation—what abusive prose is not still at their disposal?—they will, in the long run, especially if they wish to intellectually and objectively confront the phenomena themselves (= auto-implicative, being personally involved; // self-involvement), get stuck.

For the most striking feature of such people is the intellectual flight from the phenomena themselves: ask them anything—discussion about it, reading

about it, or whatever—but do not ask them to confront themselves with 'the things themselves' (// Husserl). From a distance, yes (what they call 'objective', 'behavioral', etc.), but not directly and personally confronted with it! This flight will become difficult in a number of cases. It is that self-involvement that is the great key regarding occultism: how far does one risk regarding acquaintance, information, not indirectly, distantly, but directly, personally? One avoids, flees; the other investigates. Yes, free inquiry is now to be found in neo-sacralism. Those who have long carried the flag of free inquiry mostly avoid it!

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May 17, 1974

3.7. Remark of a philosophical nature regarding history.

The founder of the modern conception of history is undoubtedly GB Vico (1668/1744), court historian in Naples. He was a Christian Neo-Platonicist in the height of the 18th century. History obeys a sequence: theocratic, aristocratic (= heroic), and democratic (civilizing) epochs. Herodotus already noted that the ancient Egyptians had distinguished an epoch of gods, heroes, and humans as the order of history. And in doing so, Vico aligns with MT Varro's (116/27 BC) sequence: dark, fabulous, and historical times. Now, Vico is convinced that there is 'corso e ricorso', a cyclical order: just as Greco-Roman Antiquity went through these three stages, so too will Western Europe go through them. Comte (the positivist) adopts the threefold order (*mutatis mutandis*), Spengler its cyclical nature. Our secular theologies adopt this as well.

The question is whether that sequence fully represents Antiquity. We believe not!

(1) The history of ancient thought shows us, after the Pre-Socratics, the Classical period with its Attic (Socrates, Plato and Aristotle: synthesis) and also with its Hellenistic-Roman phase (in which skepticism (e.g. Sextus the empiricist) and eclecticism (e.g. Seneca) dominate and in which the secularism of the pre-Socratic Sophistication fully asserts itself. Similarly, K. De Jong , **De magie bij de Grieken en de Romeinen**, 1948 (see supra), notes the sequence 'naive belief, disbelief' regarding magic. Up to this point, this corresponds with Vico's threefold scheme.

(2) Ancient intellectual history clearly shows a turning point (around 250 BC): skepticism and eclecticism, respectively, are counterbalanced by either dualistic (Neo-Pythagoreans, Hermetics, Pythagorean Platonists, Jewish Alexandrians (Philosophy the Jew), Gnosticism and Manichaeism) or monistic (Neo-Platonism: Plotinus, Iamblichus, Proclus, Aedesius, Maximus, Julian) theosophies.

Similarly, De Jong notes the sequence 'turning point, new faith, philosophically substantiated faith' (regarding magic)! This means that, following the demythologizing and metaphysics-critical period and as a counterweight, a remythologization and new metaphysics emerge. That was ancient neo-sacralism! Well then, why should the 'corso e ricorso' not be visible in our cultural cycle today as well? "The occultism of today can recall the deviations of late antiquity (...) The spirit had been removed from creation; here and in spiritualism it returns as a ghost and the theurgy of late antiquity is renewed." Thus O. Willmann, *Die wichtigsten philosophischen Fachausdrücke in historischer Anordnung*, Kempten/München, Kösel, 1909, p. 114.

Willmann was so astute and at the same time well-informed that he saw both the corso and the ricorso in the 19th century! It is known that ancient Christianity also emerged during that turning point and as a counterweight (just like the Eastern mystery religions): could the same thing be occurring now, and, thus, is a new rise of Christianity imminent? There was corso: why then not ricorso, in this as well? Neo-sacralism clearly contains a Christian component that distances itself from secularism, from Eastern religious or occult neo-sacralisms, and from the official church (one does not stand opposed to it; one stands outside of it, but one wishes to connect with it). Could the ricorso of Christianity be dawning in this, however unclear and hesitant? If Christianity truly is what it claims to be, then it should manifest itself in this way.

After the Middle Ages came two waves of secularization: the Renaissance (Galilei's mechanics!) and the Enlightenment (Locke), which turned it into a totalitarian concept of culture (the autonomous human being who casts off the 'origin' (understood onto-theologically: God as the Supreme Being, source of all finite existence) and the 'ideas' (understood in antiquity-logic: pre-given structures)): Is the turning point here now?

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06.06.1974.

