

Man in the spotlight
An optical study of the aura (part III)

A more comprehensive text.



i

"The Creation of Adam" is part of the fresco on the vault of the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City. It was painted by Michelangelo around 1511.

It is intended to be the depiction of the biblical text in which God recounts creating man in his own image and likeness from earth and then bringing him to life with his breath and life force. (Genesis, 1;27 and 2:7).



ii

A voyage to distant horizons



iii



iv

July 21, 1969, 2:56 a.m.:

"Houston, Tranquility Base here, the eagle has landed". Fascinated, and focusing on that historic first moon trip, almost no one had considered what would show itself when we also looked back. When we did, we saw that incredibly beautiful blue marble against an inky black background of the infinite universe: our good old familiar earth.



v



vi

April 24, 1990:

The Hubble telescope was launched and since then, together with our largest telescopes, has been studying space to its furthest limits. We travel 14 billion light-years back in time and find evidence of the "Big Bang", the birth of the universe. Unbelievable, with what great strides science is advancing.

And the way to ourselves...?

And man himself? Can we also put man, ourselves, in the spotlight - literally - for once? Are we already quite satisfied with what we have already discovered about ourselves, human beings? Or does our self-knowledge still have important gaps? Some claim that the latter might be the case, especially when it concerns our subconscious and unconscious soul depths.

In almost all times and in many non-Western cultures, one hears testimonies from people who claim that we not only have a biological body, but that we also dispose of a whole of subtle bodies, the so-called 'aura'. This is said to be situated in a number of increasingly rarefied layers around the biological body. Moreover, in this aura, for those with sufficient and proper clairvoyance, our unconscious and subconscious soul depths could be read. Yes, for the rare

people who have such a gift, we, with all our life experiences and character traits, would be like an open book, so that their knowledge about us could be much broader than what we think we know about ourselves.

The concept of "thin, fine or subtle matter" may have been abandoned long ago from a scientific point of view, but belief in its existence lives on - hidden or not - in all kinds of occultisms and in dynamically conceived religions. Such religions emphasize the paranormal force that is said to emanate from them. The Latin term 'occultus' means indeed 'hidden'.

Fine matter in the course of history

Even in contemporary Western philosophy, the subject is rarely discussed. Yet it was one of the most important themes among the founders of our philosophy: the ancient Greek thinkers. A number of Presocratics - the philosophers preceding Socrates - pondered the question of which 'primordial matter' the whole of reality was made up of. Thales, for example, argued that it is similar to water because, like water, it is fluid and malleable. Anaximander taught that it has no shape but can have all shapes. Anaximenes claimed that it was air-like, like breath, like a mist, similar to the wind. Finally, for Herakleitos, the primal essence of everything was as mobile as fire.

As in just about all religions, even in Christianity the concept of a fine, subtle substance is never far away. For example, in *Luke 9:28f*, we read that Jesus went up to Mount Thabor with some of the apostles to pray, and that he showed his aura there. His face became shining with light and his clothes became dazzling white. Here we refer, for example, to many saints who are often depicted with a halo surrounding their head.

Apparently, this fine substance can also be used actively - the dynamic aspect. In *Luke 8:43*, Jesus asks who had touched him, for he had perceived a power emanating from him. Then it turns out that a woman who had suffered from hemorrhage for years had been holding the hem of his garment behind his back. She believed that Jesus' garment also shared in his special life force, and that if she could touch his garment, she in turn would also participate in that high life energy. The Gospel text proceeds to say that the woman was indeed cured as a result. In *Luke 6:19*, the evangelist mentions that even a whole crowd wanted to touch Jesus because a power emanated from Him that healed all.

Notice that this is a combination of faith and power. Both are necessary. Immanuel Kant, the principal figure of modern European enlightenment ('aufklärung') once said: "without concepts, vision is blind, and without vision, concepts are empty". If you don't know in advance what to look for, the fact may escape you, and if you do know, but simply don't look, it also escapes you. Or compare it to a language rule: without a rule, the applications are "blind," and with only applications, the rule is "empty. Paraphrasing Kant, we could say: without power, faith is empty, i.e. without result, and without faith, power is blind. Because the woman believed, that force was able to penetrate her aura. Without faith, some force also passes, but the active cooperation, the woman's faith, strengthens the healing process and is even decisive here. Fluidity is indeed subject to people's ideas and choices. This is shown, among other things, in *Mk 6:5* where it is said that Jesus could not perform miracles in his city because of the unbelief of the people on that spot.

Those who are also familiar with the story of Abishag of Shunem and King David, as it is described in *the First Book of Kings*, know that there too there is mention of a transfer of power. The old king suffered from a lack of energy and could therefore hardly handle his administrative

tasks. Therefore he was permitted to charge himself with the powerful subtle radiance of the beautiful Abishag. Her beauty in this case is not of the misleading type, but the external sign of her powerful and beneficent aura. The scripture even mentions that he slept with her, yet did not "know" her. In biblical language this means that he did not have intercourse with her. The king recovered and was able to resume his administrative duties.

The beauty of Abishag is like a blessing for King David. But feminine beauty can apparently also be misleading. For example, the term "Lorelei" comes from mythology and is composed of the German word "Lure," an elf, a subtle creature, and from the word "Lei," meaning "rock. It therefore refers to an elf who resides near a rock. Think of the 232 meter high rock along the right bank of the Rhine near Sankt Goarshausen in Germany. The river is very narrow and deep and has a dangerous current there that has already surprised many skippers. Folk tradition now claims that there is an elf on that rock, who by her enchanting beauty distracts the skippers, causing them to sail their ships onto the cliffs. Her beauty blinds and leads to death. Such is the theme. It is somewhat similar to the Sirens from Homer's Odyssey.

Clairvoyants refer us to certain 'beauties', for example, from the fashion and film world and to a number of completely or partially 'defoliated' photo models on the covers of porno magazines. It is sometimes said of such women that they are a "lorelei". Sacred - in terms of subtlety - they succeed in making others 'fall in love' with them through their misleading seduction. However, if a person opens up to them, they take away his life force. The tragedy is that the stealing of life force usually remains an unconscious or subconscious process, both for the 'vamp' - note the choice of the word as a reference to her vampirism - and for her victim(s).

In nature, too, fine matter is said to be an essential and vital link. For example, G. Hodson, *Les fées* (the fairies) (7), testifies about his mantic or clairvoyant encounter with an elf near a waterfall. He describes how this creature absorbs the 'magnetism' of both the sunlight and the flowing water, transforms it and then releases it with a dazzling flash of light and color to the plant world that surrounds her. This absorption, transformation and release of energy appears time and time again to be a basic element in all that lives and grows in nature. Once this occult, energetic basis in nature has been affected by, for example, the many forms of pollution, Hodson says - and he is far from alone in this - man is faced with an immense difficulty. A vital link is then missing. The subtle, occult foundation is then damaged, indeed sometimes completely destroyed. Similarly, for many non-Western cultures, the pollution of river waters is not only a biological problem but also, and above all, a religious one.

We give another, rather rare, testimony of a subtle force effect. For example, the clairvoyant E. Haich, *Initiation* (8), asked her husband to think of something very intense, and she would try to find out that thought. But she relates that something very different and something completely unexpected happened. She "felt" and "saw" a bundle of myriads of tiny particles beginning to flow from his stomach area, a bundle that, she sensed, "pushed" her to the window and "forced" her to lift the curtain. Once she had done this, the flow disappeared and she felt relaxed again. Her husband confirmed afterwards that he thought and wanted all this in a very concentrated way.

This experiment still seems quite innocent. However, one may wonder what the consequences would be in such a magical mentality when a fellow human being is targeted in a passionate love or in a rancorous and sustained hatred. "Would I be a witch?", one woman wondered, "because every time I wish someone an accident from the bottom of my soul, it happens." Or even: "I avenge myself! I practice revenge by concentrating enormously on the

person in question. I visualize (note: I imagine) what I am doing to them, for instance in case of an accident, an unfortunate fall or so. This imagined, but insanely strong-willed occurrence I hold uninterruptedly before my eyes. Until the incident actually occurs." Speaking is Hexe Petra (9), a punk star who claims to be evil of herself and was interviewed in the German monthly *Cosmopolitan*.

On the other hand, the clairvoyant and theosophist Ch. Leadbeater (10) testified that a mother who activated all her forces to assist her child, who was dying, gave birth to a kind of guardian angel in the fine matter. G. Graichen, *The New Witches* (11), writes, "We do magic all the time, every day, everyone. But most people are not aware of it. There are great magicians in politics, in economic life, in industry, also in science, but they do not know it. And if one were to tell them, they would reject it absurdly and ridiculously".

This fine matter can apparently not only be passed on, as in the case of the nursing mother, or with Jesus and the woman who suffered from hemorrhage, but it can also, as already mentioned with the lorelei, be stolen from others. This is what so-called 'sensitives' claim; those who say they are involuntarily under the influence of those who - with a softened term - can be called 'suckers'. These are people who, consciously or unconsciously, steal energy from their fellow humans. Sensitives maintain that, whenever they come too close to such a "sucker," it seems as if all their energy, all their life force is sucked out of them. In their imagination they see, for example, a stream, a mist of myriads of small luminous dots, which is taken from them - but also from others - and goes to the 'sucker'. If longer contact cannot be avoided, such sensitives may feel totally drained and exhausted afterwards, which is often followed by an attack of fever. Although there is usually almost no noticeable effect of this fine material process to the outside world, some claim that the final result can be extremely powerful and, if certain limits are transgressed, can even lead to a general weakening, illness and ultimately even to death.

That such a stealing of energy from one's fellow man could also take place unconsciously is not the least tragic side of existence. A well-defined tendency in the philosophy of religion states that the time between birth and death of a human being is only a part of a much larger totality. The soul may, before incarnating in a body, have already gone through an entire evolution for better or worse. One then speaks of the 'occult' or 'hidden status' of someone, which then makes him or her feel 'light' and agreeable or 'heavy' and unusually exhausting. Again, the 'sucker' would reap what he sowed of evil in a distant past: a negative and tiring, dark aura.

In this vision a person who at first sight does a lot of good can, in a barely noticeable way, burden his or her neighbor with a lot of calamity and thus quasi imperceptibly steal a lot of his or her life force, happiness and health. This can then gradually work itself out in the victim, but also in those who are in contact with him or her through their work, family or circle of friends, in extreme fatigue, setbacks, illness and miscalculations of all kinds. Such 'suckers' literally radiate evil all around them. Those who, as victims, sense this, can try to avoid such situations as much as possible, while others undergo this evil rather passively.

"I am where my heart is," wrote the medieval Augustinian monk Thomas a Kempis in his *"On the Imitation of Christ."* Anyone who unwittingly, too much and too carelessly opens oneself up to such 'suckers' and identifies too intensely with their ideas during life would, as a victim of severe illusions, remain connected to them even after death. Such victims, insiders

say, would then have difficulty, if at all, in freeing themselves from this negative influence. Something that also involves a whole tragedy.

The Bible repeatedly warns us about possible negative forces and the misleading, not unarmful temptation that can emanate from such a person. The Old Testament, (*Proverbs 30:15*) speaks of the "aluka," the bloodsucker or "vampire". The scripture draws attention to what it calls "the distinction of spirits": "Do not believe in every inspiration, not every principle of inspiration, but examine it." We refer e.g. to *Matthew 7: 15/20* where the evangelist talks about one of the basic premises of logic that Jesus recommends: "By their fruits you will know them". Of such "suckers" *Psalms 53:5* furthermore says: "Do they not realize, these evildoers? They devour my people; that is the bread they eat".

The term "bread" here stands for God's life force and breath of life, for his "image and likeness" which he gives to each individual human being at his creation. According to the Bible, anyone who steals this breath of life from his or her fellow man commits an unforgivable error. The 'sucker' chooses preferably young people and children, still blazing with unspoiled life force. Firmly, the psalm continues, "But behold, with horrified eyes they shall be punished without realizing the cause." As cited above, the Bible situates this evil "in the heart and in the kidneys," which refers not only to the conscious life (the heart), but also to the unconscious and subconscious soul depths (the kidneys) of man. It may surprise, but mistakes could indeed be committed not only consciously, but much more unconsciously.

Isaias (*Isaiah 6; 10*) already lamented in his day that the eyes of a very many people are blinded and their hearts are petrified. According to this prophet, this is the reason why they do not always feel properly the distinction between good and evil, between what is sacredly 'taboo' and what is not, and thus come to wrong estimates and to many wrong judgements. The unprejudiced and unobscured intuitive grasp - the unblinded eyes and the unshaken heart - will, at least in part, be able to sense and interpret the other side of reality much more correctly. Because it can warn of such situations much better than overly profane reasoning, it also remains decisive.

Likewise, in the vision mentioned above regarding the occult status, the reverse would exist. Someone who commits a crime can have acquired an exceptionally good aura in an earlier evolution, which still has a strong effect. Think, for example, of the 'good' murderer who was crucified together with Christ (*Luke, 23; 43*), or of Acts 9,1 ff, where it is recounted what happened to a certain Saul, who persecuted and mistreated Christians, on his way to Damascus. He suddenly fell from his horse by an inexplicable lightning and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" We know him as the later apostle Paul.

According to the Bible, some would then apparently have a remarkably strong and good aura. For example, in *Exodus 34, 29-30* we read that the Israelites dared not approach Moses because his face was glowing, after he had spoken to God on a mountain in the Sinai desert. In an incomparably more modest version, a number of sensitives claim that while praying-which also aims at a contact with God-they sometimes feel their crown chakra opening more. They also feel tingling in the palms of their hands. This would also be caused by an inflow of subtle energy.

Many contemporaries are particularly skeptical about the vision that attributes to the existence of thin matter a decisive role in life and that it would be at the basis of paranormal and religious forces. Indeed, not everyone senses such energies. The distinction between an

subjective imagination, on the one hand, and an image of an objective reality that imposes itself on our mind and thus reveals reality, on the other - which brings us into the realm of apocalypticism, - is not always clear. An inaccurate distinction between the two could all too easily lead to many erroneous interpretations. For example, we need only recall the numerous abuses committed during the medieval Inquisition.

The Bible, *1 Kings 22*, illustrates this lack of distinction in no uncertain terms, with the testimony of four hundred "clairvoyants" who predict that their king will be victorious in an imminent war. The prophet Mikeas, however, mocks the monarch and exclaims: "Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all your prophets, because He has decided on your doom." The king goes into the fight anyway, loses and dies in the battle. According to this Biblical story, in the Israel of that time, out of four hundred "clairvoyants," there was only one who had the right intuition and truly "saw". And those who claim to be familiar with this field today quickly come to the conclusion that even in our time the abuses of clairvoyance are far more numerous than its proper use.

In addition, there are also degrees of sensitive and clairvoyant perception. According to the Bible, Moses "saw" Yahweh on the mountain in the desert "face to face". Hence his sigh in *Num. 11:29*, where he wished that everyone would have a solid clairvoyance, then this other side of reality would be equally clear to everyone. Still, experts say that in principle everyone has, at least in a minimal way, a certain sensitivity and can develop it. It expresses itself, among other things, in correctly sensed intuitions and in "the voice" of our conscience. However, this voice can be consciously suppressed or unconsciously repressed: what it suggests to us we then reason away, "it must not be true" or something in us "does not want to know it".

The fact remains, however, that the Greek civilization and Christianity, the two pillars of our Western culture, did pay attention to intuitions and subtle, healing powers. Not to mention many non-Western cultures where even today a certain sensitivity is the rule rather than the exception.

Finally, let us quote the great German poet Wolfgang von Goethe (12) where he says that there can be a subtle, healing power emanating from people. He speaks of 'magnetism' in this context. The passing on of this power is then called 'magnetizing'. Goethe writes about this: "Magnetism is a universally working force. Every (comment: well radiating) human being possesses it, although there are individual differences. The magnetic force effects extend over people, animals and plants. Yes, man does not know what he is, but neither does he know what he possesses or what he is capable of. That is why he himself is so miserable, so powerless and so unfit."

We added the comment ourselves in this quote. It should be obvious that you would really not be better off if a "sucker" were to magnetize you. He or she would be taking more of your life force than giving it.

Although such beliefs and practices lead a somewhat hidden existence in our culture, our time has, in addition to its opponents, its advocates and its practitioners.

A plurality of types of matter

One speaks of a belief in a 'hylic pluralism' in this context. 'Hulè' is the Greek term for 'matter,' and 'pluralism' refers to "a multitude." Thus, the term "Hylic pluralism" means "a multiplicity of types of matter." In addition to the substance of physics that everyone can

determine, there are, according to this view, other, more rarefied forms of substance and materiality. Moreover, as already mentioned, the fine matter would be at the basis of the paranormal, the occult and even of a dynamically conceived religion (13). It is said to play a somewhat hidden but nevertheless decisive role in the life of every person, and this with regard to his or her spiritual evolution, health and happiness. Sensitives claim to be able to sense this fine substance. Clairvoyants tell us that they also 'see' it, for example as a fine stream of countless particles. Whoever, moreover, can control, "manipulate" and "transform" this thin matter, for example, to solve life and health problems, is said to be a white magician or magiress in this vision. Those who, like Hexe Petra, use the power of thought to harm, would then be a black magician or sorceress.

The Gospels, for example, mention thirty-two miracles - which presuppose the control of subtle energies - including healings, exorcisms and some resurrections of the dead. A number of philosophical schools of thought, however, dispute their authenticity and reduce these texts and their contents to nothing more than a literary genre. Others, on the other hand, argue that one must go on and conclude that even texts concerning the existence of God are merely a literary genre that cannot be taken literally, and that even then God is equally unreal and powerless. But then, they continue, religion is essentially reduced to folklore, psychology and sociology, and its high, vertical dimension and subtle powers are ignored.

If you look into older reports by missionaries and explorers who could still empathize with the then still unspoiled non-western cultures, you will soon discover quite a few testimonies of magical powers of all kinds. We refer to the works of the French missionary H. Trilles who stayed with the pygmies in central Africa. Or do we think of the French woman Alexandra David-Neel who lived for years in Tibet, of the Italian explorer Atillio Gatti who at the beginning of the last century extensively studied the tribes south of the equator in the African continent for years and who even knew a lot of chiefs personally, or we can read the diary of the German Albert Schweitzer, the first and for a while the only doctor in the whole of Lambarene, Gabon. Similarly, the travel reports of E.R. Huc in Tibet and China between 1844 and 1846 (14) do not seem credible to Westerners. Elsewhere (15) we have gone into some of their experiences and those of many others in more detail. We will only mention them here.

A concealed reality?

The Leiden professor (Leiden in the Netherlands) J.J.Poortman (1896/1970), *Ochêma, history and meaning of the hylic pluralism* (16), deals very thoroughly with the concept of matter in various cultures all over the globe. The Greek term 'ochêma' means 'fine material vehicle', and refers to our aura. He writes that besides the coarse matter of so-called 'hard science', other, thinner forms of matter and materiality are possible. He, too, states that such a belief in multiple materiality is common to all past and present non-Western cultures. Yet, he complains, this theme was and is repeatedly ignored in our culture and our philosophy of life, even though there are often ample reasons to mention the belief in this hylic pluralism. G.R.S. Mead (1863/1933), *The subtle body in western tradition* (17), writes that belief in the existence of a fine substance is "one of the oldest persuasions of mankind".

Our Western culture has known, and still knows, a number of prominent thinkers and philosophical schools that were or are not familiar with the topic of "subtle matter". Yet, according to the Apostle Paul (*1 Cor. 15*), man consists of a biological body, a subtle soul and a non-material spirit. The church fathers Origen and Tertullian also adhered to this threefold nature. In the fourth century, with Augustine, the two terms 'spirit' and 'soul' began to be used

interchangeably as if they were synonyms. Thus, eight hundred years later, the great scholastic thinker Thomas Aquinas taught that angels are immaterial, pure spirits. For René Descartes, man was as a machine, animated by a kind of immaterial angel. Immanuel Kant further asserted that paranormal phenomena, which would usually manifest themselves in a subtle way, are simply unknowable to man. More recently, the 1964 Catechism of Mechelen (Mechelen in Belgium) defined man twofold, as a creature gifted with reason, composed of an immortal soul and a mortal body. Whereas the Council of Constantinople in 381 still spoke of a (fine material) resurrection of the dead, this Catechism in "The Twelve Articles of Faith" speaks of "the resurrection of the flesh".

In passing, let us note the following when using this catechism: the catechist who refused to use this booklet in his or her lessons in a Christian school sixty years ago was reprimanded. And the catechist who wants to use it today is also reprimanded. Anyone who thinks about this for a moment can see that something is not right here.

Thus grew the current dominant Western view that sees all existence as exclusively twofold: phenomena are either entirely material, like 'hard' science and like basically everyone experiences them, or they are entirely immaterial. By the latter is meant our thoughts, concepts, possibly even angels and other non-coarse material beings. But there is no third possibility. And all this leads to the fact that people who do have paranormal experiences prefer to conceal them, because they will not be believed anyway and fear being ridiculed. Some complain that a phenomenon is condemned, not for its use, but for its non-use, possibly for its abuse.

Everyone immediately sees the error in reasoning such as: "Antarctica does not exist, because I have never been there". But not everyone notices the analogous error in reasoning like: "Paranormal experiences do not exist, because I have never had one".

Traditional philosophy and many non-Western cultures, however, held and continue to hold to a threefold nature: in addition to the coarse material and the immaterial, there is also a great deal of room for a variety of fine material processes and fine material beings.

Making the invisible visible?

Let us clarify it first: what tradition wants to communicate about subtle or rarefied matter has nothing at all to do with anything related to nuclear physics and nuclear processes. Here we are dealing with something quite different.

In more recent times, extensive attempts have been made to make what is invisible to the eye, visible. Telescopes and microscopes are the well-known applications. Another example is that part of optics that tries to visualize fine liquids, gases and other flows that are invisible to the eye, a process referred to by the technical term "flow visualization". A well-known experiment in this respect is the visualization of the heat emitted by a burning candle. Or think of wind tunnels where car or aircraft models are tested for their aerodynamic properties.

The so-called "Schlierenoptica", the German term for "Schliere" meaning "string", is also used for this purpose. Strings of rising hot air disrupt the light path, causing the light rays to deviate slightly and create a shadow effect. We refer, for example, to the shadow that the smoke of boiling water can cause on a wall, or to the air vibrations that become visible above an asphalt road on a hot summer's day.

We should also mention the so-called kirlian photography that was discovered by chance in the 1930s. Objects are subjected to a voltage of a thousand volts and photographed using a special technique. This reveals a remarkable halo around, for example, the hands. The answer to the question whether something of the aura can be seen here can only be nuanced. Experts say that the radiation around the fingertips, for example, is only a first, very vague form of "seeing" the "aura", and that the actual "clairvoyance" lies much deeper. Kirlian photography would only be a first and very superficial step in that direction.



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The theme of 'thin matter' is not without significance from a philosophical point of view. Its existence or non-existence is indeed one of the great philosophical-religious questions.

We are embarking on a quest...

So we started experimenting - somewhat naively and overconfidently at first - without realizing how extensive and far from simple this work would be. It also turned out that not everyone was equally set up for such research. "Serious science can't go into something like this," some sighed dubiously. Of course, everyone has the democratic right to his or her own opinion.

The critical rationalist Karl Popper (22) argued that the natural sciences do not consist of a firm and certain knowledge, but of bold hypotheses. What would be wrong, then, if we were to postulate the existence of a fine substance as a possibility? Formulating a hypothesis, designing a series of experiments, testing them and drawing the necessary logical conclusions by means of verification or falsification: such a method does not seem unscientific to us. It is possible that the interpretation of data may conflict with a prevailing mentality. But should our ideas reflect reality as much as possible? Or do we prefer to transform reality according to our conceptions, to a certain spirit of the time and fashion?

In an attempt to make something visible of what is not visible, we have conceived and built a number of interference set-ups using the mirror of our Newtonian telescope. A more detailed description of these experiments, for those who want to understand them technically, or even do them again, is given at the end of this text in a second section. Here, we only explain the broad outlines.

Optical Interference

This has many applications, including in astronomy and microscopy (23).



x



xi

The display of colors in a soap bubble or in a layer of oil, for example, is the result of interference, of the interaction of many light rays. If we hold the screen of our mobile phone (which is turned off) in a dark room near a lamp, the screen will show a lot of multicolored interference lines.

Let us try to explain this phenomenon.

If you throw a stone into still water, the waves it causes will create a series of concentric and ever expanding circles.



If two stones are thrown into the water at the same time and at a short distance from each other, one sees the waves, caused by the one stone, "penetrate" the waves of the other stone. Where two wave tops meet, one has a higher top; where two wave troughs meet, one has a deeper trough. And where a wave top reaches a trough, or a trough reaches a wave top, they neutralize each other: in both cases the wave 'fills' the trough. The water then remains at its original level, almost as if nothing had happened.

Light also travels in waves, but these are extremely small. There are about two thousands of them in a single millimeter, which says something about the almost draconian precision with which such set-ups have to be built. Where two wave tops or troughs meet, there is twice as much light; where a wave top and a trough fill, they neutralize each other and the strange phenomenon of each extinguishing the other occurs. Light added to light gives... darkness. One speaks in that case of destructive interference. We will come back to this phenomenon later on in the text.

1. A radial interferometer

In a radial interferometer, the light is split into two partial beams that are slightly different in diameter. In the setup we are planning, this difference is too small to be seen by the eye, but still sufficient to cause interference effects. So we build a radial interferometer and then bring the hand into the light path. We see images like the one below. The hand heats up the surrounding air and this turbulence obstructs the light, causing it to deviate. This leads to a color shift. We see strings of warm air constantly rising upwards. The whole process is very dynamic and provides a fascinating spectacle.



xii



xiii



xiv

Please note that we only represent what is shown in drawings. Our 'point' light source has a diameter of barely 0.3 mm and capturing the result in a photograph is not so easy.

2. A reversal interferometer.

Next, we design and build a reversal interferometer. Here one half of the image mixes or interferes with the mirror image of the other half. We then hold the finger just in front of the mirror M, as shown in the drawing below on the left. An image is formed as shown in the middle. We see the result in the drawing on the right.



xv



xvi



xvii

Let us look at the picture on the right. The heat from the finger warms the surrounding air and makes it rise. Possibly the evaporation of the finger itself also plays a role. It is remarkable that the turbulence is clearly circumscribed. It seems as if the evaporation is somewhat 'caught' between two light waves, between two 'rainbows'. Yet colorful heat bubbles regularly escape, somewhat analogous to soap bubbles that rise. If one gently moves the finger back and forth, the turbulence follows with some delay, almost like moving a burning match gently back and forth. It remains an unusual and fascinating spectacle.

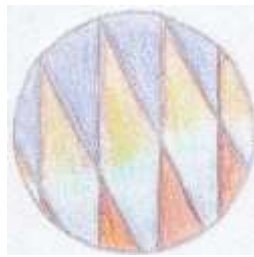
3. A multiple-interference setup.

We then asked ourselves whether we could make two interferences interfere with each other and what images this would produce. We searched the internet to see if something like this had ever been done before. But perhaps we did not search well enough, because we did not find anything of the kind.

If we think about this for a moment, it seems to us that a set-up with such double interference will be much more difficult to build, but if it is successful, it will probably be an exceptionally sensitive instrument. The slightest movement of, and also in, such a setup will immediately result in a large color shift and an abundance of colors.

Compare this effect somewhat with that of a vernier on an ordinary caliper. At the bottom, the caliper indicates the length of the enclosed object in mm, but the vernier above it gives us a much more accurate result, e.g. in tenths of a mm. Similarly, we expect double interference to produce color differences more quickly, making it a much more accurate measuring instrument.

So, we devise and build a set-up in which two distinct interferences unite. Not two beams of light that interfere with each other. But two interferences that we want to make interfere with each other. We can see what happens in the picture below.



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A number of vertical, broad interference lines are formed, which are crossed by inclined interference lines. Here, too, both partial beams 'mix' with each other and form a beautiful and symmetrical color pattern. If we bring the index finger into the arrangement, there are hardly any shifts in the colors. On closer inspection, this was somewhat to be expected. If we want to achieve this, it seems advisable to adjust the set-up in such a way that the surface of our mirror is only filled with one single color. How this high degree of accuracy is to be achieved still requires some thinking.

Let us now take a look at the various results of our experiments.

A preliminary conclusion

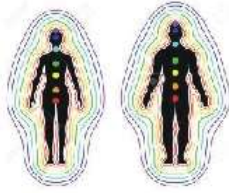
These set-ups do show us some unusual and beautiful color effects, but we don't notice anything of an emerging aura yet. What we are looking for does not show up at all. So let us leave hard science aside for a moment and listen to what clairvoyants have to tell us about it. Maybe they will give us some good indications.

Our aura according to clairvoyants

Dione Fortune, an English occultist from the first half of the 20th century, mentions in her book *Spiritism* (33) that this aura "under certain light conditions, could be seen even with ordinary eyesight". Ph. Payne, *Latent Powers in Man* (34) seems to confirm this. She writes that the aura "is visible to the normal eye under favorable lighting conditions. Many can even catch a glimpse of it by bringing their fingertips together in the semi-dark and then slowly pulling them apart. A nebulous effusion can then be seen flowing from one hand to the other. This is easiest to see against a dark background. (...) It is perceived by many, who have scarcely more than normal eyesight, as a greyish, flaky mass, radiating from the skin and especially visible around the head and hands".

Similar descriptions can be found in the book by Barbara Brennan, *Light on the Aura* (35): She writes: "Usually, rays of the lighter blue come from the fingertips, toes and head. Most people are able to see these rays from their fingertips after a few minutes. To see the aura, you need 'night eyes'. The eye then adjusts itself to the darkness. You will notice that you can see the aura of your hand better if you do not look directly at it, but focus your eyes on something just beside your hand, something that is somewhat further away. The light-sensitive cells in the retina of your eyes consist of rods and cones. The cones are for daytime, to see bright colors. The rods are much more sensitive to lower levels of light, that's what you look with at night, and that's what you use here."

Many clairvoyants also claim that if they are in a dark room for a few hours, they see all objects light up.



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On the Internet (39), a video attempts to show us a very modest image of this first, thin layer, immediately around our index fingers. Continuous back and forth movements of both fingers are used to illustrate that there is a thin, hazy mass around each finger. In addition, if the two index fingers are brought very close together, a fine, thin thread would connect them.



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Payne further writes (40) that this aura shows itself "as a silver-grey mist radiating straight from the body and most easily seen at the extremities of the head, fingertips and toes. Many people are able to see it under certain circumstances, e.g. when the hand is held against a black background in dim light". So much for Payne.

As already mentioned, an aura surrounds every human being, like an energy field, in different and increasingly rarefied layers. However, not all layers would be of an optical nature, so that it would be useless to try to investigate these last and thinnest layers with optical instruments. These finer layers would also be of a very complex structure. They can only be seen through the so-called 'third eye', in an exclusively paranormal way. Only a very few people are thought to possess this stronger form of clairvoyance.

It may come as a surprise that our scientific knowledge is developing so rapidly in just about all fields, but that in this fine material field, despite some good indications, hardly any progress has been made. In 1931, some ninety years ago, when there was no such thing as a laser, essential for aligning optical components, Fortune (41) wrote that "its discovery is probably only a matter of time." Let's hope her statement is more than a wishful thinking.

From the findings of Fortune, Payne and Brennan, we take the following two clues: on the one hand, the favorable lighting conditions, and on the other hand, they emphasize darkness: the black background, semi-darkness and night eyes. Let us first consider the first clue: favorable lighting.

Because the surface of our concave mirror can capture much more light than the eye can, we see stars that are invisible to us. The eye has a pupil diameter of about 6 mm. However, our

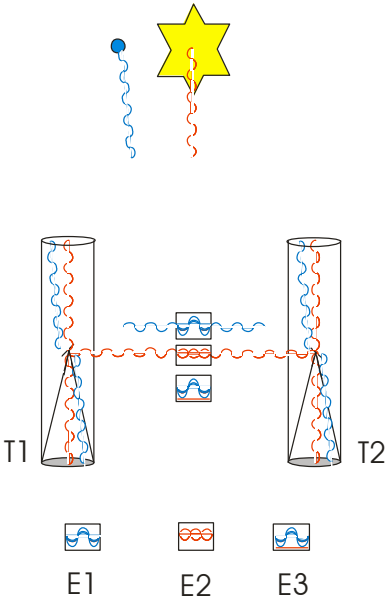
mirror has a diameter of 155 mm, so that it catches about six hundred times more ($\pi \cdot r^2$) light. We assume that with the use of our mirror the favorable exposure conditions are met.

The second clue is the black background, the semi-darkness and the night eyes. At first sight, it seems a bit contradictory. If you want to look more closely at something in a telescope or microscope, you usually need more light. And here, apparently, the reverse is true. So we ask ourselves whether there is anything in the world of astronomy that bears any resemblance or connection to this second condition. After some searching, this brings us to the so-called "nulling" interferometry. Let's go into it here.

"Nulling interferometry

Thinking back to the star world. The question of whether other planets like our Earth exist elsewhere in the universe is very topical in our time. Finding such planets is not so easy. If they are too far from a star, they are too dim. If they are too close, the blinding light intensity of this celestial object prevents the observation of the planet. This is why one of the tools used is destructive interference: light beams can, under certain conditions, extinguish themselves. We have explained this higher up in this text.

In the drawing below, we see 2 similar telescopes T1 and T2, which are aimed at the same star. Because the distance to this star can be thought to be infinitely large, and the telescopes are close together, the light from the star in T1 falls parallel to the light from that star in T2. In the drawing, these light rays are shown as light waves in red color.



The light beams of T1 and T2, coming from the star, are brought together, however with a difference of half a wavelength. But this means that they will destructively interfere and thus extinguish each other. The observer in E2 ('E' from 'Eye') no longer sees the starlight or sees it very attenuated. The two destructive waves level each other out and are shown by a red straight line. The star is thus barely or no longer visible.

The star also illuminates the blue planet on the right. But that means that the - blue colored - light path from the star via the planet to both our telescopes, now takes a longer path than the

light coming directly from the star to T1 and T2. Moreover, this light now falls obliquely into both telescopes.

If the blue light beams from the two telescopes are united, the phase difference is different from that of the red light. The blue light path between T1 and T2 obviously takes the same path as the red light path and so we should actually make both light paths coincide in the drawing above. So in order not to make the drawing too heavy we have drawn the blue waves slightly above the red ones, but actually they follow the same path.

If we adjust the light waves in such a way that the blue interference is constructive - as shown in E1 - and the red interference destructive, then - see E3 - the blue planet becomes visible.

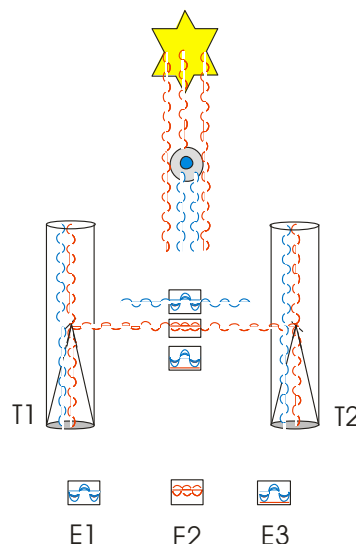
However, if a planet is between the star and the earth, then hardly anything can be achieved with this technique. The blinding light from the star makes it almost impossible to observe the planet. Moreover, the planet is then facing the earth with its dark side.

And let's add immediately that the accuracy required to achieve destructive or constructive interference in a quasi-direct manner is unthinkable for the ordinary tinkerer. Such precision requires a great deal of high-quality, professional optical equipment.

So is this the end of our story? No, because we invented, calculated and built a kind of interferometer in which two coherent light points can be brought exceptionally close together indirectly. Explaining all this here probably requires more than an ordinary knowledge of optics. So we will not go into it here. However, those who wish to do so will find a detailed explanation in a second section, following this introductory text.

As mentioned, this nulling interferometry can be used when a planet is next to a star. Not so when the planet is between the star and the Earth.

However, imagine that a planet is located there anyway, and that it has a very large atmosphere. In a nulling arrangement, the light of the star will therefore be able to be obscured. But - and this is the decisive point - the light that passes through the assumed atmosphere of the planet will experience a resistance, a delay, as a result, so that this destructive interference could cancel itself out just around the planet and so, the planet might become visible.



Now it is unlikely that planets exist with such immense atmospheres. But that is not our concern.

Returning to our optical bench: we replace the planet with our index finger, we compare its atmosphere with the assumed thin layer around our finger. The question is: do we manage to achieve destructive interference with our optical means, and if so, what will show up if we then bring the index finger into the light path.

It is a far from simple task. Patient experimentation, then, and learning from many failures how not to do it and what could possibly be improved. Eventually we get a field of vision shrouded in destructive darkness. Finally, we bring the index finger into the path of light and see what shows itself.



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Indeed, just next to our finger, very faintly and mistily, we notice a bright yellowish band against a dark background. This yellow color is easy to explain: there, the interference of our light source is constructive, the light intensity increases. Think back to the waves in the water, where two peaks or two troughs reinforce each other. Above the finger, we can hardly see any strings of rising warm air. The latter speaks for itself: when adjusted as precisely as possible, there are mainly delayed, but hardly any diverted light rays. So, of course, there is no difference in refractive index with non-deviated light rays. If we move the finger gently up and down, the band does seem to follow the finger, but always with a certain delay.

If we adjust the image so that it is even further away from the destructive interference - an extremely precise task - we see the mirror surface in a single color of the spectrum. If we now place the finger in the path of light, the band shows itself in a different and adjacent color. As was to be expected, the heat strings begin to appear again here. The two images of the different light paths no longer coincide exactly, but are doubled up in such a way that the eye does not perceive them.



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In the end, the strings are so intense that it becomes more difficult to see the yellow band. What this band is, we will not go into here.

We extended this last experiment by letting the light undergo a second interference. In the end, we see an interference of two interferences emerges. The images are beautiful, the set-up is very sensitive. Even the gentle touching of one of the adjustment screws results in a kaleidoscopic and changing color panorama, until one watches, almost with bated breath, when the image stabilizes. If we then hold our hand in front of the mirror, we see an IFW (infinite fringe width), and quite intense color turbulences, or, if we adjust for the destructive line, we see the luminous band around the hand again. The quality of the image suffers, however, because of the many optical components that have to be run through.

Finally, an arrangement with a combination of the two previous ones is also conceivable. In practice, these are far from simple and we have not built them.

So far a summary of these experiments.

How to interpret all this?

Adherents of the belief in a hylic pluralism might argue that here something of the first thin, most coarse band of the aura is possibly showing up and that the hypothesis of the existence of even finer kinds of matter is thus becoming more probable. Paraphrasing Galileo, they might exclaim with some triumph "eppure, lui esiste", "and yet, it (the aura) exists". History teaches us that in 1633 Galileo was forced by the Church authorities to retract his claim that the earth revolves around the sun. He complied with this request, but immediately afterwards he whispered, but loud enough for everyone to hear: "Eppur si muove", "and yet, she (earth) revolves" (around the sun).

For hard science this is perhaps a little more difficult. From traditional metaphysics, the proponents of the belief in the existence of a fine substance may point out to us that the "philosophia perennis", the "eternal philosophy", the collective name of philosophical views that defy the ages, has always maintained that hard science does not encompass the whole field of reality, but that it is only a subset of it. Science is constantly growing. What is not scientific today may be so tomorrow. Something is scientific if, among other things, it satisfies the axioms of science. An experiment is only recognized as scientific if it can be repeated and if the same conclusions are reached under the same conditions.

But the axioms of science are limited. How, traditional philosophy wonders, can one make statements about the infinite with finite premises? How, for instance, to prove in a scientific way that a child is convinced that his parents like him and that they love each other? And if this cannot be demonstrated in a hard scientific way, can one conclude that they do not like each other? Think here of the Russian writer N. Tolstoi. He said that every thorough reasoning about love, destroys it. How, for example, can one make scientific statements about paranormal phenomena, about the existence of the soul, the deity or religious experiences if these are a priori excluded as non-scientific? Science judges whether something is scientific or not, but not whether something exists or not. The latter belongs to the field of ontology or the theory of being.

Real, methodical science is aware of its limits. It will, with good reason, give priority to a hard-scientific explanation. And if that is not found immediately, it will have to suspend its judgement and declare itself (provisionally?) incompetent. In view of its axiomatic, which keeps to a hylic monism, to the matter of hard science, it cannot and must not accept non-scientific explanations.

The situation is different - always according to traditional philosophy - with a form of ideological science, which prefers to reject all paranormal phenomena a priori and which believes that it covers the entire field of reality. Among other things, it states that the all-pervasive physics is the basic science of all phenomena in nature. Biology has become a part of it, as have chemistry, nuclear physics, astronomy, even the brain sciences, and in the wake of that, human consciousness arises - apparently entirely spontaneously. Out of that, out of this spontaneously arisen consciousness, a number of thinkers can then gradually develop what remains of 'philosophy'. An all too materialistic vision of life will be inclined to deny the existence of a thin substance in advance, so a priori. Its possible reality character might have far-reaching philosophical and even religious consequences. To question one's own, all too ideological or all too materialistic, views on life is indeed a far from easy task. All this was beautifully illustrated by a scientist who, after being confronted with the results of these experiments, maintained that this cannot be real science.

Classical metaphysics states that a human being is not a body, but has a body. He is essentially an immaterial soul, which literally 'animates' the biological body via a number of subtle bodies. With the great German thinker J.F. Hegel, it could be argued that a culture without metaphysics, without a belief in something that transcends the material level, resembles a much-decorated church, but without a supreme sanctuary. Something similar was also the great concern of, among others, the Christian Orthodox philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (45) and even of the existentialist thinker J.P. Sartre (). If everything is reduced to pure matter and nothing higher exists, what is then the meaning and purpose of the human conscience? How then, for example, can we find a higher justification for our ethical standards? Or for religion?

Modern man is easily overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of daily life and usually has little time for such profound questions. However, in the light of, for example, a penetrating psychic experience, a striking setback, a lingering illness, an approaching death and the question of what comes next, one sometimes gives more thought to the deeper meaning of life. Many feel intuitively that death does not have the last word. Yes something in them 'knows' and 'feels' that even after biological death, 'life', but in a spiritually elevated sense, does not end, and cannot end. For them it is simply impossible and totally meaningless that the passing of a human being would be the final end.

Here we refer for example to *1 Samuel 28: 3/25*, where a rather unusual testimony for the Bible is mentioned: The witch of Endor. Let us summarise. King Saul found himself with his soldiers facing the mighty army of the Philistines. He was terrified and asked the witch, a summoner of the dead, to consult the spectre of the prophet Samuel in the hope that he might be able to advise him. She did call Samuel, but he said that the dead should be left alone and that Saul would die in the battle and enter the realm of the dead himself, which happened afterwards.

Connoisseurs tell us that the summoner of the dead belongs to a particularly gifted type of clairvoyant. She is an 'elohim', a being with great spiritual power. The Bible, of course, assumes that the death of the biological body is not the end, and that after death one also has a consciousness and even a body, although this body is subtle and nebulous like a phantom. Moreover, Samuel's ghost is not in a higher or heavenly realm, but in a kind of underworld, yes, in 'the depths of the earth'. Even if he is a prophet. The event, insiders say, took place before Jesus 'descended into hell' just after his death on his cross. Only then can souls, possibly after a longer or shorter stay, depending on their 'occult status', be released from this dim existence, escape it and 'rise' from it and pass on to higher and brighter regions. Whoever looks at the

world as it really is, quickly understands that not everyone ascends automatically to a higher light world after death.

As with the miracles in the Gospels, our times consider such testimonies to be no more than a literary genre, far removed from any earthly reality. But look, Homer's *Odyssey* (47), chapter VII, *To the realm of spectres*, also describes a hellish journey, as does the Roman writer Virgil in his *Aeneid*, song VI. The great Italian poet Dante Alighieri also takes us, in his *Divine Comedy* (48) "in a hundred songs", to souls in the underworld, to the mountain of purification and finally to a kind of paradise. With his poetry, he summarizes the dominant ideas of scholastic philosophy.

Recent, psychically gifted writers such as J. Grant (49) and G. Van der Zeeuw (50) give us similar testimonies. And whoever has even a minimal knowledge of shamanism, as described by P. Vitebski, (51) for example, knows that a real shaman also visits the underworld or higher spaces in his out-of-body situation, in his attempt to magically solve all kinds of life problems.

Connoisseurs regret that today's Western man is hardly prepared for a life on the other side, and that even after death he or she often does not even realize his or her own depraved state. Panicked by the unusual and strange environment in which they have ended up, they sometimes try to cling to their earthly existence, where they can no longer find their way either. Then, according to clairvoyant initiates, it takes a lot of psychic expertise, energy and persuasion to make such wandering souls realize their true condition and to try to help them further. Most of the time, such workers are completely silent about this. As mentioned, our world rarely takes their task seriously and usually their sparse testimonies lead to disbelief and even to bitter scorn.

The Danish existentialist-religious thinker S. Kierkegaard (52) stated, with regard to life and death, that the reasoning mind represents only the conscious and superficial level in man, but that hidden underneath, in our intuitions, in our unconscious and subconscious, the deeper, the real life is gradually being realized. He believed that it is the intuitive feeling that convinces, and not the rational proof. To put it bluntly: some people do not need convincing at all, they are convinced as it were. And the others, with all the effort in the world, you cannot convince at all. They will never be convinced. Apparently, our overly materialistic age - in the words of the French vitalist thinker H. Bergson - is in great need of "un supplément d'âme", an extra dose of soul-force.

After this digression, let us return to our optical experiments and conclude by stating that in all this we hold a strictly logical position. Both theses: "Fine dust does not exist, because its existence has not been proven" and "Fine dust exists, because its non-existence has not been proven", are incorrect statements. Fine dust has not yet been widely and scientifically established. But it would be imprudent to definitively exclude it a priori. Nor has its non-existence been proven, but logically that is also an option that must be kept open.

We prefer to remain with a cautious hypothesis: perhaps it exists. Further research, carried out with much more precision than ours, may verify it, add to it, or possibly even falsify it. We have carried out some experiments that may point in the direction of the existence of a fine substance, but we have not achieved the convincing proof, the evidence to enforce this universally and in a hard scientific way. Rather, this conviction is only individual or private. So let us remain extremely modest. What does an amateur, with a few self-grinded hollow mirrors of only 155 mm diameter and some optical material, have to say to such an extensive optical

science? At most, our tinkering might have brought the subject of "fine dust" and what it entails a little more to the foreground.

Possibly, however, all this could spur further research at a higher, professional level. The question remains: what would happen if larger telescopes, with mirrors of 2 meters diameter or more, and with an accuracy that is incomparably better than ours, were to literally put the whole human being in the spotlight? Would other, possibly unprecedented perspectives about us, humans, then - literally - come to light? These remain extremely fascinating and intriguing questions.

From Christmas to Easter
Quarantine year 2020-2021

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