

1. Notes from the class of 13 04 98

An introductory word on paranormal power operations (8 pages).

(Editorial : Mr. T'Jampens is speaking.)

I'm going to underline something beforehand: the use of visualizations. Physicists in particular use that word. An unknown original is better made known by a known model. Rather, to understand physics properly, one must be specialized. The original is then specialist knowledge. All others, as outsiders, then have little or no access to it. If scientists speak about their field to people who are not at home in it, then they must use a generally accessible model, to something that belongs to the common, the common mind and that is peculiar to all people.

Illustrate. It is said that an atom consists of a nucleus with a number of electrons around it. That is a model, but original is much more complicated. The model gives a visual representation, a kind of translation of something specialized into an unspecialized form.

Cosmology is that part of physics which deals mainly with mathematical structural formulas. Think of Einstein's formula, and pretty much the basic formula of all physics: $E = mc^2$. This formula says that energy and matter are interchangeable from a certain point of view. Energy is a form of matter, and vice versa. In 1 gram of matter there is an enormous energy. It can be calculated by multiplying its mass by the square of the speed of light. An awful lot of energy is needed to form little mass, or, little mass can be converted into gigantic energy. The latter is applied, for example, in a nuclear power plant. Einstein first published a text on his theory of relativity in 1905. If you're not versed in mathematics, you don't really know what it's about. Those who do study mathematics, but in a non-specialized way, are somewhere in between. Although not really specialized, such a person already reaches above what a janitorial, what the common or common mind can tell about it. Physicists visualize, they use terms familiar to the general public to discuss about their not so accessible theory. People in education do the same; the original, difficult subject matter is constantly translated to the childlike level using many accessible models.

This is equally true of philosophical theology. Religious science is a very specialized science. I have been involved in it since 1956. I did read a lot about it, and discovered a world I can speak about, but still it remains difficult. In the text that deals with philosophical theology,

I give the basic concepts that you can understand, so that the basic concepts of the Bible are also clarified.

The same also applies to philosophical psychology or humanities. That decays into 2 parts: a biological part and a part covering paranormology. The course consists of texts chosen for your level. It is serious and solid information that you can understand. Writing solid texts is not always easy. At the universities of Lausanne and Geneva today, courses are set up for scientists and lawyers to draft solid texts that are also written in an acceptable style. Finding good texts for you is my constant concern, so that when you leave from here after the third year, you will have serious and solid information. You thus appropriate a world, which eventually forms you. 'General education,' so that you are somewhat at home in a lot of things anyway. This is also the principle of Harvard, the university in the U.S., so that one is kept far away from all professional idiocy.

I started studying the paranormal in 1956, thanks to a meeting with Prof. van Esbroek, who was a professor at the engineering school in Ghent. He drew my attention to that problem of paranormology, which was very neglected at the time. And I see now that he was right. Most Western people have no real understanding anymore of what religion once was and in some non-Western cultures still is. The result with us: churches are emptying, religion hardly tells many people anything anymore. They have virtually no contact with the essence of religion itself. My colleague who teaches catechesis (lecturer at HIVO) has a very different viewpoint from mine. Catechesis is rhetoric, which is conveying a message to an audience. My problem is different and deals with the ontology itself of religion. What exactly is religion? What is its essence? Not: how can I convey the Catholic religion to children? The latter is rhetoric. In a world alienated from religion, giving catechesis becomes an unlikely job.

Twenty years ago talking about religion was not really "in," now however, it has become a sought-after topic yes a fashion, even among atheists. Religion is becoming very current. I began to study in 1940 I can somewhat trace the waves and fashions to which the intellectual world is subject, and it does remind me more sometimes of women's fashions that also undergo a lot of changes.

The word visualize is somewhat unfortunate. It would be better to speak of models. It is about similarities and connections, about a fact that resembles the original and is related to it, yet is not the same. One speaks of analogy.

Some friends in Geneva provided me with a book¹, which is unique of its kind: a scientific study of the near death experience of a well-defined type. The Russian writer Tolstoi knows this phenomenon very well, and in one of his books describes a death near experience of a certain Ivan Illich. This one fell into a deep sleep and while sleeping experienced a so-called out-of-body experience, in which the fine material body leaves the gross material. Apparently dead, he then possesses a form of heightened consciousness and finds himself in a luminous world. Doctors and nurses also sometimes hear such stories from terminally ill patients. Suddenly, seemingly for no reason, their mood improves, a smile shows on their face, they are no longer in pain, and have only one desire: to be able to die. They want to go to the shining world they have seen. Of such experiences around the world, Osis and Haraldson made a comprehensive study, even involving medical personnel from India and America. This was to have data from cultures other than just Western European culture as well.

Their conclusion: an exit is independent of the culture or religious choice of the terminally ill person. So the existence of a luminous world gains in probability. I have one objection to that book and that is the following: what differs from their experiences the authors call a mythical aberration. However, there are other and equally true visions but not so spectacular². In my opinion, such studies, which nevertheless have a scientific level, enrich and strengthen the science of religion. There you learn a lot and this in the most scientific way possible.

In *Scientific American* last September, a specialist is speaking on the effect of hypnosis and other methods of suggestion. In Mons (Mons, Belgium), hypnosis was used to attack a senior justice official. I held my heart, because hypnotic statements can be taken as true with a very high degree of reservation.

Beware of statements by people who have been hypnotized. I have radically opposed all forms of hypnosis, with or without the consent of the hypnotized. For all hypnosis deprives the

¹Osis K, Haraldson E., On the threshold; visions of dying, Amsterdam, Meulenhof, 1979.// Karlis Osis, Erlendur Haraldsson Ph. D. - At The Hour Of Death: A New Look At Evidence For Life After Death.

² See the book 'the Homo religiosus' on this site, section 6.1.1.: a joy beyond death.

will of the man or woman undergoing it. Hypnosis is a far-reaching degree of suggestion and self-alienation, and then you can play with people and make them do and say all sorts of things. Doctors use it, for example, to take away a toothache. Even with such a seemingly harmless use, I have questions. In my opinion, hypnosis is not harmless at all. But given that it is used in scientific circles, fine by me, but I always advise against it. If I want to help people with a problem, they have to be as conscious as possible. They have to be there with their mind. Then they can process it with their own personality. If you put them in hypnosis, you put them in a dream state. You are yourself and not yourself. What kind of "I" is that when you are dreaming? You are not in control of yourself and not in control of yourself. I have texts from psychologists who write that it doesn't matter if something that surfaces is true or not, as long as it surfaces. Yes but, take those so-called satanic rites, if they never really took place, but the hypnotized person tells about it, what can a psychologist do with that? If that ever took place then you can say there is a problem there, but if that is pure fiction, what therapeutic value does that have? I can't there, I find people hypnotizing rather experimenting but in a very dangerous way.

How can one talk about the paranormal to people who have never known it? Yet I know few people who have never had a paranormal experience, or have never heard of one from a trusted person who has. The fact is that our culture does repress that. It may be a good thing in some cases. I know people who are involved with it in such an unwise way that after a few years they also suffer from something ... You have to be good and logical in your skin to be involved with that.

Catechesis on the one hand and ontology of religion on the other, differ. Ontology of religion asks the question: how real is religion? And; how is it real. The catechist asks the question: how do I instill religion in people, which is a different perspective. The Greeks made strict distinctions between ontology, rhetoric and science. Science is subject specialization. Most people who teach catechesis interpret religion rationalistically. It is difficult to do otherwise. After all, our Western European culture is rationalistic. One gets into trouble all too easily in our culture if one includes too much of the paranormal in religion classes. How to convey religion to children or adults if you do not fit in with that all too rationalistic way of thinking. If people are open to this, then you can talk about religion as an experiential force,. All archaic cultures are religious. Religion is the foundation of the whole culture. In the West, since the late Middle Ages, that ontological foundation has been replaced by scientific, nominalistic reason. This reason leaves no room for psychic inspirations. That is why our

culture poses problems for those non-Western cultures, which is after all about 80% of the world's population. Those people do not understand us Westerners.

A friend missionary on Peru tells me that in order to introduce a chemical product to those Indians in agriculture, there is only one way, address the people there in such a way that "Mother Earth" accepts that product. Then the local people will accept it. Western propaganda will not achieve much. You will encounter rejection. Those people there cannot place that in their world understanding. Pascha mama, (literally translated: the corpulent lady) can be compared to our old Venuses, very old and corpulent female figures representing Mother Earth. Even as far away as Russia one finds them. Those cultures still live by that. They do not know pure chemistry, but they do know chemistry integrated into their religion, which goes in and is acceptable. Not so much scientists, but missionaries, Protestant or Catholic, make contact with that population much easier than scientists, precisely because they live with it.

To understand local populations, a solid course of religious studies is important; only then can one penetrate their mentality. In some cases, ethnology courses are written too rationalistically. To a girl who took such a course I asked him that text for perusal. There was not much religion in it, on the contrary. Moreover, the course was biased. I told her: your prof is a pure anarchist, all that is authority from parents, teachers, patrons, is like a red cloth on his bullish consciousness. And I catch him being dishonest. I read in that course that he talks about Margaret Mead³, the head of American ethnology.

His opinion of Margaret Mead is extremely favorable, but a more recent Australian study says Mead made many scientific errors. I told the girl she could feel free to tell that to her prof. Which she did. To which the prof replied, "I do know that, but what Mead says is so important that I can't deviate from it." So afterwards I asked the girl, "Is your prof now scientific and honest? He is willfully concealing that this Mead study is false. Your prof is not objective." After that Australian study, Mead was deleted as required reading in ethnology at universities in the US.

³See the book "The Homo religiosus" on this site, chapter 2,1.: "An anthropological fallacy").

People blame the Church for not always being tolerant, but on the other side, the non-clerical side, sometimes they are not tolerant either. If you bring some scientists' axioms before their eyes, you sometimes notice their enormous resistance to the fact that there are data which, although not strictly scientific, exist anyway. An ideological form of science believes that it covers the whole field of reality. What is not scientific then does not exist. A methodical form of science knows that it studies only a part of reality, and that part which corresponds to its axiomatics. For example, an experiment acquires scientific status if it is repeated in similar circumstances and, in doing so, always reaches similar conclusions. But such strict criteria lead some data to exist, but not in a scientific way. Some scientists do not want to know that something can exist outside the realm of science. Freudians, psychologists and psychiatrists speak of a certain resistance. The subject, here the ideologically - not methodically - minded scientist, is more likely not to want to have known that he or she is wrong.

What is philosophy or philosophy of philosophy? Philosophy is not a religion, there is a philosophy in all religions, and there are many philosophies that are religious, but it is not the same thing. What philosophy is not I want to clarify through counter models.

Philosophy is not art, although, all great art carries a philosophy in it. Dante's *Divina comedia* contains medieval philosophy and theology turned into a work of art. And so does Goethe's study of the Gothic cathedral. He finds there the characteristics, expressed in stone and glass, of a well-defined philosophy. Nor is art philosophy.

Ideology is a kind of "philosophy" but with rhetorical purposes. Unlike philosophy, an ideology does not seek objective truth, but rather a set of axioms to influence people.

A life and worldview in itself, is not yet philosophy, if only because in a worldview one does not look for a strict justification.

Scientists easily have a philosophical view: usually a strongly scientist-inspired one, viz. they are influenced in such a way that they see the world, the universe and reality according to their specialization.

Philosophy is concerned with the really is that encompasses all subfields. Philosophy is not common sense thinking, common sense thinking. However, at the basis of all philosophy and

science is common sense thinking. Think of the stages of evolution as Solovief describes them, starting from the common sense: the stone exists, the plant is alive, the animal has consciousness, man is capable of religion. Solovief views reality in a deepened, philosophical way. This is also how every professional science begins, with the common sense, but exceeds it.

Philosophy is more than a world and life view; it seeks a methodical account of it. One "practices" phenomenology and elaborates on it further and in a logical way. Common sense also does that, but philosophically it is done as methodically as possible. Phenomenology wants to represent the fact as it shows itself to consciousness, which also implies psychic inspirations. They too show themselves to the one who perceives them. Phenomenology shows what is directly known without effort. Logic never exists without phenomenology because logic begins with that which is given and seeks that which is asked. Ontology brings up "beingness," I prefer the word "reality" that is given. On the given follows the asked. That leads to logical reasoning. Logic always follows that. Logic begins with something that is given and looks for something that is asked. The strict logical method makes philosophy : the object, in its broadest understanding, tested or as testable as possible.

People do not succeed in capturing the totality of reality in one comprehensive system. Reality is too vast and complex for that. Yet it is a coherent system, if not there are contradictions. Plato and Socrates did not believe that the human mind can arrive at one comprehensive system. They did believe, however, that reality ultimately contains no contradictions. That the human mind can grasp it in its entirety, they do not believe. Hence Plato's dialogues, he sticks to different opinions and samples. His dialogues often remain "aporetic," one does not reach a unified conclusion but a number of opinions that can be more or less substantiated. Aristotle too realizes that we cannot arrive at a correct, general encyclopedic picture of reality.

Archutas likewise felt that problem. He writes, "If someone were able to reduce everything to one concept, then, it seems to me, such a person would be the wisest man, committed to divine attributes. The Greek Archutas of Taranto (in Sicily, southern Italy) sees an ideal in this. The ancient Greeks were very religious. Atheism as our culture knows it was foreign to them. Anyone who would claim otherwise is telling a historical lie. They knew only skepticism, not our thoroughgoing atheism. A skeptical Greek philosopher was even once a priest of his city.

Greeks never knew raw materialism as lived, e.g., in 18th-century France. Greeks knew their myths. Once philosophy began they had their physical theology. I.e. they reason philosophically about what deity is, what religion is, etc. To understand all of reality, according to Archytas, one should be able to take a higher position. One would then have to view reality from outside that reality. However, this is not possible because we ourselves are part of it and in the middle of it. Socrates and Plato, among others, were very acutely aware of this.