

Luc Sala

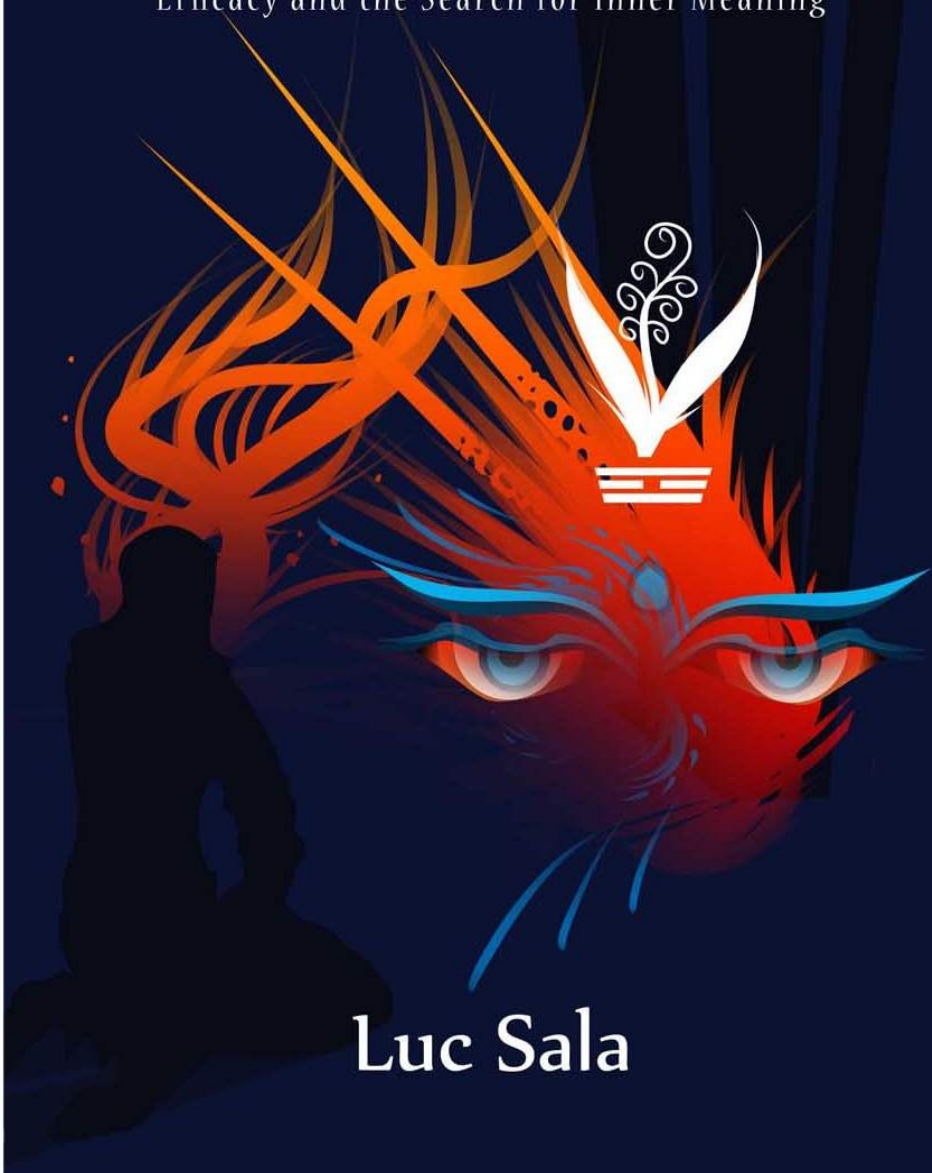


RITUAL The Magical Perspective

RITUAL

The Magical Perspective

Efficacy and the Search for Inner Meaning

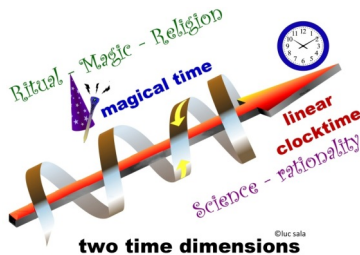


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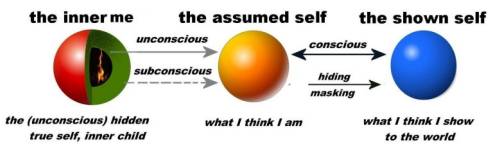
As an introduction

This ebook covers a lot of ground, concerning ritual, magic, religion, psychology and philosophy. To give you some idea about the subject matter, here first some sample images from the book.

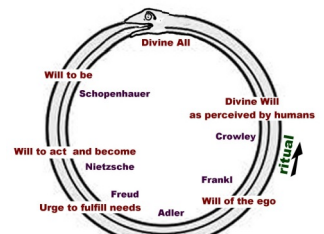
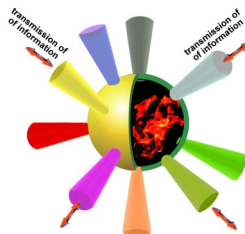
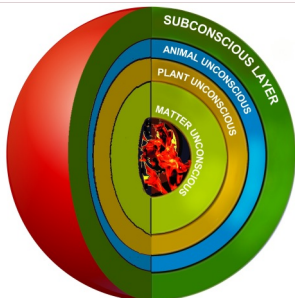
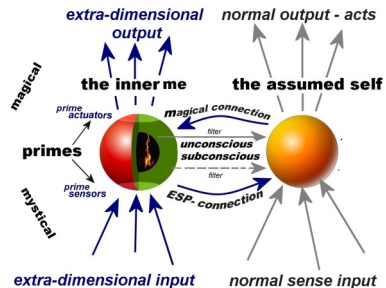
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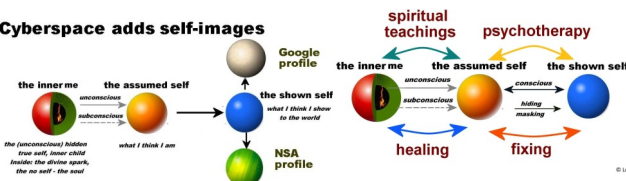
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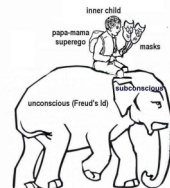
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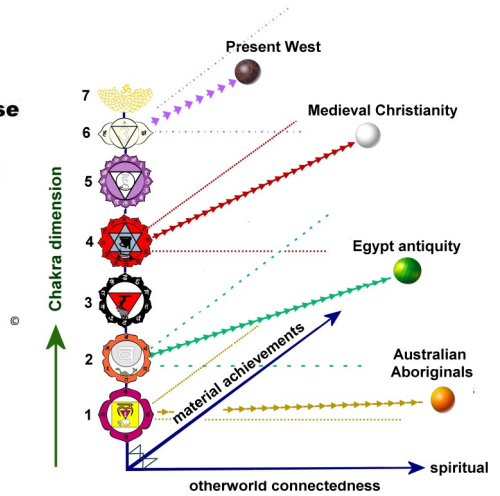
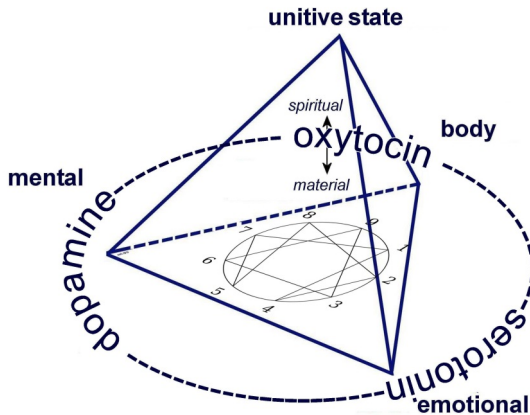


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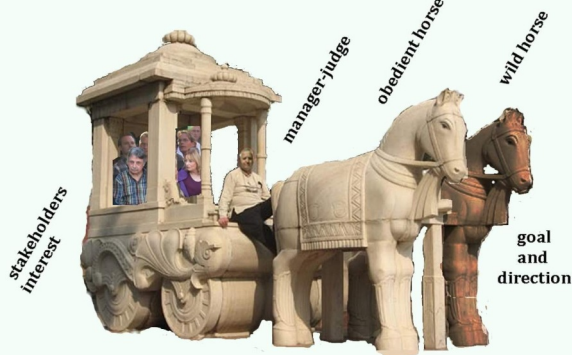
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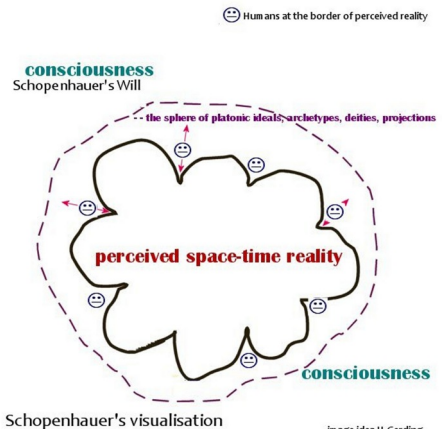
3D Chakra and cultural - technical development



Plato's Phaedrus in a broad perspective



The driver not only has to balance and guide the horses but also has to listen to what the stakeholders want



ISBN 978-90-820823-0-2



€ 29,95, \$ 35 £25

What if....

- ❑ Ritual is the universal umbrella to perform practical magic, intended to cause changes in mind, tangible world and the extradimensional realm (otherworld).
- ❑ Ritual uses the dissolution of the ego-mask(s) to facilitate entering a magical state of consciousness where time and place are not limited by the normal laws of physics.
- ❑ We have exchange centers allowing us to communicate with the extradimensional otherworld where truth, beauty, intuition and other ideals reside, but from where we can also perceive and influence the future.
- ❑ There is, apart from linear time, a magical time dimension that allows prophecies and is where free will acts.
- ❑ Two different time dimensions fit within the modern quantum and string theory.
- ❑ Time is the manifestation vehicle of consciousness.
- ❑ Our psyche uses different programs, running on the same hardware, which can be identified as ego-masks with sometimes different memories, intelligence, sexual preferences and ailments. The medical world does not recognize these different masks and treats problems symptomatically only, mostly ignoring that the roots of diseases are internal conflicts between masks/subpersonalities/characters.
- ❑ Ritual and the use of psychedelics and herbal medicine we have inherited from the animal kingdom.
- ❑ Dreaming is an evolutionary heritage from the plant kingdom.
- ❑ The pyramids, Stonehenge and many similar monuments were DNA-healing places, erected in a time when much more was understood about our relationship with our epigenetic programming, the otherworld and the cosmos.
- ❑ Ritual is embodied distributed cultural intelligence, is comparable to the way modern robotics technology now makes use of local embodied intelligence.
- ❑ Magic, by way of correspondences, offers an effective synergistic link between the worlds.

In this book you will find material that will at least change your perspective concerning these issues and many more.

Ritual

The Magical Perspective

Efficacy and the search for inner meaning

May 2014

Ir. L.H.D.J. Sala is a physicist, an information technologist and critical thinker. He believes that just as in the days of Kant and Hume we have to rethink everything, doubt everything and not limit the ‘new philosophy’ to critical correlations and analysis of previous thinkers. We have to start afresh, now, here, feel rather than know, intuit rather than deduce. He says; Let’s revive the intuitive wisdom we can and do access all the time, honor the dimensions, worlds and categories beyond the materialistic. Luc believes the “Enlightenment” has in fact closed our eyes to the real light of a transcendent connectedness, and it’s time to let go of the fetters of “science.”

He has published many books, mostly in Dutch, thousands of articles and columns, and produced many television programs, his website www.lucsala.nl gives an overview.



ISBN 978-90-820823-0-2



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1 Introduction

Ritual in the broad, common sense is everywhere: in daily life, in the office, in religion, in mating behavior, in education. Nobody is beyond them; we all have our habits, quirks and patterns.

We use rituals or rather ceremonies all the time, as ways to ease the mind, concentrate, meditate, focus, express thanks or atonement, or as a way to escape the world around us.

I consider them true rituals if they are also a way to connect to the deeper layers in ourselves, where I believe we have much easier access to the spiritual or extra-dimensional world. It is there that we connect more to the inner fire of our soul and the magic we all have. In that sense true rituals are practical magic, they offer us a way to reach beyond the rational, beyond the limits of space, time and normal causality.

Rituals are an essential part of life and I believe they are effective in more ways than is generally assumed, and have meaning beyond the psychological and the social. They also have a magical component which is not usually seen as a rational component of our reality. We take them seriously only from a religious perspective, as part of psychological routines and patterns and as a sociological phenomenon.

Studying ritual, ceremonies and such irrational behavior is left to the anthropologist, the (para-)psychologist and social scientist, maybe to theologians. They are hardly ever recognized by the medical establishment or psychiatrists as a practical way to deal with life, stress, danger and disease or (openly) used in the business world to predict the outcome of marketing plans. Rituals are not considered effective, let alone essential.

Their efficacy, which means affecting reality, is not acknowledged in our Western cultures, but I hope this book will help to change that notion.

Rituals are essential and evolutionary important, as they provided prehistoric man with group structure and hierarchy, enabling specialization and hence progress.

I would like to make, from the start, a distinction between ritual and ceremony. Ritual, the way I use the word, has a magical or spiritual component, while ceremony is limited to psychological and social effects. A true ritual is intended to influence the spiritual (otherworld, magical) realm. It uses magical links or correspondences which are processes and tools supposed to affect the extra-dimensional realm. This then reflects back into the tangi-

ble, normal reality. So ritual is a way to achieve results which don't follow the normal rationality and causality, but have their own.

I acknowledge the problem of definition here as some "rituals", especially many religious ones, were originally intended, designed and understood to be magically effective, but their true meaning got lost. They became more or less empty, more ceremonial than ritual.

In this book I look at rituals from a broad perspective, not much concerned with the details of specific rituals but trying to outline what is the essential ritual process, and what elements make up the ritual matrix. Why do we do them, how do they work, why are they more concerned with doing and acting than with thinking, what role did they play in evolution, what is the relationship of ritual with consciousness, time, evolution, law, our psyche and our being?

I argue they are a central part of our precognitive being and acting, very much related to intuition and the perception of information beyond normal space and time limits. Understanding ritual focuses on what is essential in reality construction (which is what perception ultimately is). This is an important issue in the ongoing debate about consciousness.

Ritual offers us ways and means to affect both internal and external reality, from easing our mind to actually affecting our body, the group, the outside world, the future, and even the laws of nature. It is therefore far more than just a theatrical performance or superstitious placebo act.

This means I argue that rituals work. They have efficacy. I try to explore and explain this beyond the rational and yet in a way I seek to rationalize or at least ground the irrational. Efficacy doesn't mean that ritual always brings what is asked for or intended. In many cases what comes about might be different from what the performer of the ritual assumes or wants. Ritual is much more than or deeper than a mind-trip, it is rooted in mechanisms and relations that go beyond the cognitive, they are pre-cognitive, and part of our animal ancestry.

So looking at ritual, assuming it is a fundamental tool to overcome the mind-matter dichotomy, is much more than an anthropological exercise. The basic questions I address seem simple: Are rituals more than mere behavioral patterns? Why do we do them? Do they work? How?

These are however issues that are very close to the essential controversy between a materialistic and an idealistic world view. A dispute that is again so acute and heated in our postmodern days but of course ran through all philosophical discussions in historical and probably prehistoric times.

Taking ritual seriously in the way I tackle it, by making the link to practical magic and effective otherworld contact is taking the bull by the horns. I am

confronting materialist neurologists and physicists and maybe science and academia as a whole.

These days we might not equate rituals with primitivism, superstition and black magic anymore, but few scientists risk their academic career by even remotely connecting ritual and spirituality with effective magic and the roots of consciousness, as I have done in this book.

Focus

Here I have to draw some lines. This book is not a guideline for ritualists, a manual with rules and suggestions. Its focus is on what ritual is and how it works at a fundamental level.

I will mostly look at ritual as something that existed before myth, language and religion and maybe even before human self consciousness emerged or happened. This means I will not probe deeply into the convoluted mix of ritual, religion and art that has evolved later and which we see today. Instead I will look more at the original essence of ritual and of course use examples of contemporary ritual expressions like Burning Man or Flash Mobs, but will try to focus on the precognitive processes, the primitive if you like.

Since the subject matter of ritual and its effects are indeed far-reaching there is the danger of getting lost in the details and spreading in too many directions and separate arts. This book covers many aspects and links up with many fields. In the process of writing it I touched so many tangents that I had to limit myself. There are the tendency and dangers of a panopticon, too broad an overview trying to cover all and be complete, which I had to suppress.

I had to remind myself all the time not to get lost in comments on what other philosophers, social scientists and ritual theorists had come up with, but retain my original perspective. However, as my ideas are rooted in what others discovered or stated before, even as I offer alternative views, there will be many references, critiques and theoretical perspectives, which are also dealt with and commented on in the appendices.

The more deviant and original views and models I present are touched upon in the opening chapters; they come back in the later ones. Then, hopefully, the reader will be able to follow my line of thought and see how these ideas change the whole picture about what rituals are and do.

As there is a constant mix of more theoretical aspects, historical perspectives and original views, I feel I had to rephrase the main theses more than once, also making each chapter digestible by itself.

This may mean I outline and repeat the main new views and hypotheses and in different words as they may offer a perplexing vista at first. Later on they

will be woven into a more expanded analysis of ritual in a historical, theoretical and magical context.

I try to place ritual in a much wider perspective than most ritual theorists have done, but I offer a logical path to arrive at this. My main point is the integration of the magical, but I accept that in doing this I aim at a new (and yet age-old) paradigm, shaking at the roots of the material worldview. One could see this as ritual revival!

This is an ambitious goal, as it means replacing or extending the tree of rationality with a magical perspective, and obviously there will be aspects that are treated less extensively. The whole subject with its roots and branches is like a giant Banyan tree. My challenge therefore has been to offer the reader a view that honors both the whole and the parts.

I have tried to maintain a clear structure but also to render a readable and hopefully entertaining book with enough personal color.

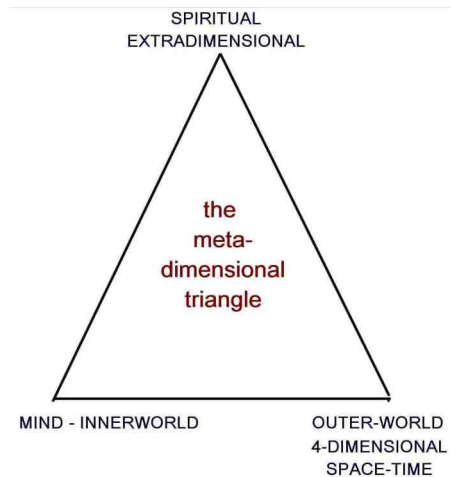
Concerning the style, this is not really a scientific book but more a story of discovery, a tale of a path I walked in life. I often refer to my personal experiences even though they are subjective, thus trying to complement the somewhat scholarly approach so full with lots of facts and expositions.

Looking at rituals beyond the limited notion of the materialist scientist or scholar is quite a challenge, also for the reader, especially as I introduce many new concepts, views and conclusions. In order to go beyond what could easily be called pseudo-science, I have to explain the foundations of my perspective, my methodology and the consequences of my views. Doing this has required not only an overview of the relevant aspects of rituals ancient and new and an examination of why we have rituals and what their functions are. I also had to go deep into the roots of what magic, perception, reality, time and consciousness are.

As such, this is a book about psychology, philosophy, cosmology and theology as much as about ritual and magic.

The matrix and the models

Ritual in the magical perspective adds a whole realm to traditional views as it adds a dimension usually discarded or ignored. This



magical part is not superficial and comes back in many aspects of the ritual process.

To separate the three worlds (a model I will use a lot) and yet integrate them in a single image I have to combine the practical, psychological and social aspects of a ritual with the magical. I use the term ritual matrix as a container to discuss them and give them a place, but not as a mere list and catalog. A ritual matrix is a starting point for much deeper analysis of what happens or could happen in a ritual situation.

I try to show how questions and insights concerning perception, senses and metasenses, trance, dreams, celebration, leadership and officiator roles, performance, staging, emotion lines, etc. fit into a general ritual matrix. This of course also leads to new answers and arguments about how art and myth are related, and to what religions do and did with rituals.

There are many practical aspects and many books filled with specific rituals, with factual description of liturgy, setting and cultural roots. That is not the intent of this book.

I believe the fundamentals of ritual are more to be found in how our psyche works, how body and mind integration and the development of ritual go hand in hand. Ritual offers a bridge between the subjective self levels we (falsely) equate with reality and the wider and deeper reality out there.

To show how this works I am looking at how psychology sees all this, but also where most theories and approaches miss the point. I needed, and this takes up a large part of the book, to paint how we experience these selves and how the ego dissolving process which is so essential in ritual actually works.

I expand well beyond accepted ideas about the structure of our psyche, personality and masks. In doing so I put some serious question marks about how 'science' and 'spirituality' in our new age of mind-manipulation and media hypnosis deals and dealt with mind and matter.

Ritual has changed over time and especially the magical has been lost or replaced by seemingly rational practices. There is much fashion and hype in modern ritual, or in practices that are essentially ritualistic in medicine, academia, business, therapy and beyond. These practices are maybe out of touch with the originals intentions, but are rationally effective on the social and psychological level.

Models and systematic ranking are important for me, often a graphical image helps me to clarify my views and I hope help the reader to anchor the concepts. There are quite a number of illustrations and graphical images I use to elucidate my views. They are however maps of the moon, not the

moon itself and only tools and simplifications to get the (or rather a) picture across.

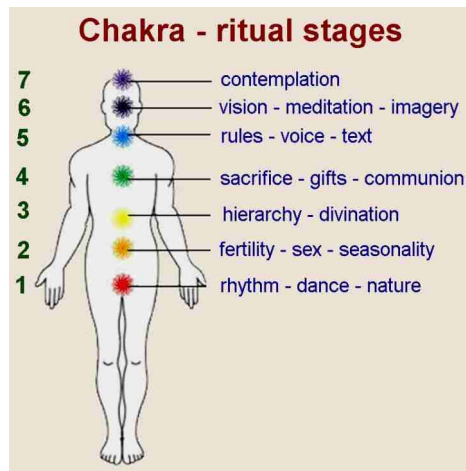
In order to make things manageable I have for instance flattened the complexity of all the various subjective and wider realities into an three world image. It's a simplified map with three realms, the psyche, the world (including other people) and the spiritual. Some will argue our mind and the otherworld are the same, but here I prefer to separate them.

I will use the words (mind)-set, setting and magic to indicate them and to distinguish between set, world and the spiritual intangible realm. Looking at rituals with this model in mind I analyze the ritual matrix for its efficacy in these worlds. I demonstrate this later in the book by subjectively ranking the elements of the Christian Eucharist. Here I touch on the subjective measurement of the "value" or energy level of parts of the ritual matrix and how this relates to the three world model that I employ.

This is an example of how very subjective but repeatable ranking and gauging by divination (dowsing with a pendulum) can still lead to a more objective recognition of statistical trends and understanding of phenomena. In the book I will give more lists and matrices with such subjective data.

The "set" part of the model, involving perception, body awareness and projection is of course important in the ritual context. It concerns the mindset and intentions of the performer (and of the audience/ viewer/participants). Even though the focus of the book is on the magical, I have to start with the psychological and in particular with selves and the masks (assumed selves) as this is where the ritual process starts.

Letting go of the ego, stepping out of the assumed self and getting in touch with the deeper self is the core of the ritual process. The analysis of those processes, including my personal experiences on that level is what led me to deeper understanding of what ritual is and does. This analysis of becoming aware of our selves and ego-structures is an important step to reach a 'ritual' or inner child state. Only then can we understand other means of achieving such a state of altered consciousness like lucid dreams, trance, yoga, drugs or meditation.



Development model

Ritual evolved from prehistoric forms and animal ritualistic behavior to what we see now. I argue it played a role in the development of our human societies, probably even in evolutionary terms.

Ritual facilitated the emergence of hierarchical layers and specialization. Fire and ritual, before we even had language, myths and religion, were the decisive factors in how we progressed from pure survival to more socially developed community structures.

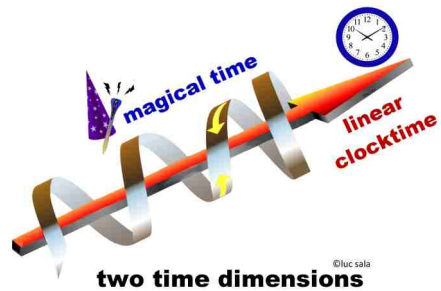
From the Eleusinian mysteries to the Aboriginal songlines or fraternity hazing, our cultures are interwoven with rituals and ceremonies, but we hardly have any notion of how these really influenced us. Rituals are often the deciding cultural factor which gives a tribe, a people or a movement its identity, but here I have difficulty with terms like progress. How could we discern and compare cultural development factors beyond the usual and anthropomorphic sociological classification of “human progress” or “identity focus”.

I propose a ritual development model that acknowledges a certain time-line development, honors cultural specifics and mirrors the individual's growth using a chakra model as a way to differentiate various stages. It applies to societies as well as religions, but is in essence the human personal development model.

To gain more insight into what rituals really mean and cause, the existing understanding of social scientists and ritualists has to be correlated with what the esoteric and old mystery schools know and knew about it. But this is just the start; I try to combine this with what thinkers, scientists and practitioners such as A. Schopenhauer, J. Frazer, A. Crowley, C.W. Leadbeater, A. Lang, M. Murray, G. Gurdjieff, M. Eliade, V. Turner, R. Steiner, C.G. Jung, A. Jodorowsky, Hakim Bey (P.L. Wilson) and R. Sheldrake have come up with.

Most important for me however was interpreting the actual experiencing of ritual (by myself and with others) at a deeper level. What did I feel performing rituals, what is the effect of a certain act or intention?

I needed to integrate this subjective part and understand how my projections and those of other people's are involved and maybe distort our understanding. I therefore also look at what concepts such as self, time and con-



sciousness contribute. In this way some important classes and forms of ritual are analyzed, like divination, sex magic, sacrifice, and so on.

For example, as a new departure I analyze ancestor worship as a karmic purifying time-magic phenomenon.

Rituals, as most magical acts, are mostly time-manipulations. Here I use an unconventional way of looking at time to explain what happens.

To start with, there are other dimensions than normal space-time, something what modern physics also supports. I argue that intangible qualities like beauty, perception of future and past, genetic sensitivity, sacrality, justice, magical quality, danger, health (balance) and intention/purpose are aspects of an extra-dimensional realm. They are curled up along our normal space-time dimensions and are part of an underlying framework of resonance (consciousness, love, information) that unites everything.. What these extra aspects (dimensions) precisely are, they might be infinite Hilbert space dimensions, I don't know or care about so much. They are anyway beyond normal space and time, but they exist and they matter (immaterially), that's the important part.

Two times

I believe that by acknowledging and accessing these otherworld aspects and links we have a key to know and influence many things, including the future.

Here time enters the fray. I came up with an important and unorthodox insight; the notion that there are two accessible time dimensions. We have access, or should I say live in, to both. There is a more flexible magical time dimension and then there is the straight, logical and normal one. The magical time is what 'runs' in the extra-dimensional otherworld and goes both ways; there is no one-way arrow of time there. Eternality might be a third kind of time. The two time dimensional model addresses issues like evolution, nature/nurture, free will/determinism in a totally new way, and hints at solutions for many other phenomena.

In this approach the future influences the present (and the past). This is quite a blow to the classical and new physics, and also to the legal and psychological underpinnings of society, even to the roots of "scientific" thinking. Science and rationality have led us away from this dual time realization; by ignoring the magical and the magical time dimension we have lost the essential connection.

I see, capping this three world model, a meta-dimension underlying everything, which has to do with (all-)consciousness.

This meta-dimension comprises both the tangible, the mental and the spiritual. I call this the meta-dimensional, but Nature, God, the All, the Divine

Consciousness and Schopenhauer's "Will" or the One are equally acceptable indications of what exceeds our daily human scope anyway.

The theoretical models and descriptions I have developed here find their roots in the long history of human philosophical and psychological thinking. They nevertheless offer an image that is quite different from what "science" now accepts. More specifically, this image differs very much from what most contemporary neuroscientists and neo-Darwinists, with their reductionist and materialistic approach, present to the world. Rupert Sheldrake in "The science delusion" (2012) explores this separation of the worlds or rather negation of the otherworld and the narrowed view of science in depth.

The concept of extra-dimensionality, a word I prefer to use to denote the spiritual dimension(s) and how we contact and address that realm, is a central theme in this book. I use the word extra-dimensional rather than the "fourth dimension" notion used by many writers like J.C.F. Zöllner, P.D. Ouspensky, C.G. Jung and C.H. Hinton, as there might be many more extra dimensions.

Quantum-scientists now talk (in M-theory) about eleven dimensions in all and the extra ones are curled up and not tangible. Rudy Rucker pointed out that the non-tangible might well be an infinite-dimensional Hilbert space. Whatever it is, it's extra, more than normal space-time.

Psyche: our inner world

The psyche is the best tool we have, but how little do we understand how it works or how self consciousness happens? We don't even know how we translate sense input to thought, images and memory.

Even worse, we are hardly in touch with the deep layers of our psyche. We have protected and shielded, in the course of our upbringing, our vulnerable and sensitive nature with an ego, an assumed personality. We have masked what we really are.

The personality which we tend to assume is our "me" or self, but this is just a superficial layer, a mask. The perceived self acts as a shield between our core and what we show to the world. It thus also shields us from what the world brings to us in love, hate, resentment, violence, projections and challenges. This personality – I like the notion of assumed self – can also be described as ego and has layers and levels, sub-personalities, and hidden traits. Trying to discern what happens at these levels in a ritual context and what effects this can have, is an essential element of this book. I believe that connecting to the deeper levels beyond this ego is what makes rituals, healing, magic and other esoteric and mostly intangible techniques, effective.

The structure of the psyche

An important part of this book deals with how rituals affect the psyche, how perception is more than physicists can measure and how mind over matter works. I develop a model of the psyche, self images and interaction amplifying the work of S. Freud, C.G. Jung, A. Adler, R. Hubbard and the transpersonal psychologists.

In this model the subjective axis, where I place the sense based self-images like the shown self, the assumed self and the inner me, differs (orthogonal) from the transcendental I-axis, where we have access to the extra-dimensional realm. It is in the inner me, if you like the higher self complex, that there are layers or modalities of the psyche which can be referred to as the inner child, but also what C.G. Jung calls the collective unconscious, the archetypical. Maybe it is better to call these inner layers (in that core self) the super-conscious level; it is obviously not less, but more connected to the spiritual, the inner fire.

Affecting or making contact with these deeper layers is, I believe, one of the main purposes of ritual. This is the fundamental message of this book: ritual is a means to get in touch with our deeper “I” as the core of our inner “Me”. It is there that we can feel and influence the wider reality, the magical or spiritual world.

All this points to the notion that we as humans (but in this we are not very different from animals) have a deep inner level of sensing, being and knowing, beyond the physical. To illustrate this, I indicate a set of information/energy nodes (primes) where exchange with the extra-dimensional takes place.

These primes, quite a fundamental notion in how I see ritual and the working of our psyche, are the transmitter and receiving organs for communication with the unseen.

To access the capabilities of these ‘hidden’ organs we need to be aware of these primes and what they offer. They are what connects us to truth, beauty, love, our intuition and the otherworld. They can be called metasenses, instincts, sixth sense, we indicated as our divine connection, but now the word ESP (extra sensory perception) is more common. I believe they are not so extra, all of us use them all the time, and ritual is the way to make us more aware of what they offer.

Ego-dissolution

Ritual is very much about taking off our mask, our false self. By letting go of our assumed self (ego), we have a chance to access the deep layers of that sub- and unconscious part of ourselves where the self disappears too, where the subjective dissolves. I don’t specify the primes (transmit/receive nodes)

very much. I don't place them in specific organs in the body, but obviously we do perceive things like beauty, danger and, here comes the crucial point, even the future.

Practical magic

Magic, as one of the important themes in this book, is what connects everything, it can be defined in many ways, one of them is to see magic is synergy between the worlds Rituals and magic are of course very much related, just as magic and religion are simply two faces of the same phenomenon. Rituals clearly means to influence reality, can be described as magical acts.

This concerns the internal reality (including psychopathological states), the outside world reality (including our bodies), and the otherworld. Magic is everywhere; the magical is far wider than the manifested and measurable we deal with in the hard sciences.

Physics in that sense is just a subset of the magical (and a small one too). This is not novel thinking: people like Immanuel Kant already distinguished between the unknowable totality of "Das Ding an Sich" (the isness of something), and the limited and subjective perceived reality of what a person observes. This limited perception amounts to, superficially, "Das Ding für Mich" (my experience of it), the manifested, physical and measurable.

Plato gave us the image of the cave, where perceived reality is only a shadow of what is really out there, and virtual reality has given us the option of experiencing and absorbing the illusion of "maya" reality, while the movie "The Matrix" takes this even further.

I would call magic an art rather than a trade. One way of looking at a magic act is to see it as dealing with the extradimensional, overcoming the limitations of daily and manifested reality. Magic is a broad subject, but deserves considerable attention in the context of ritual. I developed concepts and models of the structure and essence of magical working, they do differ from accepted science or even esoteric and religious insights into what magic is.

The revival of magic

Magic is everywhere. We live magical lives. Once we accept that there is direction and purpose in created reality, it is very hard to ignore that there is a deeper, more profound hyper-causality than the causality flagbearer Pierre Simon (de) Laplace and most of the philosophers assume.

Jung's synchronicity just touches the surface of how deeply the magical is part of our life. We are all magical beings and we perform magic all the time, through our thoughts, our words and our deeds. We might see our little off-the-record gossip routine at the copying machine as a harmless and

innocent pastime, but in a way it's already a magical and not so innocent act. For me, a better understanding of ritual can help me (and I hope you) to understand how all thoughts, moves and acts influence reality.

I will illustrate that reality is magically influenced by sharing personal experiences and stories, relating my own magical journey.

Ethics, karma, good and bad

The ethical aspect of rituals and magic requires some deeper understanding and modeling of what ethics, morality, and good and evil mean. To understand this, we can look at what Plato and philosophers before and after him came up with concerning good and evil, white and black magic, the nature of justice, law and rightfulness, of virtues and sins and natural law. The brave and the wild horse in Plato's *Phaedrus* are a great starting point for a new way to look at the "Contract Social". It points at a balanced way to deal with creativity and criminality, the apparent but false choice between security and liberty.

Beyond this rational look at ethics I also suggest that the primes mentioned above give us access to hyperreal but important "truths". Morality in that perspective is God-given in the sense that it can be perceived as originating in the extra-dimensional realm. There aspects like beauty, truth and justice reside and our time and space are irrelevant.

The exclusion of the immaterial, the amputation of what spiritual and religious traditions teach, in many cases is directly related to the loss of ritual as a basic part of life and upbringing and has led to serious divisions and problems in today's world. Religions have offered a stable base, just because they have traditionally claimed exclusivity in the understanding or description of the metaphysical. They have imposed dogmatic but clear notions of morality, and have gone to war to defend or spread these. Ignoring the religious roots of the ethics that define culture to a large extent in most civilizations is a costly experiment, as both communism and neo-liberalism have shown.

In the rituals that we did away with crucial ethics and cultural cornerstones were often institutionalized and transmitted to the people. We have, letting go of these traditional "collective memory tools" lost a lot of our bearings. I think we have to go back and see what anchors for collective and individual happiness we have scrapped in a wider perspective.

Happiness, in itself quite a broad notion, has to do with structure and freedom, rituals can be acknowledged as tools for a happier life. I will try to untie the happiness-knot a bit, explain how personality (selves) and happiness are related and how the one ritual can be very beneficial for the one and leave the other unaffected.

Focus of ritual

Religion is not without a purpose and looking at religious ritual in the context of extra-dimensional access routines (another way to define ritual) makes them more logical, in a way. Looking at the core focus of ritual traditions has led to my using of the chakra model to make a somewhat unorthodox classification of religious traditions and ritual development over time.

Now this sounds all very serious, but in looking at rituals and ceremonies one also has at least to be open to acknowledging the play, the entertainment aspect, the need to exaggerate, to embellish the process, the need for sleight of hand magic and illusionist trickery. Playing, often with a repetitive character, can become a ritual, and when taken to the theater-level, the two aspects intertwine. The old Greek drama's were much more stylized rituals than today's experimental theater, and in the person of the sleight-of-hand magician we see this interesting amalgam of entertainment, play, illusion, psychological manipulation and jesting.

A recurring theme in the book is the notion of information. This is actually a main theme in my life too, as I made my career mostly in the information technology (IT) industry. At some point I started wondering about what of information really is.

I looked beyond what Claude Shannon (the sender-receiver-noise model) and the computer industry have made of it. In our world of data-processing the misunderstanding of what information is has taken on grotesque forms. We even refer to giant aggregates of data like the Internet as information media now, and talk about information highways rather than data highways. I believe that information is what hits us (a bit is only information if it bytes) and makes a difference.

Mountains of digital bleeps do not do so, not unless we put intention and effort into "mining" them, using filters and search engines. But then there are those bits that do reach us, hit us, change us, that we didn't ask for, but came by themselves.

I am thinking about the surprise meeting, the accidental news item we see, a book that opens at the right page, data we need that reaches us in a synchronistic moment. There the whole notion of information widens, it includes the irrational, the magical and then the connection with ritual is a logical one.

Information access, exchange or retrieval is not a one way street, it is at least a two-way process, and more likely similar to dealing with what we call fields in physics. When we deal with information that really makes a difference (a physicist would say it changes the entropy, a philosopher would call it free will) it feels much more like dealing with a process or an operator in a field, something that touches upon consciousness.

Looking for information, we often experience an effect similar to the old adage: “When the student is ready the teacher will come.” This can be applied even to mundane web-searches and everyday life searches. When we find, what we are looking for or when we are given what we need, and the bit thus bytes, there is a striking similarity to what happens in quantum physics when the probability curve collapses, and “existence” is established/measured. In both realms, consciousness is at the root of it and so information and tangible reality meet.

How exactly, I leave to science but I dare to suggest that magic (the science of resonance) is in essence the ultimate information technology.

I have also looked ahead: where is ritual going? We now have the interesting subject of cyberspace, a virtual environment where we have to redefine what reality, love, contact and all those monikers mean. At this point we can ask whether virtual (cyber-)ritual is possible and effective. Interesting questions. There are already people who see cyberspace as a good way to address the otherworld (again beyond the conventionally acknowledged social and psychological effects).

Priestly roles in cyberspace like that of the cyber-druid are already assumed; cyber-paganism and even info-theism are emerging movements. I will also go into the lack of cyberspace ethics and why we need the hackers and the cyberspace pioneers, the defenders of information freedom.

Many of them see their work as a sacred duty, and here the study of magic and ritual suddenly becomes a real 21st century issue.

Fire is a core part of ritual. Noah’s first act after the Great Flood subsided was to thank God by lighting a fire. In a religious, Biblical context this was the first ritual. In the Zoroastrian and Vedic traditions, fire is the quintessential ritual tool. All communication with the gods and otherworld is through the fire and Agni, the fire-God. Fire rituals are therefore a good subject for elucidating and applying the hypotheses, models and processes described in the first parts of this book..

As a general format of the book, I will develop my insights and models concentrating on my own understanding, but I will give references to theoretical and historical context in the appendices.

I could have adopted the footnote format of scientific publications, but I think Internet, Wikipedia and Google are easier and more modern ways to check on my arguments and sources. If you doubt a statement or want to know where it comes from, just search the web.

Luc Sala, May 2014

The Alchemy of Nine Smiles

By Yuyutsu Sharma

One

From now on, Mom,
every moment would
become a miracle.
Your mourning face
trapped in a circle
of daggers would turn
into a nine-petalled dandelion.

Two

After Nag Panchami,
after the last of the Monsoon
showers,
after feeding the serpents
of the cursed valley of fiery
dragons
from the earthen bowls
full of milk, saffron and honey,
they would start winding
sacred threads round hysteric
torsos.

Three

The sleeping shamans
of the fuming valley would
wake up from their torpor
of rain and rhymes and go
stomping
the squelching streets, furling
their skirts along with feathered
crowns,
beating their drums to kick up
the drooling pulse of my numb
body ...

Four

They would wake Shiva
as he sleeps after a catastrophe
of lights of million galaxies
triggered
by his favorite consort's uncouth
hands
asleep now with her endless
menstrual flow
in a separate smaller pond,
whetting blue waters of a
turquoise lake
in the high Himalayan canyons...

Five

The copper bowl
the priest dropped last year
in the lake up above would
be found here again.
Crossing a million hill ranges,
it would arrive today
to dot the blank spot
on city's fluttering calendar.

Six

Your face would appear again,
Mom, a nine-petaled dandelion
or a flame of nine burning suns
smoldering in the dusty streets
of the Republic in the making.
You would appear
again on a decorated cow,
your voice louder, shriller.
You would smell my head,

tousle my hair, hold my shaking
frame,
aching endlessly from the erratic
wheezing of demented dolls...

Seven

Nine months ago
when you left me,
for months I slept on the spot
they gave you your last shower.
Nine months ago,
agitated and angry,
you moved about in the hushed
spaces
of our ancestral house.
Every morning you sat on the
threshold,
chatting up the women who
passed by
tirelessly unstitching the quilts of
the house,
opening up pillows, cushions,
blankets
and tearing down the fancy
dresses
especially tailored for your
numberless gods and goddesses,
quietly sobbing the absence of
your son,
and of your man who vanished
years ago
on the trail of hashish smoke
along the blue rivers flowing
into the shrieking forests of
despair...

Eight

Tomorrow again, I know,
I would see you riding
a bejeweled cow I donated in
your name,

almost a decade ago.
I would see you agitated
in the alchemy of your fresh
avatar;
your voice thundering,
your eyebrows knitting
mandalas of forgotten mantras
of my fretful moves
in numbered streets of the famed
cities.

Nine

Nine different dresses
I would put on tomorrow,
eat nine colored food,
visit nine shrines,
drink from nine rivers,
nine water wells,
feed nine holy cows,
nine crows, nine dogs,
and utter your name nine times
along with my children to shake
the poise of Shiva sleeping
beneath nine boulders
of nine glaciers, making
his nine consorts bring
nine smiles nine times
on your face
in memory of
nine precious months
you kept me in your belly
and patted me
nine times every month
in flowering of nine petaled
dandelion of your youth.

*To appear in 2014 in
A Blizzard in My Bones:
New York Poems*

2 To start: definitions and the main points

Let me start with some definitions or rather limitations of the subject matter. What do we mean when we talk about ritual, ceremony, magic and suchlike?

Discussing mind, consciousness, emotions, feelings, reality, personality, soul and similar concepts, there are many definitions and an often very vague use of these words. I will relate my understanding of these terms in the specific context and see this also as a way to quickly introduce the points in this work that are new ideas or hypotheses.

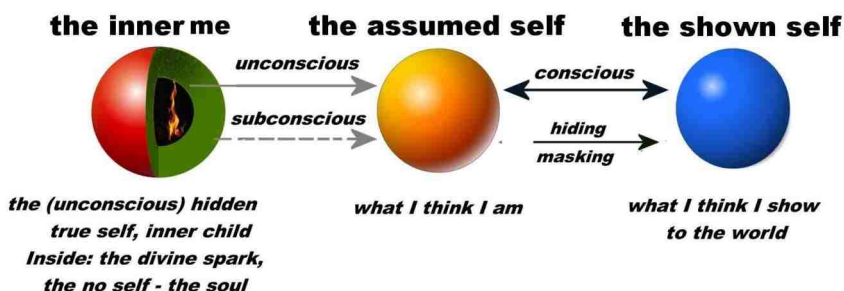
I accept that sometimes the way I use them is a bit peculiar, but it fits into a broad general cosmogony that will become clear as you read on.

One general remark is that these concepts usually refer to processes rather than to things. They are dynamic and changing. The “nature” of things is a dynamic process with a past, a present and a future.

The phrase: “Natural History” is much closer to what Plato referred to as “Phusis” (related to growth) than the rather static word “physics” that we use nowadays. Scientists are obsessed with measuring. But to measure is a “now” act at a specific moment and often ignores the dynamic aspects and the whole of the picture. I like to say: “To measure is to know, but risks losing track of the whole.”

So I will start by indicating what I mean when I use some of these words, not so much defining them as limiting them in scope. More exact defini-

The three self images



© Luc Sala

tions (and why there are so many different ones) will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

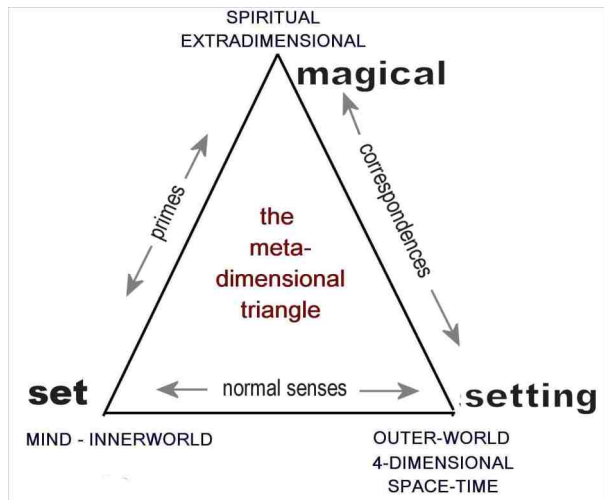
The limitations I will outline below are more to help focus and eliminate unnecessary explanations further on.

Ritual versus ceremony: efficacy

I do suggest (and use in this book) a distinction between ritual and ceremony. Ceremony is a more mundane activity, while ritual has an other-worldly, spiritual connotation. I use this difference to separate the two. Ritual, the way I use the word in this work, has or had a magical component aimed at influencing physical reality (including psychological and social effects) through interaction with a spiritual or extra-dimensional realm. Ceremony in this view is limited to the psychological and social effects (more or less in normal reality, including our mind). I will explain that the magical in the ritual, in order to be effective, requires a special psychological state of consciousness which could be called the ritual state and is like the inner child state. This state in itself has effects on the participants, but a true ritual also aims at influencing physical reality, to “work” beyond the psychological and social. This is what is meant by the efficacy of ritual, it points at the magical effects achieved.

Psyche

I see the psyche as the totality of the mind, conscious, subconscious and unconscious, and this extends even beyond the brain. The psyche includes the intelligence, instincts and memories in other parts of the body. Reflexes, resonance mechanisms (mirror neurons), the links between perception and action (embodied cognition, common coding) are part of our psyche. The psyche is our information processing unit and most of what happens there is “embedded” and automatic. Especially in the context of ritual the link be-



tween body and state of consciousness is important, not only as embodied cognition (body states influence mental states) but the body as distributed intelligence. We are more than what we think or even perceive, we are what we do first in situations where we try to let go of the fetters of self-consciousness, in ritual

The psyche is a process, not a static phenomenon and it changes and has plasticity. Looking at the psyche as if we took a snapshot at a given moment (the now) ignores the trajectory. What happens is always in relation to the past and the future.

The psyche is not the same as the soul.

The soul is the core of our being, the divine spark that also is beyond the mind; it is the transcendental part. It is part of the inner me and the I, at the center of the higher self, but also separate from it. This is not what Freud saw as soul (Seele); he equated that more with spirit/Geist in a materialistic sense, as a part of the mechanism of the mind.

Mind

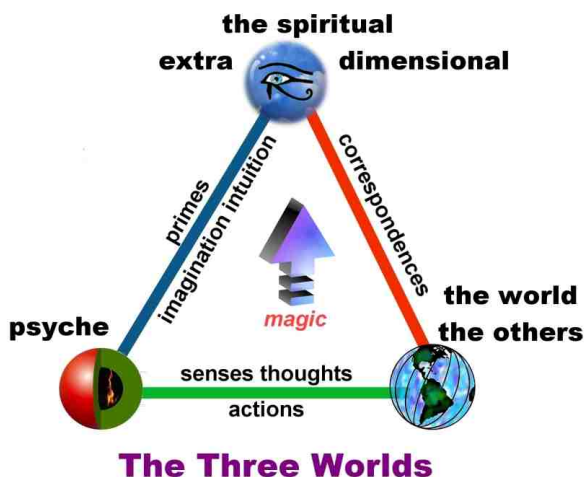
The word “mind” is preferred by cognitive scientists to “psyche”. Mind is usually seen as a function of the brain, but I believe the psyche is more than only cognitive processes (thinking), has roots not only in other parts of our body (like memories of experiences stored in body parts) but extends beyond the body limits and in other dimensions. I therefore prefer the word psyche. I will deal with the whole complex of psyche, self and I in this book, as it is relevant in the context of ritual.

We are connected to a wider awareness, not only through thinking but at more levels. Thinking is important, the notion of thought waves appeals to me, but there is more.

A brain scan reveals a lot about chemical and electrical activities in the brain, but not what happens in the psyche (or even the mind). It is a materialistic snapshot, at best a series of snapshots.

Self and not-self

The notion and meaning of self has changed over time from more social to more individual, but in my view it is the subjective image that we have, as in “myself” or “me”. The sentence “I am looking at myself in the mirror” makes this clear. The notion of self covers at least three selves, as it is used to indicate the deeper levels (the unconscious, higher self) and the self image that we see as the conscious self, but also the self we are showing to others.



Magic: the synergistic link between the world

These three (subjective) self images are one way to look at how our psyche is working, looking at the “I” as the witness and controller. I make thus a distinction between the I and the me.

The connection to a different dimension (in the I) offers another perspective. The conscious “assumed” self image is not what we really are, it is a construction that is perceived as personality or ego.

Letting go of that self image we can access the inner me, the true self. In there we see that the deeper we probe, the less individuality there is. In the end the self disappears, there is only not-self.

I believe we have ultimately to let go of being different and special. “I am only different as I have not yet learnt to be the same”.

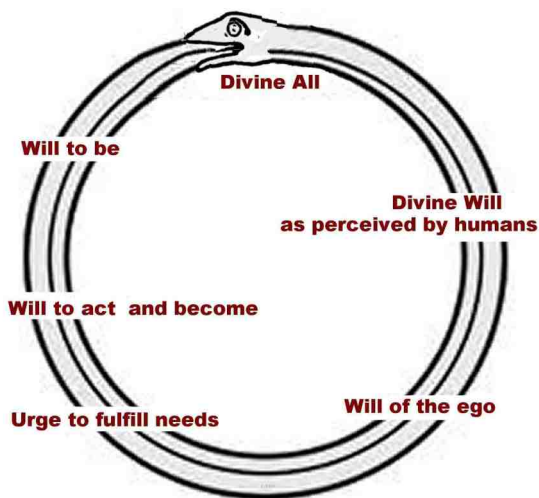
The inner me central point where the I dimension of the mystical state intersects with the selves, the crossroads of the subjective and the transcendental is where we are without identity, individuality, closest to being all and nothing.

Fear and liminality

Letting go of the ego is a fearful thing, we lose our bearings, drop our masks and this stepping over a threshold has been recognized by Victor Turner as a fundamental characteristic in ritual. He used the word liminality. The limen is a threshold, a Latin word also used to indicate visiting the grave (ad limina) the stone threshold of life. Many rituals use fear, uncertainty, stripping of identity as a tool. Initiation rituals are a good example, a rite of passage usually involves hardship and terror, terrifying the initiates to the point where they give up their (perceived) identity.

Identity

Self and identity are closely related, certainly in the modern materialistic context. One is what one owns, mostly stuff, status, knowledge, web-content, sensitivity, taste, mainly things that distinguish one from others or show peer group affiliation. Self-concerns are very much the center of an individual's striving for well-being and for making sense of one's life. Loss of ego and loss of identity are related.



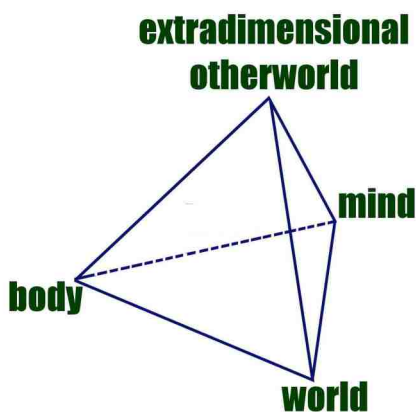
The hierarchy of wills

The goal of losing the self in a ritual context means letting go of the identity too. But this is the outside, false identity. Just as the self is fluid and changing, so is our identity, our self that we assume we are. We are often unconsciously moving between the various self modalities (masks). Then the way we show parts of our self to others is even more contrived.

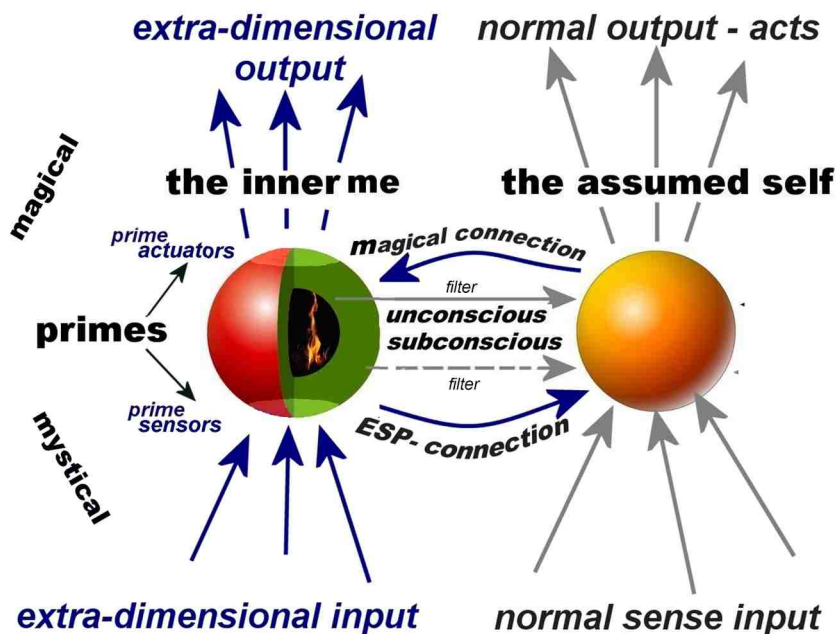
Personality-Mask-Ego

Again here are words that have a different meaning depending on the author or discipline. Freud's ego is not what we now call ego as in egotistic. I will use a model of the subjective selves where I consider the mostly unconscious inner self part of our psyche to be the inner me, or the higher self. There are many names for this, like true self, core self and inner child.

This is separate from the conscious self image of the assumed me (ego), or what we think we are. It is where we go in dreams, in meditation and altered states of consciousness.



The three world model could easily be expanded to include a separate body corner, but for



In this book the concepts are accompanied with graphs, sometimes complicated but offering a visual way to grasp the relationships

This conscious part does have some hidden, less conscious attributes; together the popular notion is personality or ego, but basically it is a mask. I use that word because it kind of fits with persona (the Greek for mask) but it's more flexible, not so rigid. This is thus not an unchanging, simple self image, a constant mask. It changes over time and develops and shows different facets.

To complicate this even further, in many people there are self-contained other egos, modalities that I usually indicate as masks, because they are separate; one can switch from one to the other. In extreme cases these become multiple personalities; normally we experience them as mood swings. Often the people around us notice the switch between masks better than we do.

All our masks or sub-personalities or ego-modes are coping mechanisms, the result of the inner me core (our original nature also called the inner child) dealing with external situations. The first and usually most prevalent ego-mode or mask is the result of dealing with our parents and our early upbringing. This is where the nature/nurture separation starts. Our inner core or inner me is nature, that what our soul chose and manifest in our genes (DNA). Nurture is our adaptation, in modern terms the epigenetic. Not all

DNA is activated the same way, the environment even in the womb affects what DNA will manifest.

Sometimes more masks develop later because of new influences, situations or traumatic experiences; some people only have a single mask or ego modality. Having more masks can be felt as being less honest, as being more complicated, but in fact all masks are in a sense false. Only the switching between them makes other people insecure, so a single mask reassures them.

The third self is the one we present to the world, I call this the shown self. There is another notion of a mask, the pretention we offer. That is what appears in the difference between what we think we are and what we show to others, but this is a more conscious masking. It's more in line with what happens in a theater. We put on a show, pretend, create and cast an image.

The core self in this model has levels of identity association, not very distinct, but layerlike. I like to use the notion of inner child as a layer within the self, with the wounded inner child at the outside; others use notions like higher self (with the lower self being the ego) or the soul. There is the use of the word not-self for what we believe we are (and just play at being), but this could also be the core, where individuality ceases.

Most traditions differentiate between higher self and ego and aim at letting go of the ego. I tend to think that ego and self need integration, but that it is the inner me (higher self) that has access to the magical through intuitive, instinctual senses and energy exchange nodes, which I call primes.

Primes

Quite an essential part of my ritual model is the concept of exchange with other dimensions. Humans perceive much more than tangible physical reality; we intuit things like beauty, balance, love, danger and many such things, but have no way to measure or quantify these notions, at least in the eyes of the scientific world. These intuitions are not mere illusions; we experience them as emotions (they have physical bodily effects) and they are translated into feelings, which make us do things, decide upon actions, and shape our lives. Ignoring them or classifying them as irrational mind programs or illusions and going for the empirical, the measurable, has of course led to progress, but also limited us.

I argue that we have senses and actuators to deal with the extradimensional, that they are real, have measurable effects and can be used consciously. In fact, we all use these primes unconsciously all the time. Using them more consciously can be called ESP (extra sensory perception) and magic, and in ritual we use them to perceive and influence the extradimensional, beyond time, place, reason and tangible causality.

Feelings and emotions

Another distinction I like to make is that between feelings and emotions. This distinction became clear to me on reading Antonio Damasio, the neuroscientist who dares to admit that wisdom and science are different things, and whose books are about science as he sees it. Emotions are what happens in our body, the physiological effects of external stimuli or internal “make believe” suggestions, whereas feelings are what our mind makes of them. Feelings are in the mind, closer to consciousness; emotions often happen before we are even aware of them and are more basic. A mood is an emotional state and differs from emotions in that these are less specific, less intense and less likely to be triggered by a particular stimulus or event. Moods are subjective states and have more root elements in the personality structure. They also last longer than emotions. Temperament is even more fundamental and longer lasting.

Ritual matrix

A ritual is more than just a set of acts. Things like intention, attention, the mindset, but also the layout, sounds, smells and much more make up the ritual matrix. Apart from the normal senses and the primes mentioned above, an effective ritual matrix uses links or correspondences that connect the tangible sense world to the extradimensional. I will look at the various aspects of a ritual, mostly looking at it from the perspective of set, setting and magical connections.

The three worlds model

The totality of the cosmos and beyond is of course unfathomable, but to give a manageable perspective I use a model with three worlds or realms: the mind, tangible reality and the spiritual. This is a simplification, as the otherworld (the spiritual) is probably far more complex, has many layers and there are many views and theories about it. I don't want to go into this, I leave the invisible realms or layers of the mental, astral, etc. planes to the theologians and esotericists and keep it simple. This doesn't mean I include or exclude a world of spirits, gods or whatever; let everybody believe what they like. This third, intangible realm serves as a way to include the extra-dimensional and I just call it spiritual because this is what most rituals are aiming at.

Maybe there is a some relationship with the extra dimensions that string theory physicists these days talk about, but I leave it to them to see and name the correlations. They will usually also not accept that time (or one of the time dimensions) works both ways, in the sense that the future influ-

ences the present (and thus the present the past as well as the future), even as the mathematical equations point at this, and some quantum-physical models can only work if there is negative time.

Resonance and setting

The social part of ritual has a lot to do with resonance and how we influence each other, how group mind effects develop. Science has observed phenomena like mirror neuron resonance, but I will argue resonance is much wider, that what is observed in our brains is but the tangible part of that resonance. Everything correlates with everything, but to assume that our thoughts and our brain processes are identical is too simplistic.

Set, setting and magical correspondences

Within the three world model I denote what has to do with the mindset as set, what has to do with the world (people, place, liturgy) as setting and add the third corner of the triangle as the spiritual, magical dimension. In a somewhat outdated jargon the many physical and symbolic connections with this third world were called “the correspondences”. The mental connections (to the otherworld) are imagination, our dreams and the sense/transmit organs I call primes.

The metadimensional panentheistic view

I assume there is some overarching level of being beyond being, the metadimensional. This is the formless and unchanging ultimate consciousness, that includes the extradimensional. I tend to see as the all consciousness, but it could be named God, Great Spirit or even the Ultimate Cause of Nature and manifestation.

This primordial level of ultimate consciousness must manifest into form in order to express itself. I see time as the vehicle for this manifestation in our space-time reality. Space follows, but like time is not a thing of itself, but is only the outline of form. Manifestation is form. The extradimensional which we call spiritual can only be outside of time or in a special time dimension, but it is also an expression of the ultimate consciousness.

The idea of a metadimensional super layer is panentheistic, it goes beyond the notion that all is conscious and thus endowed with divine qualities, God in Nature and even beyond Spinoza’s God or Nature (for some a pantheistic notion), it assumes there is something outside both the seen and unseen realms, something from before or outside there was a universe.

Consciousness, awareness

The notion of consciousness and the word itself comes in many flavors. Some see it as self-consciousness, as awareness of one's own existence, sensations and thoughts, surroundings, and so on. Others conceive it as so vast, that only pointing at what it is 'not' makes sense.

I see (the all) consciousness as a root phenomenon; it shows up everywhere and in everything, tangible and intangible.

Everything manifested has some consciousness. I will argue in this book, borrowing from the new physics and quantum science, that consciousness is where it all starts and that time and then existence follow. This might be a surprise to you, but in the context of dealing with the unseen as in magic, it makes sense. I believe time is "used" by consciousness to manifest our reality, as a vehicle for manifestation.

Humans tend to think they are the only beings who are self-conscious and can think about themselves, but maybe this "gift" is of less value than we think. Being self-conscious means being aware that we are aware; it is considered a more human quality, but animals do have some of it as well.

We could speculate that we have traded some other consciousness like magic or ESP for this special gift. I will argue that ritual is a way to become reconnected in this sense. We might have gained some, but also lost.

Ascribing consciousness to animals leads to seeing it in plants and then why not accept consciousness in water, crystals and all matter, ultimately a pantheistic view of creation. Even as this goes too far for many to swallow, there are good reasons to assume consciousness is not a purely human thing. I will point in this book to phenomena concerning plant consciousness. One of my more esoteric speculations is that we owe 'dreaming' to the plant kingdom.



The will, free will

Has a particle of water, falling onto the watershed in the Himalayas, the freedom to choose whether to go to the Indian ocean or the Pacific? And could we call this will?

Will, focus, attention (to the present) and intention (concerning the future) are certainly important in ritual and magic, but there are two fundamental problems.

First, do we have free will? Some will say we are just preprogrammed to act out what is determined anyway. I agree with the mystical George Gurdjieff that most of the time most of the people are not free, in the sense that they play out their mask scenarios in an unconscious way. In the model with two time dimensions that I use in this book, I offer a way out of this dilemma. In a magical time dimension we do have freedom to manipulate time and thus reality. To access this dimension we have to get into a different state of consciousness and to do this already could be considered an act of will. This is stepping out of the cosy normality and risking something new.

Secondly, I feel the focus on the (human) will as the central force in human consciousness is giving it too much prominence. People such as Schopenhauer, Aleister Crowley, Roberto Assagioli and many others ignore or overlook that the will (willful intention) is only one of the approaches. In the chakra model it has to do with truth and power (the third chakra) and obviously is related to making things happen. But there are other energy modes we possess and there tools like love, sex, art, expression, and visualization come into play. Think about language as a magical tool, we can feel elevated and connected just tuning into a song.

When magic is defined as using the will to manipulate time and thus reality, then of course it is the essential component, but I feel this is limited. By expanding this notion of magic as using all resonance possibilities, the other chakra modes, we widen the scope of it. The human will is only one of the mechanisms.

Resonance

I argue that the fundamental law of nature and magic is resonance. If there is resonance, there is a relation, there is contact. Resonance is not limited to the tangible world, where manifestation in itself is resonance, but there is resonance between the three worlds. This is where the notion of correspondence starts.

Ultimately everything is related to everything else. All things, events, thoughts are relational and as a physicist would say, entangled. Perception is a resonance mechanism and needs some kind of consciousness, as even

modern physics indicates. What consciousness is remains the big mystery. For me it is more related to the ground of all being, but maybe one day science will discover the consciousness particle, the ultimate resonance explanation, even beyond the Higgs' gravitation boson.

Causation

Where does change starts? Is there only a prime mover and chaos or is consciousness instigating chance? In a ritual we try to cause something which is beyond rationality, we "will" a change.

Causality in philosophy describes and analyses cause and effect but is usually limited to rational and chronological (time-related) relationships, where the effect is the consequence of the cause.

Causation is the notion that events occur in predictable ways and that one event leads to another, but usually within the limits of following the arrow of time and logical reason.

Empiricist David Hume listed conditions for cause-effect relationships, which in modern quantum-theoretical terms are not valid, but still apply to "human" scale causality situations.

He questioned that we can ever really perceive cause and effect, we just assume (and this becomes a habit or program in our mind) an association between two types of object or event.

In magic (and ritual as practical magic) however causation is not limited by the direction of the arrow of time or the dimensionality of space, and thus foregoes the laws of normal logic and rationality.

Will plays a big role in ritual, but there are many interpretations of what will means. In order them in a graphic that illustrates their place in a wider perspective.

Free will, when exercised in manipulating the course of things, therefore has to be grounded in another dimension, a time other than logical time. Then it is not limited by the normal chains of events.

What matters in magic (and free will decisions) is to find a bridge, a correspondence or resonance between the worlds and this is always a duplex, things go both ways. Not only do we change things in the extradimensional otherworld, they mirror back.

Action is reaction but supersedes the barriers between the worlds, by way of the resonance between them. The barriers are in that sense irrelevant, karma applies everywhere.

"Correlation does not imply causation" is a phrase used in the sciences and statistics but not in magic. Here it does work, the concept of correlation indicates resonance and points to the possibility of reciprocal influence.

Meaning

The meaning of ritual has been one of the big controversies in the theory of ritual. What is meaning? Is it an image we have about ritual in our head. Is it another way of talking about the efficacy, the effects of ritual or is it relational, ritual compared with religion, society, art. In this book ritual is approached from many sides, the meaning of ritual shones through in those perspectives.

The most logical approach is to look at meaning of ritual in the three worlds and in how it relates to the others from one point of view. In one's head (the mindset) ritual can be about inner peace or spiritual growth, and have a personal private meaning.

Looking then at the world, a person can see a ritual as a means to connect with others or as a means to distinguish oneself. The third link is to the otherworld, here the ritual can be a way to imagine a better world, a heaven or hell out there, a means to establish a picture of what the extradimensional can do or offer. From the standpoint of the setting, ritual can be a way to deal with the individual, helping them in inner growth or just controlling them, manipulate them, extracting time, money or energy. Or is ritual seen as a collective way to deal with the otherworld, a spiritual practice that aligns with the religion, the culture, the society.

Even if we separate ritual from the conscious self-awareness like in the case of animal ritual there is meaning, ritual has a purpose. It might be a biological, neurological need, a means to achieve some state of being, but it has meaning in the sense that an animal will recognize it, maybe like it or not.

Paradigm shift: distributed cultural intelligence

Do we have to change our worldview, is it time to let go of the materialist focus of what is called modern science? I believe so and will argue that honoring the ritual paradigm of our past is a good start.

Many think that the cloud, the virtual container of all data in cyberspace is where we are heading as the next paradigm. Identity is out, we are becoming transparent and so is society, business, politics. We have to move away from the computer paradigm with hardware and software notions, but is the cloud going to solve our ecological problems, will it bring us the fearless society we so crave?

I suggest that we look closer at what ritual suggests, as there we might discern where we are heading.

Ritual is often seen as a cultural, very human way of dealing with the rationally unexplainable. But animals don't explain things, and yet they have rituals. So maybe ritual is the way to deal not with the unknown, but with the fear, the anxiety, the angst.

Ritual is not, originally, a cognitive thing. It was there before myth, language, self-consciousness. It is there in people whose cognitive capabilities are diminished, and seems to offer relief, a sense of connectedness with the whole. Exactly what modern life, even with all that cyberspace connectivity, does not bring us. Ritual is a way to deal with fear, and bring true connectedness, how about that as a new paradigm?

Distributed intelligence

I tend to see ritual as something that is so intertwined with our body and our evolutionary roots, that it mirrors the fundamental structure of the psyche, at the pre-selfconscious level. We function, as biological beings, more or less automatically and much of our ‘intelligence’ has developed over millions of years, in our body, in our instincts, reflexes and as I will explain, in our primes. It’s not our cognition that primarily connects us to the extradimensional otherworld, the primes are our link..

We are not controlled by a single, superimposed brain, we are a complex of distributed intelligence all over our body, we are more than embodied cognition, we are body and mind, consciousness is not limited to this energy consuming bit of grey matter in our skull.

Ritual mirrors that, and functions in societies (also non-human) as distributed cultural intelligence.

Ritual carries the memes, the memories, acts as a unifier, reaches the three worlds of set, setting and magic, and is self-sustaining. Once a ritual sacrament like Catholic Confession is sufficiently anchored, it doesn’t need much supervision, it works like a limb of our body, it’s distributed intelligence.

As we are moving toward a robotized world, distributed intelligence as in embedded and semi-autonomous computing power will pervade our lives and society. This will be a trend with far more impact than the cloud or even internet, as it will eliminate much manual and cognitive labor and will be recognized as a fundamental paradigm shift. Understanding ritual and how it is rooted in our body-mind-spirit existence can help to deal with the new realities on the horizon.

God, spirits, reality

Limiting ourselves to the tangible and rational in the context of ritual would narrow this book to a materialistic description of a rather irrational aspect of life, so some form of extra-dimensional reality is assumed. This does not imply that an acceptance of the concept of a God or a spirit world is necessary to understand the analyses.

It is enough to accept that there is an unseen dimension that we connect with, a dimension that is as yet unmeasurable and intangible. It exists and

might eventually be explained in the sense that the magical is just the as yet unexplained. I personally believe there is a primal ground of being, indicated in many ways by mystics calling it as the ultimate truth or love.

This meta-dimensional all is not tangible, it manifests for us as reality, but what we see and touch is just a part of it, the rest is out there. But as we are limited in our understanding of that which is beyond everything, we project onto it and experience what we are: multilayered beings.

From the formless all to the consciousness of the minutest resonance we tend to span a web of projections, naming and thus framing Gods, deities, spirits, devas, life energy, dimensions, down to electrons, bosons. All are levels or layers of the tangible or intangible and are real in the perception of the believers. Just as I cannot hold God in my hands, I cannot grasp a Higgs particle or for that matter time.

In my view of ritual I make a distinction between the tangible and the virtual (extra) dimensions and assume an overarching meta-dimensional background, but this is just a model to integrate phenomena deemed irrational, not necessary a higher level of truth. The model presented however offers a new understanding and leads to propositions and explanations that do seem to align with observations, by me and in history.

3 What defines a ritual?

Rituals are ceremonies with a magical purpose: this is how I introduced the concept in the first chapters. But let's see how others view it. In the classic sense, rituals and ritualistic behavior, ranging from psychopathic repetition to large scale cultural events like the Olympics or even wars, seem to be at the same time a habit, a (sometimes obsessive) escape from external pressure as well as a connection to a higher level of awareness within the participant(s).

Very few definitions go beyond this and see ritual as an effective way to manipulate reality or acknowledge the magical as a real purpose. Even fewer will try to include contact or communication with supernatural beings or a supernatural reality. Mostly the definitions are very polite and politically correct, but therefore not meaningful.

Ritu and rhythm

The roots of ritual, and this is a fundamental observation, are not cognitive. Rituals are acts, bodily expressions and even as modern rituals are loaded with cognitive meaning, myth and language, this is not the origin of ritual. The word ritual is more related to timekeeping, the Sanskrit word "rita", translated as "order or truth", which is again related to the word "rhythm."

Ritu means "season" in the Hindu calendar, and there are six ritus (also transliterated rutu) or Indian seasons. The word comes from the Vedic Sanskrit word Rtu, a fixed or appointed time, especially the proper time for sacrifice (yajna) or ritual in Vedic Religion; this in turn comes from the word Rta, as used in Vedic Sanskrit literally means the "order or course of things".

According to Laurence Gardner the word Ritu also has a relation with the menstrual blood (red gold), used for medical and magical purposes in Egypt and other cultures.

Music or at least sound and pulsation is, according to James d'Angelo the natural rhythm of life. He pointed out that in one school of Indian philosophy consciousness is synonymous with an experienced inner throbbing. This can be likened to the arising of one's natural mantra as it pulsates through the energy centers. Music has this underlying rhythm, to which we respond. Various kinds of inner pulsations can arise within, which can instill a quiet mind and thus lead into a state of expanded consciousness. Music, he claims, brings a universal order to our being and here the link with ritual is obvious.

Wikipedia refers to a ritual as a set of actions, performed mainly for their symbolic value. It may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a religious community. The word usually refers to actions which are stylized, excluding actions which are arbitrarily chosen by the performers. This definition is not very deep; it sounds rationalistic and a bit grey.

I don't like Wikipedia very much; I agree with Jaron Lanier's classification of it as Digital Maoism, the power of mediocrity, of the little hero who claims a turf. I do use Wikipedia and other wiki's a lot, but look for depth elsewhere.

Encyclopedia Britannica, a more reliable source, defines ritual as the performance of ceremonial acts prescribed by tradition or by sacerdotal decree. Ritual is a specific, observable mode of behavior exhibited by all known societies. It is thus possible to view ritual as a way of defining or describing humans.

Human beings, to follow the notions mentioned in the Encyclopedia Britannica, are more or less defined as ritual beings who "exhibit a striking parallel between their ritual and verbal behavior. Just as language is a system of symbols that is based upon arbitrary rules, ritual may be viewed as a system of symbolic acts that is based upon arbitrary rules. It therefore operates outside the manifest reality; the symbols and correspondences connect it to what lies beyond."

Great, some notion of the supernatural at least, but in this view ritual is limited to humans and assumes that language must be part of ritual. But still not really accepting non-symbolic results and comparing it to language is also quite a step; this kind of refers back to the myth versus ritual debate in anthropology. I will try to show that there was ritual before there was language (and thus myth) and maybe even before there was self-awareness as we know it.

Ritual is much less cognitive than words; it is probably also less symbolic, more geared to bodily movements and acts, mirror neuron mechanisms and rhythm. This can be guessed from the observation that most "original" (primitive is a bad adjective here) rituals have music and dancing, movement and drumming, very simple mantra-like songs, and not much verbal expression. Language is already very cognitive, very "mind" and I believe ritual comes from a much deeper level, where we intuitively feel and exchange things science now calls irrational. Myth and religious thinking are the mind looking for and constructing cognitive explanations for what we "know" and feel at a deeper level.



The question also arises, looking at what Encyclopedia Britannica suggests, of whether for instance mating rituals or habits of animals are also ritual. An interesting question, that has to do with the whole issue of consciousness, self-consciousness, sentience, perception and qualia. Even Wikipedia mentions that many animal species use ritualized actions to court or to greet each other, or to fight. Let me just remark that St. Frances was preaching to the birds, so from a religious point of view they are able to receive or understand spiritual information. And in Hinduism animals have karma too and can upgrade their incarnation level, while the Buddhists and Jains are very precise about what they call sentient beings. It has to do with experiencing subjectivity, like feeling pain consciously. Any dog or horse owner will tell you how their animals feel you, how they are in touch with you beyond words, help you, communicate consciously with you. I personally have had therapy sessions with horses becoming great teachers for me, showing me my modes of behavior and my level of “realness”.

This understanding finds modern support. Neurological research shows that animals at least have all the hardware aboard which scientists now see as instrumental in human consciousness. As is stated in the 2012 Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness:

“The absence of a neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states.”

Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuro-anatomical, neuro-chemical, and neuro-physiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.” Does this mean anything beyond our accepting that animals can feel conscious pain, or that there are conscious or even self conscious animals like dolphins or whales? Is the obvious play mode we see in many animals related to our human play, to expression of individual emotion, art and ritual? One of the markers for religious awareness is the burying of the dead, a ritual that points at a notion of an afterlife and this again at well developed causality. Elephants are known to have a recognizable ritual surrounding death. Chimpanzees also mourn the dead, and notice things that have only aesthetic value, like sunsets, both of which may be considered to be components of religion or spirituality of some sort. Some birds make seemingly artistic displays to attract mates. Dolphins play and have rescued humans on many occasions, all at least an indication of pre-moral sentiments and that observing causality may not be a uniquely human trait.

Social behavior, sociality is of course one of the cornerstones of morality, but does this mean animals know good from bad? Michael Shermer points at the characteristics shared by humans and other social animals, particularly the great apes: “attachment and bonding, cooperation and mutual aid, sympathy and empathy, direct and indirect reciprocity, altruism and reciprocal altruism, conflict resolution and peacemaking, deception and deception detection, community concern and caring about what others think about you, and awareness of and response to the social rules of the group”.

Animals do feel pain, and are aware of it too; just kick a dog to find out. As for how experiences relate to consciousness, I will come back to this in the chapters on perceptions and the senses.

The “scientific” way to describe ritual carefully evades the point of how symbolic acts come to be. Where does the need for rituals arise, why do we do them; what is the intention beyond some entertainment and information transfer? Is the otherworld aspect only there to fool and manipulate the crowd, to make it more sacred, more holy, less tangible, less open to scrutiny?

There is no obvious necessity to perform rituals with an otherworldly angle and yet they show up in all cultures. Maybe there is a biological ground?

Maybe reality is so complex, that we look for an explanation and an accepted way to appease our nervous system? Maybe this has to do with how experiences become conscious, the problem of “qualia” (core and quantum-like observations like a color) or how sense data aggregates become internal “images” and memories, how subjective perceptual experiences happen and how they are stored and recalled. In ritual there is repetition and although this is something observed in pathological repetition patterns, it is also quite normal behavior for humans and animals and in learning we use this to memorize things.

Science has looked at ritual with very rational glasses, and even the psychological angle has been limited. The ritual state, what happens inside, is omitted in most descriptions and just the external (behavior, acts, repetition) is mentioned.

All these careful omissions and limitations of “ritual” definitions tell me more than what is included.

Anthropological views

I am not an anthropologist and don’t want to be one. The question of whether a ritual has magical efficacy doesn’t seem to interest them much; they mostly want to look at the social and maybe psychological effects. At best they consider rituals to be storehouses of cultural memes, carriers of a tradition, a tribal memory. They do have various definitions or let’s say in-

terpretations of ritual, and often see the development of ritual in a neo-Darwinian perspective, assuming some kind of progress and evolution. Ritualistic behavior is then seen as a primitive stage and modern man has outgrown that need. I don't mind the word primitive or even primal, as I do see ritual as a more primal phenomenon than for instance religion and will introduce the word primes to indicate contact centers with the otherworld. So if primitive means original state and not a derogative expressions, it's fine.

Joseph Jordania, in the context of the role of music, supposed that the initial function of ritualistic behaviors in human evolutionary prehistory was to achieve an altered state of consciousness in the hominid brain, building group awareness and a collective identity.

In this state hominids did not feel fear and pain, they were religiously dedicated to group interests, did not question orders, and could sacrifice their lives for the common goal. Well, music can do that, but I think this state is not exclusively human.

When I personally witnessed the mass hysterical wildebeest and zebra migration in Kenya, I noticed that before the animals jump from the river banks they circle for a while, as though ritually drumming up energy to cross (with many dying in that tumultuous crossing). So I think this "battle trance" of Jordania is an animalistic and not an exclusively hominid phenomenon.

Anthropologists like Victor Turner and the structuralists Levi-Strauss and Émile Durkheim mostly looked at the social effects of ritual and defined them accordingly, as transformational events for the community and individuals in the community. Even more modern scholars like linguist Michael Silverstein see ritual as social action aimed at particular transformations often conceived in cosmic terms.

All these definitions affirm the psychological and social importance but mostly leave out the spiritual dimension, the magical efficacy. They have only looked at the set and setting, ignoring the magical extradimensional.

Bonewits: the emic approach

Isaac Bonewits, quite versed in magical practice himself, has put one of the more modern and esoteric definitions of ritual in his pagan dictionary at his site www.neopagan.net:

Ritual: Any ordered sequence of events, actions and/or directed thoughts, especially one that is repeated in the "same" manner each time, that is designed to produce a predictable altered state of consciousness within which certain magical or religious (or artistic or scientific?) results may be obtained.

Notice that he kind of points at the liturgical matrix involving procedures, acts and directed thoughts (intention) but maintains repetition as a factor. He has been very active in the neo-pagan world and very influential and is well respected, but in this definition he seems reluctant to honor the modern trend of creating new, original rituals all the time. I think an interesting insight I share is that repetition is a useful tool to get out of the cognitive state.

Bonewits' theoretical model of why magic works assumes some field or meta-reality he refers to as the 'Switchboard'. He postulates this as a network of interlocking meta-patterns of everyone who has ever lived or who is living now, expressed as constantly changing and infinitely subtle modifications of current telepathic transmissions and receptions.

Many phenomena interpreted as "spirits" may actually be "circuits" within this switchboard, as may be many other "archetypes" of the "collective unconscious".

Now this has some connection with the notions of Akashic Records, Jung's archetypes and the collective unconscious, and with Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields induced and shaped by repetition.

Isaac's switchboard is like the collective mind of all as the basis of reality, what we believe will manifest. I must admit that for instance the Maya 2012 craze kind of points at such a phenomenon, our collective unconscious creating our own reality. There was a time where many started to believe in it, and it came closer to manifesting, but in early 2012 that spirit died; there were too many movies, books and humbug and the general public started to disbelieve, so nothing happened. Still people like Carl Johan Calleman (The Global Mind and the Rise of Civilization, 2014) believed 2012 was another important moment in the evolution and comparable to other moments (singularities) in history.

In his switchboard model, Bonewits tried to get away from the issue of external forces and spirits; he states that they may be "circuits", some kind of rational explainable phenomena that science one day might discover. This has to do with his focus (choice) on using magic only in the thaumaturgic (wonderworking) sense, as a way to achieve miracles.

Here again he is at some distance from many neo-pagan, druid and craft practices that emerged in the past century which use theurgic magic, assuming and calling spirits, deities, natural forces, with external entities asked to help do the magic, thus ascribing ritual or magical efficacy to personalized spirits. Theurgy – the word Theos is in there – assumes the assistance of God and/or spiritual beings.

This issue, is there anything out there that is conscious beyond some overarching mechanisms, is of course a fundamental question.

Bonewits escaped it by pointing to his law of pragmatism; **if it works, it works.**

He did however point to a predictable altered state of consciousness, and here I see a beginning of understanding what a ritual is and does. He saw this state (or a number of states, probably referring to the various ritual practices, use of psychedelic substances etc.) as the door to produce results.

“Results that may obtained” he says; rituals don’t always work, which is a fair comment. And he mentioned artistic and scientific outcomes as a possibility, but still separates the magical from the religious. Altogether, Isaac Bonewits came close to what I try to get across in this book.

Widening the scope

Not limiting ritual to humans of course opens a wide range of possibilities, for instance planetary, cosmic and divine rituals and even the whole of creation being a eternally repeated dance: Brahma breathing universes. For many cultures, the dance of the planets and stars and the seasons represents a divine ritual, as did the movement of the sun chariot across the sky for the Egyptians. So we have human, animal and divine rituals and why not rituals of nature spirits, elves and the like.

Secrecy in ritual: control of information flow

In most cultures there are secret rituals or parts of rituals that are secret, non-public, only accessible at certain times, hidden or taboo. This makes sense, not all information is suitable for public consumption.

Reserving certain insights for those ready and able to understand and not misuse it is a normal part of education and for religious education with initiations it may counteract intended effect of certain ritual acts. The challenges and surprises of initiations, instrumental in belief-changing personality changes, would be lost if everything was out in the open. Secrecy in whatever form (physical separation, information) makes sense, even if it is only used to separate the in-group from the outsider, the wannabe, the lower castes, the plebs. There are dangers, secrets and manipulation are also great companions.

Taboos, so often part of the totemic nature of civilizations, are often related to secrets, understanding reserved for individuals or groups according to gender, age, ability or lineage.

The secrets of magical practice are many, and there are many books or so called grimoires that pretend to divulge those secrets, in coded form or as straight manuals. The real information is often supposed to be transmitted only from person to person, from master to pupil in a lineage, but often this is misused in exploiting the underlings, the students.

Magic can be dangerous and powerful, the deep secrets are those that explain how to do the magic and involve more than mere information, the adept needs to be trained, prepared, primed. A magical act and thus a ritual is fundamentally a procedure or an attempt to control the information flow from and to the primes, a primal activity to narrow the use of that word a bit. This means bypassing the filters and straightening the process in order to get the required results, either active or passive. To understand the way to do this effectively is not an easy subject, for even those who are in practice effective healers, prophets, fortune tellers, or magicians rarely know how they do it. They often see it as a personal gift from the beyond, not to be shared easily. Sometimes for good reasons, special gifts bring special dangers if others know about it.

Some fall prey to the ego-boost associated with these talents (called *siddhis* in Vedic context) and therefore can or will not explain how they do it. Other are just careful, why share something other may not understand?

Whatever the rationale to keep the deeper levels secret, this means some notions get lost. At best, the (assumed) way they go about it becomes the basis for later rituals trying to emulate their success. Do and repeat exactly what the great sage did and it will work, is the idea.

Of course, over time some understanding of how these magical processes work evolved, at least to some. Sometimes they have issued oral or written guidelines as to how perform certain rituals. This knowledge was usually kept very secret, the guidelines are often coded or hidden in metaphors. Understandably so; magic is no toy for children and can backfire in many ways.

Over time the original understanding about why and how a specific procedure, gestures, words, songs, substances, and sacrifices were to be employed often got lost. The priests or sacrificers of later generations therefore had to stick to the rules, copy the texts, and do everything according to the book. As they did not understand why, they assumed every detail was important. In cases where some part of the original liturgy got lost, like what the soma substance in Vedic rituals was, the rituals were performed literally, later becoming empty and obviously less effective.

Another example is the use of golden crowns by kings and popes as well as gold in ritual attire. Gold has a special quality; it protects against brainwave or better thought waves (things science cannot measure, but are experienced by many and sometimes labeled as synchronicity) and especially in ceremonial situations a crown protects from external influence on what is thought or decided. This is a largely unknown property of gold, but explains why it is so often used in ritual context. I will come back to this in the chapter on ritual tools.

What is not a ritual

When pondering about the question of what a ritual is, I thought about the question of what a ritual is not; what actions in life, what sequences, what events do not qualify as a ritual or ceremony?

Very few of our actions are without some ritualistic aspect, as we act very much like automatons, repeating what we have done before, acting out routines and programs that emerged somewhere in our past. So if nearly everything is a repetition and programmed, what is then so special in ritual? In fact I think that a true ritual is not an old ingrained program or sequence, that is just the surface. The repetition is just a tool; it somehow also opens us up to an aspect of new, unique, free will inside of us.

Beyond the definitions by others, I will try to make clear that true ritual is aimed at making a connection beyond the tangible, reaching out to the spiritual. We reach out to a realm, where we get in touch with the overarching consciousness that mirrors back through the time dimension to the manifestation dimension. How we do this can hardly be limited, and ritual as such appears in a wide range of forms and instances.

So this brings me to the question of why there is ritual anyway.

4 Why ritual, what is the efficacy?

Why do we have ritual, the magical qualities of ritual and why and how it works; the efficacy of ritual

Rituals have always been part of culture, in whatever form or in whatever the tradition was. They connect us to the otherworld, the sacred, and the heavenly, bringing us in the liminal, in-between space where we can access or feel (and eventually influence) that otherworld. Rituals are the common path to enter a special state of consciousness that allows us access to the extradimensional. They are usually performed at special times and relate to special situations like seasonal changes, rites of passage, birth, death, and crises and for purposes like influencing the outcome of some process like war.

This is a state of consciousness where we can and have to shed our ego, masks, and pretension to be ourselves, entering the inner-child state where we have access to the information and exchange we normally suppress or deny. This is a sacred process, sometimes even kept secret, as it requires dedication, an anchored methodology and training. This means leading rituals is often being limited to a special class of people

Ritual and ceremonies we encounter these days often have a connection with the original creation metaphysics, they echo the primordial acts and mythical prototypes and help define the cosmology and the culture. The roots of ritual are deeper. They are in fact much older and more primitive, as in related to 'primes', our contact points with the otherworld, but have developed and are now in a symbiotic state with myth and religion. In the world of everyday modern reality, much of these once sacred rituals is lost or degraded into mere ceremonies or commercial events like Christmas or Thanksgiving, with just a shade of the original intent left.

They have become empty; they might make you feel good for a moment, but they don't elevate you, don't raise your awareness beyond the normal, the mundane, the profane. Many rituals that are now in essence ceremony; they were originally intended or designed to be magically effective, but became more or less empty. They might still have psychologically soothing or physiologically exciting effects and have a social function, but I classify that as being more ceremonial than ritual.

Church rituals are not intrinsically empty, but in practice are mostly ceremonial, just repeating what was once a holy endeavor. Rituals are in essence magical, and it took a while, but these days we accept that religious rituals are magical too. Although I can see the objections to the description, Holy Mass of the Catholic Church is (or refers to) a magical undertaking, as

in fact all religious ritual is or was intended to. And it works: I have attended church rituals where by chance or intention the magical was very much present. However, I have also sat through many Masses in my youth where boredom and empty repetition was all I could perceive.

That, for me, is a pity; eliminating the sacred from our lives is like an amputation, leaving us with the barren dryness of rationality and materialism. We still appreciate what ceremonies or habits bring, as social or psychological anchors. Not all of us subscribe to the sacredness of rituals, but we do have secular rituals: having this morning cup of coffee, going to the football match all dressed up in the right colors and attire, having a Friday night beer with friends. We might call them habits, as we repeat them in an often automatic way, but they have a symbolic meaning, too. This qualifies them as rituals or, in the way I use the word, ceremonies.

Sometimes we have connected magical qualities to what looks like very mundane things, a mascot in sports or a special sign, which makes them more ritual than ceremonial. Real rituals (in general, the sacral rituals) tend to bring us to another state of being, change our consciousness, our mind state. But they do also have other effects, they are more than staged psychotherapy or merely self-hypnotizing performances.

Social platform, Dunbar's number

Before I will go into the magical roots of ritual, first an important social effect that seems to be overlooked in the analysis of the development of hominids and early humans. Ritual has another and important function as a contact platform, in line with the social function of being together in a structured form. A ritual as such helps to establish not only better contacts, but helps to identify the other members of the group or tribe and relate to them, structure the relationships.

The size of a tribe is limited in the sense that we have a limited span of people we can relate to. It takes time to know and recognize other people but to function as an effective unit, it is essential. This limits the group size. We see some of this in monkeys and apes, their groups are limited in size, as they have to spend much of their time establishing and maintaining social hierarchies and pecking order. For human the group number varies but the median number according to Robin Dunbar is about 150. This is supposed to be influenced by the basic living conditions and also the stage of development of a culture. The more people can live and work together the more specialization is possible and this brings technology etc. Ways to have a larger tribal groups are of course hierarchies and contact platforms.

Now I believe that rituals, as being a very core contact platform, would help to structure inner tribe contacts and thus increase the optimal group size and

thus would be instrumental in sustainability and development. In later stages this would lead to hierarchies and functional specialization. So in a way rituals are part of the development path of a culture, as stepping stones toward more complex societies, as they help increase Dunbar's number. Rituals provide means for structuring the ties between people, including the weak ties Morten Hansen sees as providing a network between people beyond Dunbar's strong ties.

The sacred dimension

Ritual and magic are very close. I know no true rituals that don't have a magical intention, even as I understand that religious people could take this as a sacrilegious remark.

Traditionally, the notions and study of religion and religious ritual were kept far away from magic, the sacred kept separate from the devious and secret, but are they really different? I don't think so. They have a different connotation, different history, different traditions, and different academic valuation, but this is mostly because the whole field of extra-dimensional connection has been corrupted, manipulated, and misused forever.

Ritual is practical magic and hinges on consciousness

That magic and ritual are closely related is now a common understanding among social scientists, but they usually mean this in a limited understanding of mostly ceremonial magic, they see magic as part of ritual. I see it the other way around, ritual is just a part of magic. Magic being the more general indication of the whole, a holistic notion of how the universe works and how we deal with it. All is magical, tangible reality is just a subset, part of the whole.

Practical magic is the art of using the correspondences, the links between the spatio-temporal dimensions (physical reality) and the extra-dimensional "space" in an intentional way. In this view rituals are a form of practical magic. I don't mean magic as in tricks, self-delusion, superstition or fake effects. I do believe practical magic is or can be, depending on the situation and conditions, effective; it works. It will have an effect in the realm it is intended to work in and then mirrors back to the tangible reality.

I noted that everything is magical, so all physical action has, in the same manner, practical magic (side)-effects. Physical action, even accelerating Higgs bosons, is intended to work in the spatio-temporal dimensions (four dimensional space-time), but always has some effect in the extra-dimensional space. One could say that in the extra-dimensional there is always a reflection of what we do or what happens in manifested, physical reality and in the mind (thinking); one could call this a karmic mirroring. Action

and reaction is not limited to temporal space, it involves the whole, the metadimensional.

The three worlds I use as a general model are entangled, what we do in one, is reflected in the other. As above, below, as within, without. Nothing new there; this was known to the sages of old. The scientists of today are closing in on this with the “New Physics” notion that there are more dimensions and there is no existence without consciousness (observation being a way to manifest, to collapse the probability). I leave it to others to figure out if consciousness is just a collective dimension in the extra-dimensional space or the thing that holds the whole (the metadimensional) together. It might be the neutrino field that manifests in coloring that what we perceive as reality, it might be the supreme Godhead, Nature, Allah, Brahma. Everybody can have their beliefs here. I just postulate that consciousness is a root factor, in the very small, in our mind and in the very large; things like time and manifestation arise out of it.

I summarize this by saying “time is the vehicle of consciousness” and will explain the roots of that later. Consciousness, in a very broad perspective (human self-consciousness is just a form of it) lies at the base of the three worlds, and whatever we do affects all three worlds and is thus magical. If we act with intent, as in a ritual, whatever we do influences all three worlds.

This all points to an acceptance of the efficacy of rituals (I believe rituals are effective). They have effects in the psychological and sociological realm, but through their effects in the extra-dimensional they can also influence or impact the tangible reality. Rituals work, but how and why they work is as yet unclear. Obviously some understanding is somewhere buried in the traditions and writings of the sages long dead and I will try to unearth some of that.

Skeptics abound

Modern academic researchers and writers are usually very skeptical, denying the efficacy or only accepting some social or psychological effects. They more often than not describe ritual as a remnant of primitive, totemic, irrational, and superstitious cultures; hint at the “forbidden” magical aspects; or try to push ritual in the camp of religion (a lost case for them anyway). And yet, our holy books, our myths, dreams, many of today’s movies or fantasy novels or TV-series are full of magic, miracles, prophets, and sorcerers.

Of course there are and were serious researchers of the otherworld. In centuries past, there were magically inclined theologians, alchemists, and poets, often supported by rulers who also dabbled in esoteric practices.

Their heritage lives on in churches, Masonic lodges, Druidic circles, witchcraft covens, esoteric societies, and in the ceremonies we still have, like the Olympic Games, holidays, baptism, marriage, and funeral rites. In the new age movement there are many who have tried and experimented with old and new rituals, sometimes borrowing from far-away and half forgotten cultures, and found real value and meaning in them. The meaning of a ritual is that it gives meaning, even if not at a cognitive level, it makes us feel good and 'belonging'

The exploration of the extra dimensional, once the domicile of mystics and shamans, has gotten an immense public impulse with the re-discovery of psychedelics and entheogens, with magic mushrooms, peyote, LSD, XCT and Ayahuasca, just to name a few. But it is good to remember that the great sages and mages of the past probably also had access to similar substances, like in the Eleusinian mysteries in Greece, the soma in India and mushrooms in Sumeria.

In fact, magic mushrooms grow on Mt. Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Psychologist Benni Shanon argues Moses was high on something when climbing the mountain. I will come back to this in the chapter about psychoactive substances.

Animals like this too. Elephants are known to look for psychedelic mushrooms, the jaguar looks for the jungle herb Yahe (also used in ayahuasca) and mandrills(apes) use Iboga roots. Humans learned their use from watching the animals.

The effects of ritual are often seen as limited to the psychological and social plane, where they clearly have an effect on participants and umfeld (wider surroundings). These are well noted and explained, but the question of efficacy in the extra-dimensional as well as in the physical reality has obviously fewer clear answers. In the (written) history passed on to us many events are described as miraculous; the holy books are full of examples, but the rational minds of today are skeptical. There is little hard evidence in scientific terms or such proofs are ignored and ridiculed.

There are of course miraculous events, impressive predictions, and sorcerers with exceptional gifts (siddhis). There are even documented miracles in the religious world, but the general scientific attitude toward magic and ritual remains one of disbelief. This is partly because science doesn't accept the irrational, even systematical research by para-psychologists and studies into the mechanisms of magic (like this one) are brushed aside. Magic is impossible, goes against logic, the rational, the accepted notion of causality, locality, and the accepted and somewhat deified Laws of Physics. That these turn out to need adaptation and are everything but stable is seen as progressing insight, not as a sign we are only looking where the light is.

Parapsychology

There has been quite some research into otherworld or paranormal (psi) effects, but this has not been taken serious and is usually described as pseudo-science. Psychic phenomena were of course always of interest to individual researchers, like Thomson Jay Hudson who observed hypnotism and mediumship and came up with three laws:

- 1. Man has two minds: the objective mind (conscious) and the subjective mind (subconscious).
- 2. The subjective mind is constantly amenable to control by suggestion.
- 3. The subjective mind is incapable of inductive reasoning.

The term parapsychology was coined in or around 1889 by philosopher Max Dessoir and was used by Joseph B. Rhine in the 1930s as a replacement for the term psychical research. Rhine and later researchers like Robert Jahn and Brenda Dunne with random number generator experiments used a thorough experimental methodology and academic discipline but the results have yet to convince academia. The work of Rupert Sheldrake has sparked interest in parapsychology and psi-phenomena.

Science doesn't really accept extradimensional effects and yet, we all experience the extra dimensional, have intuitions, feelings, experience synchronistic events. Then there are the churches, institutions that have always been active in the extra-dimensional realm and have the prayers, rituals and ceremonies that billions of people believe in.

Now if one could accept that the broader Laws of Nature, covering the extra-dimensional as well as the total physical reality, are by nature not limited to space-time the seemingly incongruent claims for magic might be less frightening.

For it is fear for the unknown, the unexplainable, the irrational, the divine, that lies at the root of the skeptical view. And understandably, accepting magic as a real force would undermine and threaten not only science, but society at large, the legal system, morality, human relations, and much more.

That normal space-time Laws of Physics are at best a subset of a much larger reality is hard to swallow.

Accepting magic as effective would mean a paradigm shift, mostly for the materialistic West. To achieve this paradigm shift or at least move away for the overly rational one, we have to understand better how magic works, what the relationship between mind and matter is.

We have to bridge the abyss between science and religion (which is applied magic as I see it). Finding the Higgs-particle (a boson that supposedly gives

mass and thus existence to all) and proving the standard model of modern physics doesn't help us much there, looking carefully at what the sages and wise men of the past have given us is a better approach if we are willing to accept their findings, books, grimoires, and rituals as true and de facto effective. This is not an easy job as their truth is hidden, masked, contorted, wrongly translated, adapted and coming from a different worldview, culture, convictions.

What is necessary is to combine and unite the findings of psychology, philosophy, sociology, and a whole bunch of sciences with an understanding of the nature of the wider reality, accepting that we have (and always had) access to it through the magical (and mystical). Rituals as a widespread form of practical magic offer a great opportunity to study the bridges, gateways, and correspondences to the otherworld that is our world, too.

Rituals are therefore, in my view, ready for re-evaluation beyond the anthropological and social ritual theories developed so far. Performing ritual is necessary, as a fundamental part of our psychological development and as essential in helping us to understand how our world, including the extra-dimensional realm, really works. Given the bewildered state our Western modernistic, materialistic, and rational world has gotten itself into, we need another paradigm: we need to understand a wider reality. I here say wider, and not total reality; that's too pretentious. I believe that studying and practicing ritual, as part of the all-encompassing magic, is a promising path.

So I come back to defining ritual, which is a process before anything else. For me it is a threefold operation, involving set, setting and magic. Ritual is establishing a bridge, a gateway to the extra dimensional, on top of and in relation to the ceremonial aspects that encompass the social and psychological. It can be performed using symbolic acts, tools or words, using their corresponding qualities, or just be plain intentional (virtual) without some coding or intermediary tools, gestures or words. It can be done following specific rules like in a liturgy, or done in a new, original way and never repeated, like in a personal prayer. It can be done alone or in groups, with humans, animals, plants, object or entities, with good intentions or bad ones, open or closed for participation by outsiders.

It can be effective instantaneous, in the normal spatio-temporal dimensions or beyond, and it can take place in sacred places or just everywhere, in cyberspace or in thought space. Ritual can be a meeting of intentions, from all sides and directions, a true Vedic "sangam" or confluence of the seen and the unseen, of action and conscious thought (and unconscious mind). I can hardly define it, as it is so wide, so deeply part of what we are, that it just is, a category by itself.

Mystic and mage; two primal modes

Apart from the sociological and psychological objectives and classifications, we can distinguish two fundamentally different ritual modes, the one being a passive recipient of primal information, like foretelling the future, the other the active influencing of the world state, like health and wealth-influencing the present and the future, or even the past. Both involve the primes, contact points I will explain later, here it suffices to mention that they have a major role in the individual consciousness releasing process and thus in ritual.

The first is the passive mode, the mystical and female kind of connecting to the otherworld. This is about receiving information, opening up to the sacral, sensing what the primes pick up, which eventually reaches the mind and consciousness. The mind through the body, the emotional and archetypical layers, then deals with this primal information, but not always in a straightforward way; emotions, feelings, and thoughts are filtered, mirrored, and distorted. Also our unconscious body/mind system has, in many cases, already responded long before we think about it.

In the other fundamental mode of ritual, the magical one influencing the worlds, the information goes the other way. We want something, have an intention and use the primes to influence the otherworld, as an active and more male interaction. What the mind or body/mind system wants reaches the primes in an equally distorted, filtered, and internally mirrored way and therefore might result in something very different from what the original intention was.

We also have unconscious intentions, our system acts by itself or responds to inputs and influences the extra-dimensional in often surprising ways. Accidents, meetings, synchronicity doesn't happen like that, they are based on complex interaction patterns in a realm that for me is real, but is not measurable by 'scientific' means.

These two modes relate also to the distinction between love and truth, the one receiving and embracing, the other active and related to the will and power. Love and truth are both divine and together form wisdom, ultimately God is love and truth coming together.

In much writing about magic the above distinction is not really made. The two modes are both present, but what usually is clear is that one has to give up the personal will- here Aleister Crowley was very clear- and align oneself with the divine will. In this sense, the magical as he saw it is also a quest for losing the ego, and can be directed at good or bad, be right- or left-handed.

There are people, who by inclination, training, or genetic profile, are better at “channeling” primal information, at connecting the conscious mind with the extra-dimensional realm. If they are good at picking up the right message, they are seen as mystics or prophets. If they are good at sending out the right message and affecting the wider reality, they are sorcerers or magicians.

Ritual and ecology

Balance between the worlds is one of the purposes of public ritual. The balance within the ritual, with sacrifices and thanksgiving, adoration and worship to appease and entice the forces beyond, is a natural prerequisite.

What is less obvious, but very nicely explained by David Abram in the book “Mystery School,” edited by Eugene Burger and Jeff McBride (2003), is the role the sorcerer and shaman in a tribal society as the ecologist of the community.

“he or she acts as the intermediary between the human community and the larger ecological field, regulating the flow of nourishment, not just from the landscape to the human inhabitants, but from the human economy back to the local earth.”

The shaman in this view acts primarily as a intermediary between human and nonhuman (earthly) worlds, and only secondarily as healer. Now this offers quite a different perspective as to what sorcery and magic are or could be, expanding the responsibility of the magician. Dealing with the forces of nature means honoring them, as we know many cultures do, for instance conveying a message to an animal before killing it. The notion, that we are responsible for the effect of our acts for seven generations and thus have to be very careful about what we do with natural resources is another example of magical ecology. This view supports the idea, that whatever we do has magical consequences on a scale much beyond the here and now, and points at the responsibility of whomever dabbles in magic.

Control of information flow

A ritual is fundamentally a procedure or an attempt to control the information flow from and to the primes, a primal activity to narrow the use of that word a bit. This means bypassing the filters and straightening the process in order to get the required results, either active or passive. To understand the way to do this effectively is not an easy subject, for even those who are in practice effective healers, prophets, fortune tellers, or magicians rarely know how they do it. They often see it as a gift from the beyond. Some fall prey to the ego-boost associated with these talents (called siddhis in Vedic context) and can or will not explain how they do it. At best, the (assumed) way they go about it becomes the basis for later rituals trying to emulate

their success. Do and repeat exactly what the great sage did and it will work, is the idea. Of course, over time some understanding of how these magical processes work evolved, at least to some. Sometimes they have issued oral or written guidelines as to how perform certain rituals. This knowledge was usually kept very secret, so the guidelines are often coded or hidden in metaphors. Understandably so; magic is no toy for children and can backfire in many ways.

Over time the original understanding about why and how a specific procedure, gestures, words, songs, substances, and sacrifices were to be employed often got lost. The priests or sacrificers of later generations therefore had to stick to the rules, copy the texts, and do everything according to the book. As they did not understand why, they assumed every detail was important. In cases where some part of the original liturgy got lost, like what the soma substance in Vedic rituals was, the rituals were performed literally, later becoming empty and obviously less effective.

Another example is the use of golden crowns by kings and popes as well as gold in ritual attire. Gold has a special quality; it protects against brain waves or better thought waves (things science cannot measure, but are experienced by many and sometimes labeled as synchronicity) and especially in ceremonial situations a crown protects from external influence on what is thought or decided. This is a largely unknown property of gold, but explains why it is so often used in ritual context. I will come back to this in the chapter on ritual tools.

Purpose

The purpose of a ritual can be varied and has different levels. Often the real intentions are not clear to all or are hidden, the social control of the society by way of ritual is obviously not advertized as such. The purpose can be different for different participants, the producer/organizer, the officiator, the priest or priests, the participants or practitioners, the audience, and even those who allow a specific event, the politicians, police or religious authorities.

Purposes can be many, like predicting the future, healing, material success, confirming with religious obligations, traditions or ideals, thanksgiving, worship, purification, appeasing the Gods or preventing natural disasters, satisfaction of spiritual or emotional-psychological needs of the participants or audiences, obtaining sexual, physical or intellectual growth, testing of capabilities, qualification, strengthening of social stratification, social cohesion, group bonding, achieving trance states, delivery of sacraments like marriage, funerals, just feeling good, a sense of security, moral education, demonstration of social status in respect or submission, initiation, marking a time-change (season-eclipse-planets) or status change

(rites of passage), affiliation and allegiance, inaugurations, obtaining social acceptance or approval for some event or action (like war) and then a whole array of more negative purposes like hurting adversaries.

The list of goals is very long, but then ritual is a very basic category. In fact there are few human actions, that don't have some ritual aspect or at least symbolic reference to it, in sports, in courts of law, in graduation, in science.

There are ritual traditions everywhere and most of them make sense, although not in a rational way.

Looking at what a ritual achieves

Stating that magic and rituals are effective sounds like an unsubstantiated belief, not befitting our rational 21-th century worldview.

However, all through the ages ritual and magic were deemed effective and have survived quite a few onslaughts, from organized religion and philosophers. The debate about the efficacy of ritual runs through history, but never seems to come to a clear conclusion.

There is always this and that, always accepting it at one level, rejecting it elsewhere.

Plato and Augustine are good anchors to show the dichotomy and paradoxical views. Plato (in *Laws*) argues against magic, he sees it as a poisoning and warns against it. He sees spells as a psychological means of frightening based on ritual action and warns against those who use magic for the personal gain. He thus admits that magic exists, notably spells, and has power over its victims, but he sees it as a psychological game, not something that works because of the influence of gods. Magic is a psychological and, in the last instance, a social problem, the gods do not enter here.

But then in Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates talks about prophesy and divine madness and praises this as the source of the most important blessings granted to men. In *Symposium* the Athenian identified magicians as maleficent, allowing however a measure of efficacy as a function of the god Eros.

Plato considers sorcerers fake, but praised the divine madness of prophets, while Augustine thought that communication between men and gods was possible, but dangerous and had to be stopped or was only allowed in the religious context. Augustine accepts public religious ritual, because it is given and validated by God himself, and because there are the Sacred Writings to base the ritual on. He condemns private (Pagan) rituals which serve individual, private and egotistic goals only, and of course in his early years had some experience with it (he was once a Manichaeon).

Magic and efficacy

If we see a ritual as a magic act, the question of the efficacy of a ritual is also one about the efficacy of magic in general. Is magic just science we haven't mastered or is there more? Are psychotherapy or homeopathy also magical and what about alchemy? These days we can produce gold from mercury quite easily with nuclear technology, does that annul alchemy? The question of course hinges on the definition of magic and the range of magical acts. Obviously this includes sympathetic magic, contagious magic, imitative and nature magic, theurgic magic and other commonly known varieties.

Does magic or Magick (Crowley) work, is it an art or gift for some, or a complex way of self-delusion, auto-suggestion, maybe a way to cope with innate clairvoyance and premonition, and can we prove it works?

These questions are age-old and the answers, if any, have a lot to do with the belief system and religious inclination of whoever poses and answers them. In most non-Western cultures, it is believed to work, in our world the belief was there, but got lost with the enlightenment and rationality. In the later days of the Inquisition there was little doubt that magic did work, but the Church saw it as an evil, devilish phenomenon, and made it a heretic act.

There is a lot of debate on how magic works and of course, whether it works at all. Even though nearly everybody has had synchronistic experiences or unexplainable coincidences, proof that magic works is hard to get. Opinions range from total denial and refutation to the belief that all and everything is governed by the laws of magic and our 'normal' causality is just a small and rather insignificant subset of the wider magical reality. I tend to agree with the latter. Some believe that what you believe comes true, the "Credendo vides" (I believe, so I will see) approach, others see magic as a separate discipline, open only to the initiated and well trained.

Can we prove it works? Proving anything of this kind in a so-called scientific way, which means a repeatable and verifiable experimental setup, turns out to be very difficult. There are numerous so called para-psychological experiments, but very few yield repeatable results on a wider scale, although if done in a small circle of 'believers' the results are usually quite impressive.

One of the few scientifically proven results is that there are perception phenomena whereby human subjects seem to be able to anticipate the future, certain body responses occur before the event that should cause them actually happens or before the signal could normally travel to the brain and cause the reaction. Rupert Sheldrake has designed experiments that could or would prove ESP-effects that would convince science, but his work is not really considered scientific. He is seen as a maverick scientist with

weird ideas. One of his projects, trying to prove that when we look at things we influence the outside, that our eyes (or our mind) are senders, makes much sense to me. Looking at things we charge them, I believe the value of art objects (also films, books, statues) is raised when many look or looked at it.

My personal magic trick, taking small clouds out of the sky, very impressive for a rational audience, is probably not more than influencing the tenuous balance of gas and fluid in the cloud with a bit of photon energy, by just looking intently at them. This by the way, seeing magic as yet unexplained physics, is a stance many scientists take.

As for the efficacy of a ritual, much hinges on the belief of the participants, if you believe it works, it works.

To validate and enhance this belief, make the magic work, it is necessary that the levels of meaning and intention are aligned and point in the same direction. If one tries to achieve peace and harmony, it doesn't make sense to stage a conflict and use violent symbolism, except maybe when in the initial stage the evil forces have to be scared off. Similarly a war dance can do without the soft appeasements.

One can assume that connection and harmonization, the coordination between the tangible and the virtual matrix is key to the success of a ritual, in whatever terms, material or immaterial. Using the right names, the right movements, the right correspondences, even the right breath is essential.

Ritual and risk, placebo and healing

Anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski have long noted that the assumed effect of ritual and magic is linked to conditions of risk and uncertainty. Some level of perceived danger and difficulty, also in the preparation, adds to the liminality and disorientation feelings that help to achieve the ritual state of consciousness and this paradoxically increases the illusion (or reality) of control of the otherworld. Easy challenges are not considered real in the magical sense, not a fair exchange with the otherworld, and the heavier and risky the ritual the more value is attributed to it, like in the Sundance ritual of the Plains Indians. There is some psychological research indicating that the belief in the efficacy also increases if the potential value of the outcome is higher, if the stakes are higher. Even if one doesn't believe in the magical one takes it more serious if the setup is more impressive. In the chapter about consciousness I will come back to this cognitive dissonance phenomenon.

In healing, one of the most common goals of magic, the preparation, perception, set and setting play a similar role. The setup, with adequate imagi-

native, emotional, sensory, moral and aesthetic input for the patient and empathically geared toward playing into what is expected in terms of symbols and procedures related to the cultural mythos and adapted to the sufferer's idiosyncratic story and beliefs is really important. Healing rituals can be very simple like just hugging (Amma) but usually involve dramatic scenario's of evocation, enactment, embodiment and evaluation in a charged setting of hope and uncertainty. The patient has to be brought into a liminal, dissociated state for the process of healing to work, again this paradox that insecurity brings effectiveness. This is in line with the general thesis in this book, that ritual efficacy has to do with shifting internal states, that only at deeper levels of the psyche changes can occur and the future influenced.

In the healing process undoubtedly the placebo effect plays a role, in ritual (healing) as well as in medical practice. If the doctor and the whole environment is serious, the outcome of placebo experiments is better, one takes it more serious, is more receptive to the illusion. In this respect even the color and size of the pills makes a difference, like white pills work better for nervous complaints.

Placebo studies and ritual theory are, from the psychologists perspective often seen as mutually interpenetrating disciplines. Healing rituals work, like placebo treatment, better if administered by authoritative culturally sanctioned 'powers', the showmanship of the officiator or doctor is an important factor.

The setting transmutes the often somewhat theatrical mythos into an experiential reality for participants. The placebo effects, even in normal biomedical practice, are then a result of what is experienced at some level as a healing ritual. And even if a supposedly effective therapy is used, routine biomedical pharmacological and procedural interventions contain significant ritual dimensions.

A hospital in that sense is (even if it pretends not to be) a ritual space and even very modern treatments have this aspect of a socio-cultural healing ritual. For Western patients more impressive machinery and treatments are considered more effective, elsewhere the extended magical setting with lots of props and action works better. Science is more and more investigating these effects, recent studies of placebo treatment point to an effective placebo effect beyond the causality of scientifically understood natural processes.

Ritual as a group process

One can do rituals by oneself, but doing it in groups is felt to be more engaging and effective. $1+1=3$ is what we experience and is even part of the

Christian faith (Christ will be present if two or more are united in his name). Together even simple things like walking, dancing, but also praying and meditating go better. It is speculated that rituals involving synchronous activity may produce positive emotions that weaken the psychological boundaries between the self and the group and a group mind emerges. Another explanation is that the “thoughtwaves” we generate synchronize the group activity.

Shaving heads in this respect seem to better synchronize minds, as we see in monasteries, military training and among certain cult groups, I assume hair has a thoughtwave shielding function similar to gold (the real effect of crowns).

Group mind - group resonance

The effect, that in groups people start to think and feel alike is well known. That they even develop a kind of group mind is of course well known, like in the bandwagon effect, people seem inclined to follow an emergent trend, a collective consciousness develops. Durkheim used the word Collective Effervescence to describe this and saw it as the root of religious awareness.

Sharing or exchanging thoughtwaves not only synchronizes, it may lead to new thoughtforms (egregores in occult lore) and ideas, it might be that this is how memes and collective subconscious ideas emerge.

In crowd psychology the subject is studied in the context of what groups mean in terms of power and also how in groups the eternal struggle between individual and collective interest evolves. Ordinary people can gain direct power by acting collectively, revolutions and big social changes are usually crowd or group mind processes. Being in demonstrations one often identifies with the group mind, and acts different from normal.

Groups are safe and one tends to give up individual notions and conform to what the group wants, including separating from the outside, us-and-them thinking and acting. Here the roots of fascism become visible, systems that allow the individual inferiority complex to hide behind the superiority feeling and symbolism of the group.

In marketing and public relations this is cleverly exploited, Apple for instance thrives on the us-them separation, they cleverly use the concept of “the rest of us”.

The psychology of the crowd differs significantly from the psychology of the individual members within it. Bonding might bring about a collective and unconscious set of values, but more practically members start to think and act the same with positive or negative results, as can be seen in sports event. A kind of resonance process is happening, with each member’s emotion increased, and one becomes less aware of one’s actions. In ritual this can lead to situations, where the attendants go beyond normal boundaries.

The process of deindividuation or mental unity is dependent on the level of anonymity, security, closeness and sensory input, notably overload through lights, music or dance. In a disco setting all this is obviously used, reason why some like Hans Cousto call the disco culture ritualistic.

The explanations for this synergy of thought goes in two directions. Contagion theory states that crowds cause people to act in a certain way, convergence theory states that people who wish to act in a certain way come together to form crowds. This is quite different from what I mention as thought wave resonance, but then science doesn't generally accept the idea that we radiate and receive some kind of intangible information from others, even as mirror neuron research points there..

Is ritual addressing entities?

Another age-old question about rituals is whether they address only the inner world and our perception or that they establish contact with an outside reality beyond ourselves. Are rituals calling for real or just imagined gods, demons, entities or forces, is there anything outside we can know at all. Is there something real outside Plato's cave? I will refrain from this ontological question and leave it to philosophers like bishop Berkeley. I will just assume, in the Hermetic view, that whatever is out there, is a reflection or mirror of what happens inside our mind. I use the notion of an extra-dimensional realm to clarify my understanding of ritual, but this model is just a map, not the moon.

Is there a ritual state of consciousness?

We know that waking, sleeping, dreaming are states of consciousness, that hypnosis can bring forth another state and that certain drugs like psychedelics can again bring about another level or state of consciousness.

It has been stated by influential anthropologists like Arnold van Gennep and by Victor Turner that there is a specific state in rituals, that they call liminality. This is the, where the participant is in a kind of in-between state, in limbo about his position, loses his identification with social hierarchies, and becomes open to new "programming".

We would now indicate this as a special state of consciousness or even an Non Ordinary State of Consciousness (NOSC) An interesting concept, that points at a specific state of consciousness, but remains a little vague. I think that part of the process of a ritual, not the ultimate purpose but a necessary step to get there, and not always achieved, is to bring the officiator, the participants or the audience in a specific state, that I will for now generally describe as the ritual state, but could equally well be called the inner child state. A state of consciousness close to the inner me, that has less armor and

defenses, is open to much more direct contact with the primes and therefore with the extra-dimensional realm. A state that shamans all through the ages have reached through various (ritual) means, including music, dance, deprivation, psycho-active substances, ritual gestures etc. I believe true healing and other magical acts can only effectively take place when this altered state of consciousness is achieved.

So I argue there is a ritual state of consciousness, that has to do with being in the less protected and more open “inner child” state. That state has something to do with heaven, with the sacred space, like when Jesus talks about “being like the children to enter the Kingdom (state) of Heaven”. Being in that state offers all kind of possibilities, both in the inner- and the outer world, so reaching that state and using the heightened awareness at various consciousness levels can be a psychologically healing experience by itself and the ultimate purpose of the ritual.

In this sense ritual can also be seen as a psychotherapeutic event. For purposes beyond that the ritual state is at least helpful if not necessary to obtain further results. In this light all kind of ritual and magical tools, stories, myths, songs etc. used in rituals can be seen as tools to help attain that state of consciousness. They can be seen as anchors that help the mind to let go of its outer defense systems (personalities, ego) and let the awareness reach past the emotions, feelings, and body reactions to that core of our being, where the primes are pure and accessible.

Do we need tools, liturgy

Ultimately the human mind or better the soul in a ritual (altered) state of consciousness should be able to do magic without any tools, implements, substances, symbols, music, magical spells or formulas or gestures and in any place or circumstance. The mind however, needs help in concentration, one needs to align body, mind and heart to get into that state.

The tools help to get there, and repetition and a familiar and safe environment (sacred space) helps to get beyond the threshold that separates one from the magical realm. Act like cleansing, purification and in fact many things in the liturgy of a ritual are nothing but familiar signposts toward the gateway, they have been psychologically anchored and help to get from the normal reality to the appearance to the significance to the ultimate virtual of the sacred or magical. If necessary, fake it till you make it!

Preparing oneself and the place and tools help to recall the anchors, the routines, the neural pathways that were constructed on previous occasions, in that sense magic is also a craft. Beyond initiation the priest, shaman or magician needs practice, he needs the memories and anchors to ease the transition from the normal to the sacred, and the tools and the liturgy help him

there. Again routine and being accustomed to the liturgy is the paradoxical condition, based upon a sense of safety, for entering the liminality of the otherworld.

Experienced users of psychedelic substances know that there is always this moment of insecurity, of fear, before ingesting something, and that this should be so, otherwise the trip might be flashy and visually interesting, but not transformational. The power of a ritual is therefore never in the tools, but in the practitioner, who can use them to align himself with the “work”. Of course some acts, words, routines, tools are better at this than others, as they better reflect subconscious or symbolic correspondences or are better aligned with the psychological processes involved in entering the ritual state. The language of dreams for instance is more effective addressing the unconscious layer of archetypical symbolism than rational words.

Alejandro Jodorowsky in his works on psychomagic explains why what he calls shamanic psychotherapy works as a healing path, using the power of dreams, theater, poetry, and shamanism and concrete poetic (symbolic) acts. He notes that psychological realizations can cause true transformation and as illness in his view can be seen as a physical dream that reveals unresolved emotional and psychological problems, ailments can heal.

Jodorowsky thereby points at the process of integrating or breaking apart the dysfunctional persona (mask) a patient identifies with, to connect with the deeper self. This comes close to my notions about how identifying the quarrel points between subpersonalities or masks and the inner child (deeper self) are the key to resolving problems.

Transpersonal therapists like Manuel Almendro do use the concept of characters, not far removed from what I call subpersonalities and recognize central ‘attractors’. I would see those attractors as core inner self mechanisms. The interaction of this attractor with the outside world leads to crystallized, dynamic patterns almendro indicates as fractals, distinct patterns in the personality or character(s).

The ‘emergent crisis’ idea that psychological crisis, even psychopathological crisis, can be seen as a trigger for healing-transformation is attractive and positive. Describing them as non-ordinary states of consciousness (NOSC) is a lot better than labelling them as madness or psychotic. He places this process in the context of therapeutic healing, but I think rituals are the more traditional way to deal with such ‘emergent’ crises. *ism* or possession are phenomena quite common in many ritual traditions, and quite effective in those environments. non-

Ritual Gestalt

Psychology looks at events like rituals also in a holistic perceptual way, as gestalts. According to the Law of Closure the mind tends to perceive complete shapes even if those forms are incomplete. We group sensed information into patterns, objects or gestalts. So we don't think about separate acts when the word Mass comes up, but have a more complete image. A ritual is easily perceived as a whole, as the ritual gestalt. In this book, adding magic correspondences to the set and setting makes for a more complete gestalt of a ritual.

Liturgy involves more than using the right words or making the right gestures or having the right intention, it's the total gestalt, the combination of mind-body-soul focus that helps achieve the required state and thus decides the outcome of a ritual, on a psychological and magical level. So rules and scenarios are handed down and followed, sometimes very rigidly, but also in a way comfortable, things happen the way one is used to. Paradoxically this comfort and security aspect of invariance opens the possibility for change (of identification and mask) in the participant. Doing it the same as before brings about this option of liminality, of being at the crossroads, the Indian idea of sangam, the in-between.

The concept of staging and controlling the ritual is thus part of the process of creating the (mind) set that helps participants cross over to the ritual state. This stands apart from the earlier mentioned lack of true understanding of what was done before and became a traditional ritual.

The power of a ritual increases if all the conditions are optimal, if the "gestalt" of the ritual is focused and as the felicity conditions (John Austin) are upheld. These originally were intended for speeches, but apply to ritual quite nicely. Some felicity conditions are the essential condition (intention to act), the sincerity condition (seriously and sincerely) and a preparatory condition, whether the authority of the officiator and the circumstances of the act are appropriate to its being performed successfully. They have to do with authority, possibility, obligation and legality.

Timothy Leary, the Harvard professor who popularized LSD, has often pointed at the need to create a special environment and a special mindset to benefit from what a psychedelic substance brings. Set and setting were his shorthand for a deliberate staging and preparation. Ingesting or smoking psychedelic substances has been part of many traditions and rituals, and looking at their liturgy some notions of an effective setup emerge. Security and invariance are obviously major parts of creating a "gestalt" for the ritual. Repetition can bring the mind in an altered state, it's a psychological effective technique at the root of ritual behavior.

This can be felt as discipline, but provides also safety. In modern spiritual communities like the Santo Daime church, where psychoactive substances are taken as a sacrament this is done in a fairly strict and rigid ritual context, and called ceremony. This limits the freedom to deviate from the liturgy but as the Daime (Ayahuca) can have surprising effects it makes the whole thing also more safe.

The Gestalt idea of ritual and the Bert Hellinger Systemic or Family Constellation approach, in itself a ritual process transgressing normal time-space dimensions, have much in common. Systemic constellations throw another light on how rituals function. If we look at it in a liturgic context and see how physical placement and resulting emotions of participants, facilitator and representatives yields information and resolves deep issues, the ritual context is clear.

Hellinger who was a Catholic priest before, became deeply inspired by the Zulu rituals and ancestor veneration. The ancestors were seen in their culture as positive, constructive, and creative presences. The ritual connection with ancestors is now a central feature of the constellation process. Hellinger's constellations are ritualistic, they create a virtual environment that yield information about family and other relationships, transgressing time and distance. Old conflicts are resolved, in a way that can only be described as magical. There seems to be a correspondence between physical postures, distance, orientation and that what happened before in the family. In ritual the choreography, movement, placing and orientation obviously play an important role. The orientation of the priest in Catholic Mass (changed since Vaticanum II) facing the congregation or facing the deity makes a big difference. Instead of facing the east or the apse (*ad orientem*), the priest now faces the people (*ad populum*). It makes a distinct difference in the ritual gestalt, and although seemingly more sharing and democratic, it takes away from the original purpose of the Holy Mass, which is connection to God rather than a social happening.

The theosophist and cofounder of the Liberal Catholic Church Charles W. Leadbeater, one of the great authorities concerning rites, made this very clear, the priest should be at the head of the people, toward the divine.

Magic, good or bad, categories

Historical the word magic has had two meanings. One is a positive, signifying a highly elevated and esoteric form of practical wisdom indicated as *magia*, based on the perceived effectiveness of mystical patterns and intelligences, possessing real efficacy in nature and in human affairs. The second and far more negative connotation comes from the disapproval by theologians and religions of various popular practices and techniques. This

is seemingly because of their perceived inefficacy in nature and human affairs, but also to keep magic out of the hands of the common people, for many reasons.

Often one speaks of black magic, or left hand magic (in the Tantric tradition) as opposed to white magic, black meaning the intention of the magician is not benevolent. There is also the distinction in positive magic, as aiming at an “Do Y so X will happen” or negative magic or taboos “Don’t do Y or X will result”

Other common categories include High and Low Magic (the appeal to divine powers or lowly spirits respectively, with goals lofty or personal, according to the type of magic). Another distinction is between “manifest” and “subtle” magic. Subtle magic refers to magic of legend, gradually and sometimes hardly noticeable or intangibly altering the world, while manifest magic is magic that immediately appears as a result.

Why they work

There are some aspects and situations where rational cause and effect play a role, but the deeper workings and effectiveness of a ritual are mostly hidden and in a sense opposing the Western logic and worldview and seen as irrational. The meaning of a ritual is therefore dependent on one’s perspective.

The classic explanations as why or how rituals work range from therapeutic release to social power-play or mass hypnosis to morphogenetic fields, their mere survival for sometimes thousands of years however suggest they did and do work. Calling it superstition, as J.G. Frazer did, or kind of limiting the meaning and goal of a ritual to the performance itself like Frits Staal kind of ignores the fact that many people all through the ages believed and believe they work, that a ritual will bring real effects. They are supported and stimulated in that belief by their (organized or not) religion.

We can forgive Frazer that he would call the rituals and religious customs beyond the ‘civilised’ world as primitive, a century later we have to accept that all religions, cults and denominations are on equal footing in that they are to be respected as genuine expressions of a belief system. And if religions, of course including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and all the other ‘world-religions’ honor ritual, they must have some value. Even if one comes from a totally agnostic point-of-view then the psychological and social effects of ritual cannot be denied. One might call them delusional, self-hypnotic, illusionary, but they do have an effect, at least upon the participants and their inner worlds, their psyche.

A ritual works or it doesn’t, depending on purpose, intention, performance, actors, the divine will and grace, timing and the myriad of details to be observed. In this book I can only point out the few underlying mechanisms

and models that were in the literature or otherwise revealed to me, no doubt a particular mix of projection, interpretation and explanation.

A ritual is both an end and a means. Performing a ritual is an end in itself and yet serves other purposes too. Frits Staal, one of the foremost authorities on Vedic fire rituals, posed that a ritual has no meaning, in that one performs it for itself and it doesn't matter whether all those hymns and gestures are empty of meaning, just doing it is enough. Rituals in his view are no folkloristic events serving the gods and expressing myth, but help us structure our lives. A ritual is organizing our activities in a certain way and forms the basis of scientific thought.

He points at the rituals of animals, they existed long before language or myths existed. He sees mantras not as texts with deep meaning, but as ritual sounds without a meaning, maybe even the precursor of human language. All very rational and mechanistic, in line with the somewhat fashionable notion of emergence (out of chaos life, consciousness and humans evolved) but again not seeing the biological roots of ritual as indications of extra-dimensional senses.

A more spiritual interpretation is that there is an often hidden but at a deeper level clear meaning and intention in all and every part of a ritual, that the psychological, social and magical correspondences are all there and functional. Maybe this is corrupted through time or misinterpretation, translation or tinkering, but basically I do see a ritual as a meaningful act. Its efficacy spans the innerworld of the participants, sacrificer and beneficiaries, but also the outer, tangible reality and the unseen spirit world.

The Personal : the set

Personal development is often the purpose of a ritual, whether it is as a stage of initiation, seeking spiritual growth or just as learning more about rituals and how they work. Doing rituals is a journey in itself, a journey of discovering the working of consciousness and its various states. This can be a lengthy process with many mistakes, invoking the wrong energies and getting results not anticipated. It is therefore a risky path, better taken with patience, good guides and with some study. Colin Low uses the image of a horse: anyone can get on the back of a wild mustang, but reaching the point where horse and rider go in the same direction at the same time takes practice.

For sure the psychological aspects of a ritual are very important, if the participants and spectators go home with a feeling of well-being, of connectedness and wholeness, much has been achieved.

These psychological effects might derive from the contact with archetypal energies at unconscious and subconscious levels, the mass- or auto-hypno-

tic effects of repetitious chants, dances, hymns or prostrations, the sharing and communion with others in the ritual, the release of traumatic energies, inner priority reshuffling, or whatever mechanism psychology dreams up. It does work, and even the most rational scientist will admit that feeling good has many beneficial effects on the body, which might (partly) explain the healing so often resulting from rituals.

The Social: the setting

Rituals usually have a social aspect as they bring the devotees together and establish the clerical and social hierarchy and often a base of income for the priests. Rituals provide structure and if done regularly a certain discipline, they become familiar, trusted, safe and thus offer an platform and opportunity for individual healing and conversion.

Clyde Kluckhohn, an American anthropologist and social theorist who did field work among the Navaho native Americans, sees the function of a ritual as “the discharge of emotion of individuals in socially accepted channels” and certainly excessive feasting and fertility rites have that aspect, but it is usually not the main purpose of a ritual. It can be, and rituals do have a social effect, but his interpretation points more toward what I define as a ceremony, devoid of magical intention.

Mardi Gras (Carnival, Fasching) is a good example, but drinking coffee and gossiping around the copy machine too. If we take his view as pointing at ritual as resolving Cognitive Dissonance at deeper levels, I do agree.

Humor, divine madness, and magic

Laughing is very healthy. It releases stress and ambiguity. Jokes can solve difficult situations. The jester at court did have a function, if only to point at the masks and idiosyncrasies of his masters. It feels that laughing is also a way to let go of the mask yourself, reaching for the deeper level. The coyote mind, the jester, the joker also shows up in ritual, sometimes as the unexpected influence, the voice from the chaos, the logically impossible; a quantum jump to get beyond the logical causality.

Coyote, divine madness

The unexpected, the confrontation, the mirror held up can be a way to shock people out of fixed cultural and psychological patterns. In Vedic ritual there is one priest who has to perform this role, going against the liturgy with unusual interventions, acting as the quantum chaos effect. The explanation is that he is fending off the evil forces, the powers that deliberately want to effect and change the ritual. He is drawing the chaos curtain, ripping normal reality, and thus allowing for nonrational, noncausal things to happen.

We see this divine madness, and yet very earthly trickster figures like the coyote, the Icelandic Loki, the spider Anansi (Africa) or Iktomi (Lakota), Reynard the Fox, often in shape-shifting animal form; even Prometheus is a kind of jester at Zeus’s court and the great God himself was a shape-shifter. There are many folk stories and myths about this. Often the smart little animal or figure wins out by clever tricks. The often anti-social anti-hero turns out to be essential to save the day, with unusual solutions or tricks.

Being different, challenging, or even obnoxious or confrontational is also seen as part of divine craziness or crazy wisdom. Jokes, koans, paradoxes, unconventional, outrageous, or unexpected behavior; often teaching in this form is more effective than rational discourse. The inspiration for such actions is not only smartness, it is seen as coming from the otherworld: normal logic is replaced by an intuitive but effective madness.

It is beyond hope, beyond answers, beyond identity. One has to let go of attachments. This notion shows up in most traditions, in Plato (Phaedrus) we see it as divine madness “Theia mania”, unusual behavior attributed to intervention of a god.

Stage of ritual	mindset setting magical			
Entrance - Sacred space				preparation, welcome
Purification - propitiation				cleaning, mercy, forgiving of sins)
Dedication				purpose
Celebration				commemoration; present or past
Devotion - worship				bhakti
Invocation				asking for presence: spirits - deities
Sacrifice - Communion				gifts
Petition				asking for Grace / Healing / Blessing / Shielding
Transformation				the liminality phase and ascension/possession
Manipulation of reality				(consecration/ magic/ healing/sacraments)
Divination				time magic
Sharing				social, payment officiators
Party-orgy-fest				social
Dismissal - reentry				goodbye

5 The ritual matrix

There are many elements in a ritual, physical things, symbols, acts, songs and movements. To get them into some order and perspective I use a ritual matrix. It's a list of events and stages with their effects in the three worlds (realms) I use in my model (the set, setting and magical).

Such a framework is useful as many things happen at a ritual, sequentially and at the same time. It helps to order and rank them, see what they are, when they happen and with what effect. It results not only in a listing of stages, the chronology or liturgical order, but shows the social and group energy effects, the individual experiences of officiants and audience, and the magical effects the ritual has.

It remains, however, a limited view. To create a realistic image or representation of a ritual would require so many angles and dimensions that I have to limit my matrix of a specific event to the main points. Even if I refrain from aspects like entertainment and performance value, emotion line and all those things that we know are part of a movie or stage performance, and just look at the different stages, things get to be complicated. There are so many elements, the whole environment and culture play a role, it's a complex structure.

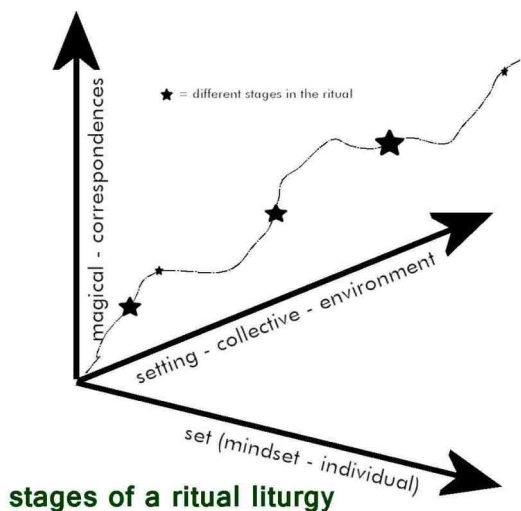
To keep it manageable, I basically list the elements I think are the most important and then assign a value to each element with respect to set, setting and the magical. The result is an ordered listing and time line, with a matrix where I indicate the various effects of the items.

I give a detailed matrix and interpretation outlining the liturgical elements, influences and effects in an appendix VIII in this book. Also the Catholic Holy Mass is a good example of a complex ritual and is dealt with in a separate appendix VII.

Here I just give the outline, an example of an empty form concerning a fairly general ritual. The values for the three aspects set, setting and magic are not filled in, this can be done for a specific situation.

I would in such a case assign values for the efficacy (result) of the elements or stages concerning set, setting and magical, thus creating a matrix that would yield insight in how the ritual 'works'.

The values I obtain, in a specific case, are by subjective divination, I use a pendulum and a subjective (but repeatable) scale. This is not the only way to obtain such comparative values and data. One could ask participants how they experience a ritual, using their subjective ranking, and then find statistical averages. There are many ways to do this using questionnaires, but why not measure blood pressure, brain waves frequency or other physio-



logical variables. The effects of the liturgical elements will vary depending on the methods, not only in general, but also among the people involved, there is always an individual and subjective experience. Much work is needed to arrive at some calibration. I will come back to the details in later chapters.

What matters is that the effects are distinguished as to what they

achieve in the three worlds.

This is a fairly rational way to arrange the sequence of a ritual, not much different from other social events or ceremonies. One can choose this or that element as more important, leave out certain stages, but there is some logical order to it and it offers an overview of the whole event.

The sequence of a ritual, the liturgical order can be visualized in different ways. Using the three axes of set, setting, and the magical a semi-3D graph could be used to indicate the ways things develop, but such a representation (see picture) is less clear than the matrix model.

A general outline; blueprint

Many rituals have a similar structure, there is a kind of general blueprint we encounter in many traditions. There are more or less standard stages, but their importance or effect on the whole depends on the intentions, purpose and mise-en-scene. Let's first look at the different stages in general, not necessarily in a logical time line order.

The processes of a ritual are often mixed in the practical liturgy and some elements are left out or show up at multiple stages. Purification and dedication are often repeated. Sometimes a ritual is limited to offering, worship, celebration, commemoration or communion, sometimes trance (entering the spirit realm) is the main process.

I follow a more or less liturgical order in these matrices. There are meaningful other ways to look at the focus and effectiveness of the stages and elements of a ritual process. The focus of a certain element is important too, is

it a cerebral part like a sermon or something more bodily, like dancing or singing?

One could look at various ways to identify what kind of energy is activated in the various stages, like using the planetary system as the model for the ritual matrix or use the Kabbalah tree of life to connect the stages with a spiritual 'sefiroth' level. The alchemical stages of Nigredo, Albedo and Rubido are also a good approach, it all depends on the tradition and intention, no model fits all.

In the appendix VIII there is a matrix with indications of set, setting and magical potential

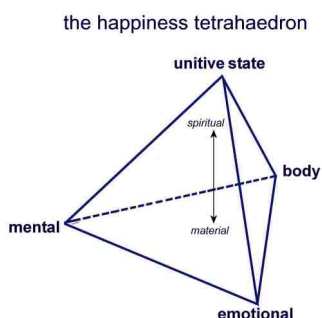
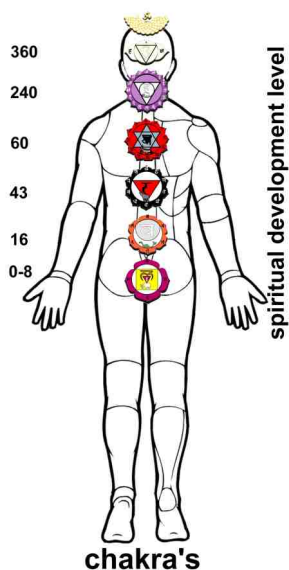
Chakra classification

A classification of rituals according to the chakra system is quite popular. Starting with the root chakra for earthing and working up to the crown chakra and back down one can focus the energy and achieve a kundalini-like structure of a ritual.

By concentrating on one specific chakra like in some tantric rituals, more specific effects can be achieved. Alice Bailey, a British writer and theosophist, saw the bridging - by way of opening the heart - of the three lower chakras and the three higher chakras as an important step to achieve wholeness. Aleister Crowley used the seven Chinese tattwas or energy modes, related to breath patterns, as a basis for his Ceremonial Magickal rites.

Ceremonial Magic(k) in the strict sense is the ancient art of invoking and controlling spirits through the use of certain formulae. It is, in Crowley's vision, a transcendental experience that awakens the magician to his inner Divinity, taking him into mystical realms and into communication with the Higher Self.

I don't follow the chakra system in my ritual matrix model, but use it elsewhere in this book to outline a development model not only of rituals, but also of reli-



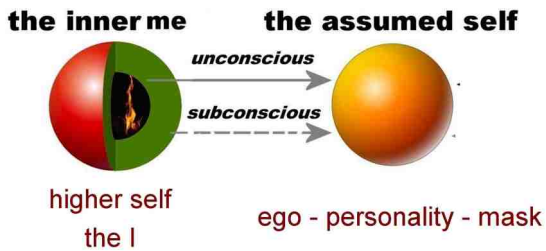
Individual happiness can be the result of very basic material conditions, but

gions. I noted the chakras in the human body are mirroring outer realities and structures.

Strict or freedom in form

Describing a ritual as a matrix might be interpreted as a preference for strict form, but that is not what I intend. In rituals the liturgy can be quite strict, following exactly what is prescribed, in the book or by tradition. This has the advantage of routine, it allows attendants and officiators to concentrate on the inner processes.

In sticking to a routine form there is the paradox of being free. On the other hand there are groups that like to develop new rituals, creative forms, where traditional elements and gestures are included, but a lot of freedom is deemed essential to have a certain “freshness”. The Craft, neo-Pagan and Druid movements are examples. In my view this has the danger of those “new” rituals becoming too cognitive, too much thinking, not enough letting go of the form.



The ritual process aims at bringing down the ego or assumed self and reaching the inner me or higher self

Purpose – goal – processes

There are many reasons and goals for a ritual. They can range from just observance of the tradition and very practical and material goals like winning a war or obtaining material goods, to healing, devotion and spiritual advancement. There are very simple prayers to ask for help or healing but also rituals to influence the course of a war.

Changing consciousness or reaching other states of consciousness is an important motive for having a ritual, as a goal by itself or as a way to achieve other goals. Being in that state offers access to forces and contacts otherwise not possible.

The question is how do we achieve those goals, what actions and modes help us to get there? As a broad description ritual as a process aims at goals in set, setting and magical sense. Beyond the psychological and social goals that also apply to ceremonies, the magical aims at shifting the consciousness, forging a connection between worlds, expanding our awareness.

Even as there are different goals, the structure and tools are often the same, rituals tend to have a similar and general format. As a example, in a fire ritual the fire itself is usually seen as the connection with the otherworld, the fire god (Agni in Hinduism) as the deity that is the messenger. This means that one can use the same divine messenger and format for a whole gamut of purposes or goals.

The ‘real world’ part of the matrix involves the practical liturgic scenario, its preparation and execution, the timing, what the sacrificer(s) and the sacerdotal crew (priests/ helpers) do, the ritual enclosure, the implements and tools, the sacrifice materials, the spectator/devotee crowd and its social setting.

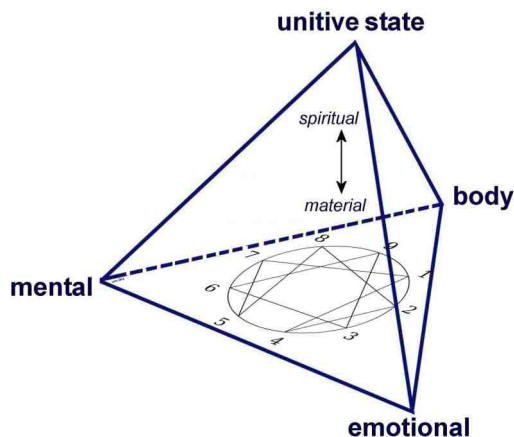
The timing might be based on celestial circumstances, but this still tangible. These physical aspects are, for many rituals, well described in the literature, again Frazer did some amazing groundwork, and I will not go into much detail here. The tangible side of ritual, tools, texts, songs and dances are not the main focus of this book.

Ritual competence

Theories like the ritual competence theory of E. T. Lawson and R. McCauley (Rethinking Religion 1990) concentrate very much on the functional aspects, the role of the priest and the tools used. They do accept that fundamentally there is some superhuman agency represented in a (religious) ritual, there is a ritually constructed relation between participants and a deity. They call this the “The Principle of Superhuman Agency”. In the development of the ritual this superhuman connection, source or act may be coming down through previous rituals, leaving what they call superhuman markers. Such superhuman traces are more important than other aspects of the ritual.

I see their work as important, it structures the way

The happiness tetrahedron



we can look at ritual acts but it is limited to symbolic-cultural religious systems and not really accepting the magical efficacy. Their suggestion that religious actions always involve an object limits the scope of their theory. At a basic level of representation, rituals are merely action on the form, a result is part of the (intended) outcome. This however leaves out rituals with no other purpose than bhakti, devotion.

Happiness as a goal

In many rituals the goal can be fairly broadly defined as trying to be happy. This term however, is not easily defined, has both material and spiritual connotations and has been the subject of much philosophical debate in the past. More recently the positive psychology has claimed the word and equated it more with well-being success, achievement and less with the satori or samadhi state or the virtue related Greek term Eudaimonia. The distinction between higher and lower needs in the Maslow hierarchy and adding otherworld contact as a happiness factor is important in understanding happiness in the ritual context.

The present trend to measure happiness as a subjective index based on answers to simple questions works well for macro-social analysis, like in the work of Martin Seligman, Ruut Veenhoven and others.

The happiness index is used more and more, Bhutan being a forerunner in national happiness policy, but is limited in understanding the individual happiness mechanisms.

The “scientific” work around happiness feels too much as ignoring the magical and mystical dimension of happiness, there is only a vague reference to meaning.. That marriage, meditation practice, religious affiliation and moderate wealth positively influence happiness beyond one’s genetic blueprint and life circumstances makes sense, but individual differences are for instance not related to type.

Jonathan Haidt in his book “The Happiness Hypothesis” does address the divine dimension and the historical thinking about virtue, but the happiness formula he and Seligman use does not specify which individual traits and personality type matter. The modern trend is that material happiness, well being, feeling good can be manipulated and enhanced to some extend, the spiritual happiness is of a different order. The relation with ritual has not been researched very deep.

Too many popular books about happiness these days concentrate on the superficial, on material conditions, happiness planning and rerouting neuro-linguistic programming in the brain. Often they ignore that the state of happiness is not always cognitive. Deep happiness is not an ego-state, and can be remembered ex post, as soon as one thinks “I am happy” it’s mostly gone.

Happiness (as a state of being) is basically not a process, but a result. It comes about not only through activity, discipline and planning, but also seemingly accidental, as “grace”.

In my view life choices at a soul level have an impact on how and what kind of happiness one experiences. Typology is the key, as I indicate in the Happiness Tetraeder pictures. Here one has to look not only at the assumed selves but the inner child typology matters too, especially for spiritual happiness. I have indicated that the enneagram may offer a way to help identify individual happiness options.

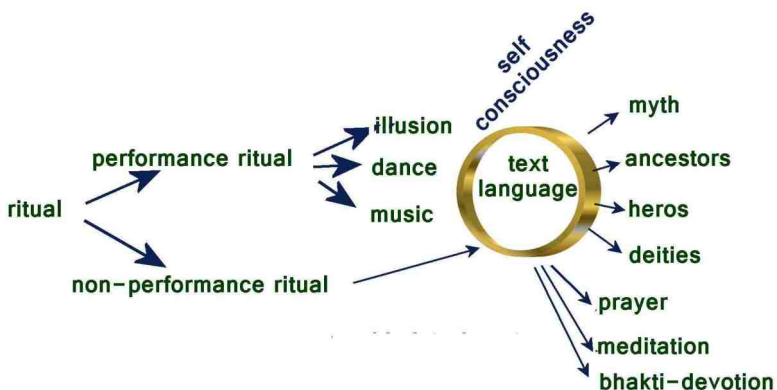
There has always been some understanding that happiness and health are related, and that it works both ways. In this way healing and achieving happiness are two sides of the same coin, and can be approached from the inside out or from the outside in.

Modern neurochemistry and insight in how neurotransmitters work can be combined with psychological and biological typology to identify the basic happiness dimensions.

In Appendix V there is more about the various notions of happiness, some new theories about it and about the relation with the ritual process.

Expectations, results

Participants have some expectations, they want to feel good, holy, warm, but also connected to the others and to the otherworld. The officiants can have other expectations, maybe more concentrating on the social and power relations. There is the notion of magical effects, but the belief in this can vary, some will hope for miracles, others see this as superstitious and irrational. The more ego, the less connection to the inner me core, the less one takes the magical serious.



The personal “set” or mindset is what matters most in the ultimate efficacy of a ritual, and this is why in this book so much attention is given to how our psyche is structured. But can we understand the mindset of others or is it mostly projection of our own thinking?

We could ask what happens in the mind of a young boy in the preparation for an initiation ritual? The boy himself can answer, but only to questions asked from a certain perspective. The people organizing the ritual, especially if they went through the process themselves, might be a better source, but again, what can be asked and what can be expected to be answered.

Often researchers have to assume or guess, as they are not part of the culture, caste or have not had the training and sometimes lifelong preparation the officiators have. Or even if they are on the inside, they might lack the broader view to compare and objectify, this is the old emic/etic discussion in anthropology. The mindset of the individual and the group often includes some expectations of the magical efficacy, but this is usually ignored in the scientific approach.

Beyond the mindset, the magical effects per se are what fascinates me, this is the true focus and reason for this book. There is magic in rituals and it works, there is efficacy. On a personal level, this gradually became clear to me. I attended many rituals, fire-events, festivals and religious events.

Some things surprised me, like that the cultural differences were obviously important, but often ignored. We import rituals from non-Western cultures, without much appreciation for their roots, copying the superficial formats, but ignoring deeper motives.

I can point here at the now popular Ayahuasca rituals. They are performed these days by both Western and indigenous shamans and would-be shamans.

In general the Westerners concentrate on the mystical part of things, the union, the healing, the psychological spiritual and not on the magical, the spirit part. The authentic, well trained indigenous shaman would be much more aware of the magical side and its demonic dangers. To accommodate the mostly western participants, he or she would go along and focus on the atmosphere, the mystical healing of the individual, but would be (without stressing that) far more aware of magical effects and disturbances. He would take greater care to “hold space” and ward off undesired “spirits”, demons and energies. As many of these rituals took place in my venues (I ran a number of spiritual centers over time) the difference was clearly noticeable in the state of the place, after the rituals. With Western shamans or even with “Santo Daime” rituals guided by Western officiators, there was far more spiritual wreckage, energy, ectoplasticity.

Preparation and cleansing

Preparation of a ritual has practical aspects, like setting up, building, dressing up, preparing tools etc. but also the preparation of the ritual mindset of attendants or officiators can be extensive, and meditation, fasting, yoga, exercises of all kinds, isolation and silence can be part of the concentration process. If we see the liminality stage of losing identity, which is and was seen (by Victor Turner notably) as an essential part of indigenous rituals (like in rites of passage) as part of the preparation, it clearly is a mindset process. I tend to see liminality, the threshold stage as part of the process of losing the ego, the mask. This means interpreting it as part of the process of getting into the ritual state of inner child or higher self, not as the defining characteristic of ritual. Getting into this (not necessary less conscious but less ego-centered) state of consciousness is a much wider qualifier of ritual process than (Turner's) liminality.

Purification is usually part of a ritual to clean oneself from sins or bad karma, water and fire are both used for this, again in connection with prayer, chanting etc. Not only the participants but also the tools and implements need to be cleaned and purified. In the purification often (salted) water, complementing the fire, is used, but also smoke from sage, representing air.

Celebration as in drumming up the good spirits and having a party in itself is purpose enough and the ritual setting lifts it above the level of after work drinks. Marriage, funerals, coming of age etc. are ground for rituals and should be celebrated in the proper setting. Celebration can take many forms and a fire adds that special flavor of transformation and renewal. Music, songs, feasting, dancing, masks, dress-up, nearly everything is appropriate.

Commemoration of events, heroic deeds or figures and of celebrating the rhythms in nature like the start of seasons, equinoxes etc. is the root of many rituals and has gradually led to stories and myths. Myth being the cognitive interpretation of the natural and magical processes observed, serving as a rational explanation of why and how questions, a cosmology and spirit world loaded with projections and human imagery.

Drumming, dancing, playing, celebration was there before the frontal lobe yielded this self-awareness 'thing' that asked questions about the why. Intuition (and the connection with the extra dimensional) was there before self-consciousness, as is obvious from animal rituals. It probably happened gradually, but the image of the hunter telling how he was successful in the past at a gathering around the fire preparing for the next hunt, visualizing what will happen, makes more sense than assuming that religion caused such behavior.

That ritual evolved was, in my view, because it was felt as an effective way to influence the outcome of that hunt, war, or project. Ritual is related to much deeper senses and awareness than what our mind brings us. Ritual was there before there were myths, probably even before there was symbolic language.

Healing

Healing of body and soul is also a common purpose of a ritual. In many cultures it is seen as a by-product of purification, getting rid of evil spirits or spells, but often the process of healing is more complex and a purpose in itself. Shielding and protection against evil influences can be seen as part of this process, with blessing as the way to call forth the good and positive. The use of spells as a tool in this respect is quite common, but is really a ritual class in itself. And spells are double-edged, they can come from good or bad intentions, in many cultures spells and counter spells are very important.

Bhakti

Worship; there is the general devotional kind of ritual (Bhakti in the Vedic tradition) just honoring the deity or spirit without asking for anything, merely thanking for the good we have received and regretting the sins we have committed. This can be done by simple prayer, chanting, prostrations or offerings and most important, by silence. Silence is one of the most powerful tools in any ritual!

Communion with the spirits, other participants and the community is a central theme. The communication with the spirit or deities, asking for favors of a material or immaterial kind by sacrifice is a common aspect. Here the offerings become sacrifice, a gift in order to obtain something in return, a kind of fair deal, to give in order to receive. The communication is two-way, not only in the expectation of the results, but oracle signs or divination are interpreted as an answer of the spirit(s).

Invocation or conjuration of spirits is part of many rituals, but is also seen as less appropriate as the spirits are supposed to be present anyway at a ritual at their honor, but they of course can and should be welcomed.

Offering

Sacrifices and offerings are a central act in religion and in magic, and even as we have limited the more bloody aspects of sacrifice in our modern world, nearly all religions still incorporate sacrificial notions. Sacrifice is a way to communicate with world of the gods, the unseen. The word sacrament, used for the core rituals (sometimes involving ingestion of a substance) in a religion, underlines this.

Already Plato saw sacrifices as communion with the Gods and the outcome like in divination as their answer. In Vedic ritual, the offering material, the deity, and the act of offering (libation/oblation) are the three main aspect of a sacrifice. (dravyam devata tyagah). A further step is the communion, like in uniting with the divine, partaking in the consecration, even eating the transmuted sacrifice to achieve this communion.

Transformation

We perform or participate in ritual because we want to change things. Change, in ourselves or in the way things develop, means magically influencing the normal way of things.

Transformation of the participants is an essential process, to enter a different state of consciousness, letting go of the ego, entering the in-between space (in oneself or as between the worlds). It often comes down to reaching for a higher level of consciousness or power in the outer or the inner world, the psychological transformation then has social implications, like in becoming a warrior of the tribe.

In Alchemical terms it is using the 'secret' fire of transmutation. The alchemical qualities of fire are well known, in fire rituals the transformation can be magical, psychological and/or social, but a funeral rite is of course also fairly practical.

Rites of transformation, passage and initiations often use fire. Usually there is also physical but highly symbolic act, one has to take a step, make a move, cross a bridge, receive a tattoo, being circumcised. Jumping over the fire, through a fire-arch, or walking it's hot ashes, juggling fire; the fire helps to transform and to achieve something new and better, a higher state. Here the fire is more than a window, it is a doorway to heaven. One goes through the fire into another state or world. Burning old cloths or paraphernalia in order to be ready for a new set is a good example of such a symbolic act, a strong signal to the subconscious that change is happening.

Here the fairly modern technique of EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) comes to mind, a psychological acupressure technique that helps to resolve emotional issues by tapping certain points. Beyond the thought we seem to need a physical token to get things going, something to connect and integrate psyche and body. In praying we express this in folding our hands or kneeling, the body and soul (mind) both need to be involved.

Spirit realm

Ascension is rising up to the divine level, in many cases entering the realm of the spirit(s) in a trance-like state. It is letting go of the ego in a special way, giving oneself up to the spirit, daemon or deity. We see this in many

African religions, but also in transported cults like Candomblé and Voodoo.

Going down to the underworld, a descent, is usually part of the ritual sequence, facing death, but coming up again, regenerated, ready for celestial ascent. In the shamanic type of ritual the trance aspect (doorway) is usually the most important, the shaman makes the 'trip' to the other world on behalf of his people or client(s).

The ritual spaces

There is the virtual, inner matrix of private purpose and intention, consciousness shifts or jumps, magical visualization, internalized prayers, alliances and foeships with the unseen world and the karmic circumstances. All religions emphasize that the inner and outer should be aligned for a ritual to be effective.

One often sees (apart from the 3 worlds of mind, setting and otherworld used in this book) three spheres or realms involved in a ritual setting:

- . A: the real (sensed) world outside
- . B: the ritual enclosure or sanctuary
- . C: the unseen or spirit world, which includes the heavens, hell and purgatory, but also the astral and other higher planes. (Sometimes one divides the unseen in an upper and underworld, with the sensory world in between)

B is a projection/analogue of both, forming the connection between the two worlds, it can also be seen as the focal point, the mirror point between the two worlds, the center where all become one in the ritual.

The ritual enclosure is in both worlds. The ritual is connecting A and C and frequently refers and joins the two worlds with formulas, chants, mantras, sacrifice, oblations, libations, consecration, benediction, dedication etc. usually with the analogy, orientation, movement very precisely prescribed. Having a physical form symbolizing the central axis (world tree) that establishes the connection is common in many traditions.

Re-entry

Rituals usually have a take-off (separation), a transformation (transition) and re-entry structure (incorporation). This last part can be a thanking of those present (also the spiritual entities) and a dismissal, but especially in cases where heavy transformational energies emerged, more care is needed to help participants processing their experiences. Coming down from the highs is a subtle process, if one wants to keep the lessons and insights. Especially in psychedelic rituals this is often overlooked, getting up is easy,

coming down with the “goods” or insights much harder. Tim Leary emphasized this, he used the image of a spaceship coming back to earth, the re-entry procedure.

Party

The party aspect is important too, a ritual can be fun or at least end with fun, being it just mead and cookies or a true Bacchantic fest or Dionysian orgy. Catholic Carnival (Mardi Gras), the last preparation for the Lent period of fasting leading up to Easter, is obviously a remnant of earlier and more exuberant processions and festivities and has some interested practical effects like expanding the community gene-pool.

After intensive rituals there usually is a sense of belonging, of group bonding and social unity. Having a coffee with the congregation after Sunday service is just a simple example.

Theatrical Performance and play

In staging a ritual, undeniable the performance aspect is part of the deal. Using symbolism, addressing the subconscious and unconscious layers; all the tricks and tools of the stage magician, the theater maker, the movie-director and the game-designer can be found in rituals. Nothing new there, except that these things are now part of art-school and not the secret curriculum of the shamanistic or religious training.

We could distinguish between performance and non performance rituals. Quiet, introspective prayer and meditation ritual practices are not really performances, but most public rituals have a performance and theatrical side to them. And a good performance does have psychological and social effects, the two worlds are not so separate.

When, over time, self consciousness (as in symbolic language and cognitive understanding of meaning, explanatory religious models and myths) raised ritual above the original level, things merged. A myth or epic story re-enacted can then be seen as a performance ritual. Myth is already a cognitive thing, while ritual lies deeper. Of course saying myth is performance ritual does apply in more modern times, where self consciousness is part of the human toolkit.

Although the Paul McLean theory of the triune brain has found no neurological proof and is discarded as a physical brain model, it does point at this idea of gradual development. In that perspective I see a plant (un)consciousness and animal (un)consciousness as embedded deeper layers, part of the whole consciousness pyramid. Ritual goes deeper than the upper layers of consciousness because it started earlier (in evolution) and performing ritual reaches deeper layers than the cognitive.

Myth is also a process but came later and is a more cognitive process. Other animals have rituals but they do not have myths. Because myth is cognitive, requiring planning and decision-making, Stan Krippner considers it performance ritual, even as it only involves a recitation of text. But then what about a meditation or prayer ritual without performance? This of course centers on the notion of what establishes a ritual, is there an otherworldly or magical goal or not? Myths are stories, deeply rooted stories no doubt, but does the telling of parts of the Mahabarat constitute a ritual, or is it merely a ceremony, entertainment, education. There are psychological effects, people are touched, the crowd united, but does it magically change the course of events? Again, what is a ritual, and as I have limited the use of the word, as including practical magic, myth is often performance ritual, but not always. I could even argue myth is performance mysticism as the receiver/participant /reader becomes part of a process of connecting the worlds, beyond cognition.

Myth is process, for the performer and the audience/reader/listener, a process of integrating many levels of awareness.

6 History of Ritual and Views of Ritual

In this chapter I look at how ritual developed, in and before historic times and in connection with that I will sketch how scholars and scientists have looked at ritual and how ritual theories developed. My own views differ from the more or less accepted models, mostly because I believe the magical efficacy of rituals is real and needs to be honored as part of the whole ritual matrix.

Concerning ritual theory we see that one usually looks at the development from a particular angle, from within a paradigm. We see what we recognize, what resonates with our worldview and tend to ignore what is alien, strange or irrational from our perspective. Even if an anthropologist immerses him- or herself in a culture and comes up with what used to be called an emic (from the inside) instead of a generalized etic (objective) view his or her worldview still influences and colors the results.

Here the scientific approach has limited the interpretation of rituals, looking mostly at the psychological and social effects, not at the magical and otherworldly. A strict materialist and rational background will see rituals as mere superstition, at best as something creating social/community bonding and facilitating social structures and individual psychological development. The more classical philosophical and theological approach, seeing ritual as a means to religious devotion, raising and directing energy will of course yield different insights, but only fairly recently science has started to take shamanism, indigenous healing, etc. serious.

Anthropologist are usually not interested in how a ritual works, they want to investigate and understand what it does to the people and how it affects society, relationships, culture. In general they don't honor the magical efficacy I see as an essential part of ritual.

But how can we deny the magical effects? They are part of the equation.



Lascaux cavepainting

Would rituals have survived if the results were just imaginary, make-belief and without real world effects?

The magical dimension, the effect of ritual acts or behavior on whatever constitutes the extradimensional can be denied or explained as mere psychological illusion, but they do influence the way things move

and develop. My argument here is that if we compare two tribes next to each other, the one using effective rituals to grow better crops, hunt better or wage more successful wars, not only because their minds are better tuned, but because they have divined the future, we will very soon see the two societies grow apart. The magical result of rituals is thus part of their meaning and cannot be ignored.

I don't see myself as an anthropologist, so I feel free to create a new and deviant image and come up explanative models concerning ritual. This in the hope it will better explain and position certain practices, effects and developments. I like to see whether these models can yield predictions about the effects of ritual, maybe point at future developments of ritual.

Maybe the most important for me is to try to explain how and why lack of ritual these days limits individual and societal development.



Cavepaintings Maya (approx 600 CE) Campeche

Where did it start: the first rituals

Was the fire lighted by Noah after the great flood really the first ritual? It's a nice Biblical touch and fits in with my focus on fire rituals in this book, but I think one could assume rituals are at least as old as self-consciousness and probably much older.

I even believe, with Frits Staal, that they are an evolutionary heritage of the animal kingdom and may have evolved further, but are based on perception and activation hardware (neurons) present in non-human kingdoms. Modern biology finds out more and more that we share a lot with our animal nephews, and that perception/action mechanism, mirror neurons, reflexes and even 'models of mind' patterns are very similar.

What the cavemen of old painted on the walls must have been part of a ritual of some sorts. In older and even prehistoric cultures the evidence of ritual activities is overwhelming. In the few relatively “primitive” societies that survive it is still a major part of life. And who could deny it ritual in modern life, looking at a generation pierced and tattooed, gathering in ritual house parties, head banging and tripping at festivals, experimenting with ayahuasca and trance-dance?

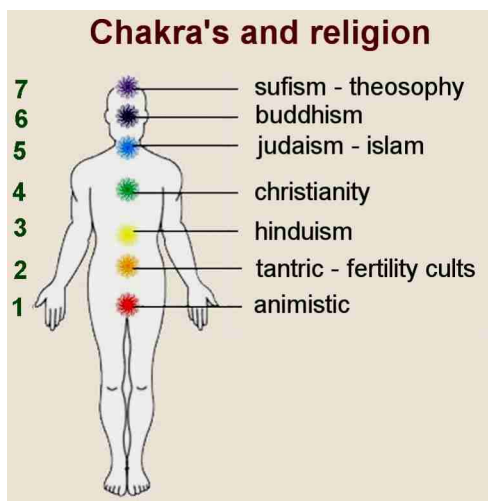
The interesting question is why and from where did ritual develop? Was it play, a way to pass time, a natural extension of celebrations, something we inherited from the animal kingdom? Or was it, as many myths and religious views see it, indeed a practice that came from the Gods, as a gift or as a demand for atonement for sins, a mode for worship of the unseen, connecting to the otherworld?

Ritual behavior may have biological (neurological) roots. Repetition of thoughts and acts happens a lot, we get into loops, repeat steps, develop tics. The mind and the body seem to like repetition and “entrainment” to ease the nervous system and escape stress. This makes ritual repetition a natural mode of expression, a way of dealing with danger, stress and uncertainty, something we also observe in psychopathological obsessive repetition. It has roots beyond the self-conscious, as these repetitions are also seen in animals, and is more deeply rooted than cognitive thinking. Repetition as in drumming and dancing as a way to get into a trance state is obviously not a very cerebral activity.

Celebration as starting point

Animals have rituals, or at least ritualistic behavior, just visit a monkey colony in a zoo, listen to birds singing, observe the mating patterns of vertebrae and even insects. We can call that instinct, but how to explain the mourning of elephants when one of them dies?

Human or humanoid ritual probably started with celebration, around the fire. A good hunt, good harvest, a successful fight, the people would gather to celebrate, party, en-



joy, share stories, thank each other and nature and those who came before, they would dance, drum, maybe get stoned or drunk. They would recall earlier events, the heroes and their achievements and anticipate tomorrow's hunt. Here we already have the basic ingredients of ceremony, like the sharing of food. Then what makes, apart from the use of fire, different



Rock art in Zimbabwe, a ceremonial dance

from animals? Animals make sounds, birds sing and seemingly enjoy singing harmoniously, dance, play and enjoy each other's company.

Now the question of self-consciousness in early humans presents itself. Not an easy subject, for could there have been ritual before there was self-consciousness? Was there a kind of group consciousness, akin to what animals display? The slow development of the human race in paleolithic times doesn't point at great cognitive achievements, things moved slowly, very slowly till quite recently.

Pre-humans seem to have been around for at least a couple of million years without much more than primitive tools, some use of fire and little progress in technological or cultural terms. Only fairly recent things have changed, some 50,000 years ago the use of tools changed and animal husbandry and agriculture is even more recent, only some 10 to 12,000 years old.

And yet archaeologists find indications of rituals dating back to those 'primitive' times. How self-conscious were those ancestors, or did they only have some kind of group mind? If so, would these early humans or pre-humans have possessed intuitive capabilities beyond what modern humans have, would they be able to communicate telepathically, use other modes of connecting we have lost but see in animals? Would they have special intuitions, allowing energy and information exchange beyond the normal senses. Would they be able to rise above 'our' limitations of time and space and become conscious of their "magical" powers?

If they were able to perceive more of the 'otherworld', think about how aboriginals live in the dreamtime, they might have had more contact with the future. So instead of celebrating only afterwards, they would start gathering before the next hunt or war, using their visualization to get in the right

mood, project success and thus magical efficacy in what then were indeed rituals.

Much of that had to do with time, the future and (in ancestor veneration) the past. A celebration of a marriage, initiation, a new leader and even a funeral is not about the past, it is about what is hoped for in the future, magically trying to influence what lies ahead, ward off evil forces.

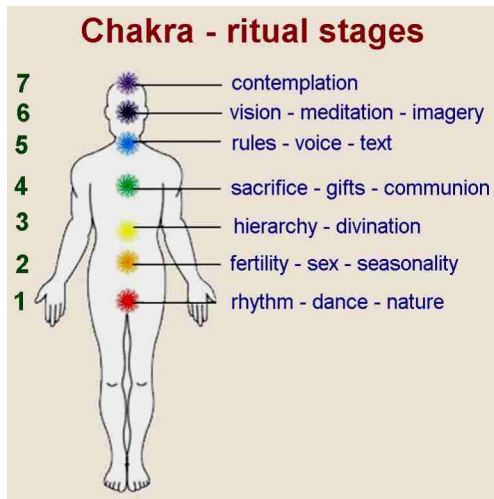
Rituals were also instrumental in establishing structures, hierarchies and allowed smaller groups to expand beyond the limits of Dunbar's number. Economies of scale come into play once a group reaches a certain size. Specialization becomes possible, tool makers, fire tenders, crafts develop, progress happens. This would also happen to ritual itself. Performing ritual would become a profession.

This was the privilege of shamans and priests and later of rulers and kings. They would assume a magical responsibility, claiming otherworldly powers presented or accepted as a fair exchange for the surplus in work, goods or water they would extract from the people. They were promising a safe future in return for gifts, taxes, help in building or warfare in the present.

Theories of religion and thus magic

Why do people group together for rituals and eventually form lodges, cults, sects and churches? Is it because God or Gods told them (revealed via some messenger) to do so, are they brainwashed, is there peer pressure, need to belong to a group, are they looking for security, rational economic benefits, meaning, hope for a better (after)-life, is it a habit one gets used to, the theories are many. Some are far-fetched, like that religions are originally cargo cults brought here by extraterrestrials (by way of psychedelic mushroom spores as Terence McKenna suggested). Theories that religions offer something humans need for a biological or neurological need are more realistic, but only in the materialistic perspective.

Rituals do play a role in the economic surplus exchange model that lies at the root of more complex societies, but they have a much wider im-



portance. They are also culture carriers, obviously constitute group memory, containing the history and culture and in later ritual development stage the myths. They have a social effect in regulating relationships, kinship, succession and allegiances and of course do provide meaning for the individual.

Whatever the angle, in ritual theory the magical efficacy of a ritual is hardly taken serious.

Arguing there are real advantages and effects in performing ritual does change the perspective. If ritual works and is perceived to work, magically influencing reality, there is pretty solid ground for doing them, even before self-consciousness, symbolic language and religion developed.

Social scientists have long looked at religions and magic mostly for the meaning and the social effects, ignoring the truly magical side. The substance of religion, why the beliefs make sense, hold value and meaning and explain the incomprehensible otherworld, experiences and nature in general was seen as enough explanation by essentialists like Tylor and Frazer and later by Mircea Eliade who recognized the longing for otherworldly perfection and the quest for meaning. The notion that religion evolved because it was an effective way to deal with the otherworld and the daily reality has escaped most scientists, I think.

If we want to know how ritual came to be, some might ask how religion then came to be. It is in through some visible traces of ritual activity that science claims to recognize religion. Here traces of burial or taking care of the dead in a special way are seen as proof of some notion about an afterlife.

I argue ritual and much later religion evolved after certain acts were recognized as having “supernatural” effects and religion only came about in the context of self-awareness and symbolic thinking and language. Rituals came first, only later their magical efficacy made people with some level of self consciousness wonder about explanations, developing hypotheses and projecting images and beliefs into what then became religions and belief systems?

However, if rituals were first, developed from celebration and sharing, then magic is at the root of it all. No magic, no ritual, ritual is practical magic, addressing otherworld dimensions.

The logical development scheme is then; celebration, magic, ritual, morality as experienced result and self evident truth, and only then (organized) religion with each stage of development using what was accepted as working before, keeping the tradition. No need for social scrutiny to act moral or good, the choices between individual and collective came about naturally and were if necessary checked in ritual, by divination or oracle. Of course, once religion became established, specialization happened, hierarchies

emerged. The ordinary people were cut out of the ritual experience and became spectators. All kind of structures would emerge, hence the need for dogma, strict observance. The once felt and natural morality became institutionalized, a system, with rules, laws and interpretation, if necessary enforced as divine commandments.

This all goes against the more or less accepted theory that belief in the supernatural emerges from hypotheses assumed by individuals to explain natural phenomena that then were shared to develop to collective religious beliefs. That model however assumes symbolic language and verbal exchange (of sacred truths) and this would limit religious sentiments to a timeframe where articulate language (beyond the animal exchange of warnings and mating calls) had developed.

In the model I suggest, where magic is perceived to work and is experienced by way of the primes, there is no need for such developed language. Spirituality is the feeling of being connected, it is an individual awareness and interpretation of what happens. Morality then is also something that is felt and then checked against the outcome of magical acts. The necessity of social sanction and dogma is much less in this perspective, sociality will play a role in the development, but is not the main factor.

Cognitive scientists usually state that religion comes with the development of the brain and notably the frontal lobe. In my view it is possible that all this cognitive processing or thinking we do actually limits the religious awareness and access to the primes (otherworld contact organs) that would make living in harmony the natural thing to do, as early humans did for some millionsof years.

The primes are the hardwired energy exchange organs that offer magical capabilities that eventually develop (with self consciousness) into religion. Hence the so called evolution of the religious mind might be not the process of expanding, but of limiting spiritual awareness instead; we are becoming more and more cognitive and less spiritual with more brain cells.

The brain has pushed away spiritual consciousness in this view and religion as it developed was trying to keep the memory of the past alive. It was magical awareness that would bring a selective advantage to a person, people or tribe, not for rational or material progress, but in terms of balance and happiness. I see that I am bringing back the Noble Savage notion into play here, but didn't G. Gurdjieff talk about the organ Kundabuffer as what kept us away from realization (In Beelzebub's tales to his grandson). Yes, the natural selection and more brains did



James Frazer

favor the rational and materialistic, the cognitive understanding and progress, but see where it did bring us.

The early rituals developed, became more complex, and specialization developed if the circumstances allowed it (enough food to exempt specialists from basic sustenance work) and smiths, healers, priests, artisans and courts emerged. It's quite possible that this led to less involvement of the people, to ritualization of what once was deep-felt impulse and intuition. Empty repetition and dogmatism took over, stratification, hierarchies and castes emerged and modern man became what he is now, isolated, detached, lonely, desperately seeking the meaning that is still in his bones and soul, but appeasing this desire with ever more material substitutes.

So ritual probably started as a natural bridge between individual and social acts, it developed from social activities, parties, celebrations; things like individual expressive art and extensive liturgy came much later. The drums, implements, altars, songs, stories were at first communal, not individual, but of course over time became individual. Even the Dreamtime Aboriginals in Australia have developed layers and social strata, some are more equal than others and have special tasks and possessions like churinga's.

Movement, drumming and dance came first

In original ritual the movement, music and dance are fundamental, more fundamental even than sacrifice, words, stories, songs and myths. When looking at rituals, these are far more common among indigenous people and in the ritual matrix have deeper roots, more power, they are more original and come from lower chakra's than for instance refined imagination techniques. In this sense the movement of the body is more fundamental in a ritual context, it feels like the mind needs to reach down to the body in physical expression to help thoughts to become beliefs. Gestures, movement, dances and the physical placing of people, implements, fires etc. are more fundamental and magically more important than what is said or thought in ritual. This is also becomes clear from assessing the elements of the ritual matrix elsewhere in this books.

As ritual, religion, myth and magic have developed, in a time span of at least a few tens of thousands of years, maybe more, I believe that experimentation and experience has shown what works and what doesn't.

The efficacy of ritual depends on the belief system, but the belief system is of course based upon what works and is experienced. There obviously has been an element of chance, the one shaman accidentally finding a specific plant, another finds a way to foretell the future. The correspondences found to be effective are also dependent on the culture, the circumstances, climate

and nature being different. So even in the remaining “ritual” cultures (and maybe all are in a way) there is great diversity, but there must be a fundamental matrix arising out of the way the human psyche works (by itself and in relation to the social and the spiritual). The question is whether we can discern a developmental model of ritual from studying history or interpreting existing cultures as being on different rungs of that development ladder. Now the backdrop of what we really know about rituals in the past is limited, prehistoric evidence scarce, so let me develop a model, a hypothetical structure.

I will use the chakra model, as elsewhere in this book, but other models could work as well, think of basic differentiation in hunter/gatherers and settlers, in the four corners or elements, the three Ayurvedic types, the Enneagram typology and the Maslow hierarchy of needs, et cetera.

The chakra model of ritual development

Rituals have, like anything, a development path, an evolution. Now in the chakra model I use here, the focus of rituals (and the cultures they are part of) go up from the first, very earthly chakra through fertility, sex, power, love to manifestation, vision and spiritual awareness, in a nutshell. This is quite a general approach, many traditions point at the need to rise from mere material to spiritual, and point at the heart as the pivotal energy point between the lower and higher motives. I have noticed, that in individuals there is a similar development and I even use this as the basis of diagnostic analysis of inner child and (sub)-personalities.

The chakra system provides a way to view how our (creative) life energy manifest and can be checked against the belief structure and thus the way one deals with life experiences. A person focused on say the material-power chakra (3th chakra) will see the world in those terms, will associate with beliefs in material values and focus on power issues. The fifth chakra, where manifestation and structure are important (the hands, the throat) will focus on rules, action, living a decent and moral life in the physical sense. A person who has achieved awareness of the seventh chakra probably won't worry much about material things and feel connected to the spiritual beyond rules, vision, manifestation or material issues.

In this context religions can also be classified as having a main chakra focus, like Christianity on the heart, Judaism and Islam on the throat (manifesting) chakra, Hinduism on the power chakra, Buddhism on the sixth (third eye/vision), etc. The basic tenets of those religions are projections of the chakra energy, like in Islam the focus is on bringing animal man to human man, aiming at decency, structure, external things rather than philosophical considerations or spiritual aspirations. Islam stipulates being “good” in a practical, visible sense, following the rules that make sense for

health, social relations and morality. Mohammed, although honoring the Abrahamic tradition, cut back a lot from the Judaic multitude of rules and ritual and only kept a few that made sense.

Levels of awareness: the first chakra

Looking at the development of rituals it thus makes sense to assume that the first rituals arose from projecting the first chakra energy onto the external world. Nature, the powers of the earth, animistic deities, life and death, the weather and fire are logical correlations. The rituals of the first chakra are earthly, about basic energies, nature and we can see remnants of this also in the seasonal festivals and rituals. The first chakra is where things start, and from where the life energy comes and rises up, the start of the kundalini (snake).

Without trying to classify all rituals according to their chakra focus, let me use the example of Chthonic rituals, related to the earth powers and thus primarily a first chakra phenomenon. Chthonic Magic, (from the Greek *Khthôn* = Earth) is mostly related to the gods and divinities under and on the earth. The underworld gods like Hades, Hekate, Abraxas are very powerful, have to do with death and the afterlife and the rhythm of the earth. The realm is often extended to include the second chakra, also fertility and sex with deities like Demeter, Persephone. These Chthonic deities are often portrayed with snakes and are in a way first chakra gods.

If there is development in human and prehuman society, rituals follow. More self-awareness, technology and “progress” will bring time and freedom to explore “higher” levels. Usually the more advanced state, climbing along that chakra ladder, will understand the lesser states better and use the energy in a more conscious way. The things that made sense are retained, so some of the old deities and practices are kept but based upon the advanced understanding in later stages of development. Things like seasonal rites were renewed or given new meaning, maybe not always for the better. Christmas is a good example, it still marks the return of the sun and the light, but is now a commercial ceremony, a kind of economic magic.

The model is actually more complex. Within each chakra one can not only recognize the basic focus, but also a level of development, one could say the realization of the previous steps. So a person or society or religion or ritual (again the three worlds of set, setting and magical connection) can be centered in a specific chakra, but be at different levels of awareness in that chakra.

Of course the level of awareness in the chakra’s one has “worked through” is higher than those not yet covered. Think about a person with a clear third chakra focus, the bossy one. He or she can be a primitive control freak or an

advanced and wise king. In the Lucidity approach (see appendix XI) I assign numbers to these states, but we easily recognize that there are differences within a chakra focus. And there are values for all the other chakra's to, and the whole complex is changing and adapting to situations too, but the model does yield some insights in people, societies and their rituals.

Then there is the phenomenon, that people, but also societies and corporations can have superficial awareness (in their mask) which is different from the core awareness. In the chapter about the psyche this is explained, but here I mention it because in some people (or organizations) there is like a hidden personality that can be more or less aware.

Looking at such a person superficially one perceives one image, but there is this deeper thing that shines through. I found that this mechanism is what attracts some people to other people or organizations that at face value have little to offer. I encounter this a lot in truly religious people, they are aware of all the bad connotations about their church or affiliation, but look beyond and see the inner core of the faith.

The focus on a specific chakra will also, at times, diminish the attention for other energies and kind of color the approach. This can be noticed in the different movements. So in present-day witchcraft and neo-paganism there is more a focus on the heart, while in the early twentieth century it was all about the will and power.

In what we see in neo-druidism and Craft circles is that the past is honored, but the earlier traditions are idealized, promoting the Christian virtues of the fourth chakra like love, compassion and unity. They ignore a bit that the older root traditions maybe were more about fertility, used human sacrifice, were less matriarchic than the feminists would like, non vegetarian and war-oriented.

In the wider perspective, in the development of ritual (and society and the individual) there is a vertical axis (the chakra idea) with a strong focus on one or more chakra's but all the other chakra orientations also coexist and are addressed at times. This shows of course more clearly in advanced societies where resources allowed development beyond mere survival. The other orientations and ritual occurrences are then not mainstream, are at times hidden, gone underground or are limited to selected groups, lodges or castes. We will still see rituals associated with the various chakras, although of course in a culture that denies for instance sexuality, the sexually oriented rituals disappear or go underground.

This is not the place to go deeper into this classification or model, I leave that to anthropologists, I just want to propose another way of looking at how ritual came to be.

Ritual theory: how is ritual seen

In trying to look at what ritual means it makes sense to look at the history and development of ritual understanding. I don't think the fundamental ritual matrix has changed so much, not in our historical times anyway, humankind hasn't changed so much. So it's not the ritual that has changed so much, it is the image of ritual and the relation to religion, magic, myth, and art that has changed, especially since it became the subject of theological and philosophical discourse.

In a way the more recent anthropological views of ritual are more a mirror of the "Zeitgeist" and individual perspectives than an objective analysis. Science has it fashion too.

In this respect it's funny to read about the academic view of a movement I have personally participated in, the New Edge movement in the nineties. This was covered in a scientific dissertation by Dorien Zandbergen, but she paints a picture quite different from what I remembered and documented. And I personally not only knew most of the people in that movement, but organized in 1993 the only New Edge conference ever (in Amsterdam). Truth is in the eye of the beholder, I suppose.

We are all looking at different parts of the elephant in the Sufi tale, but with a limited scope. Some see the tail, some the trunk, some the ears, all believe they are right and all their truths together could give us a better idea about what an elephant is. This is what I notice in anthropology, social science and science in general, we are working from a paradigm or even a myth that is hard to escape and on top of it we have our personal lens, the way we interpret perceptions due to our personality, character and references.

Reading through the stacks of books I have in my library and even more browsing the endless sites and wiki's on the internet, I found out that a main job in making sense out of all that is trying to separate the personal and societal imprints, the projections and the bias, from the observations and conclusions.

This is not to deny that the messenger is also the message, that the individual angle has value, but needs to be recognized as such. In anthropological ritual studies this is probably also true. The researchers and especially fieldworkers are usually less



The Jewish Torah is a sacred text (Photodisc)

“controlled” by peer pressure and can project more freely, they will see what they want to see and are concerned with what they are, so projection is the danger here.

Let me go into some detail here, about the views of some of the leading anthropologists and sociologists and how I see them, as they colored my view of the history of ritual and the history of ritual theory. What the old Greek, Roman and the Catholic theologians had to say is covered in many books and articles, so I will concentrate on the more recent insights and scholars.



Scrying in a crystal ball

Interest in ritual

The interest in rituals, especially those originating in the East, got a boost in the nineteenth century, when the Vedas and Upanishads first came to the West, and intellectuals got interested in what those strange cultures and peoples were about.

This interest was sparked initially by German orientalists like Max Müller, but toward the end of the century England took the lead in what then were seen as backward, superstitious and satanic practices of primitive people. The esoteric became popular, the link to magic and the occult made it even more exciting. Some pioneers travelled to those exotic places and especially Madame Blavatsky with her Theosophical Society (1875) opened a door to the East.

A certain resonance with Masonic and Rosicrucian notions, which were seen as The Western Esoteric tradition led to groups like The Golden Dawn lodge (1888) and a synthesis of East and West traditions with somewhat later the magick of Crowley and Gardner (Wicca).

People like James Frazer tried to bring together, classify and organize the knowledge of customs, taboo's, rituals, myths of the then considered primitive cultures and categorize the material. Even as he considered ritual only as helping to clarify the myths of the various peoples, Frazer laid the foundation for what is now called anthropology, then very much focused on totemism and the year-king idea. In his extensive but dated work, *The Golden Bough*, Frazer argued that societies evolved from cultures depend-

ent on magic to ones subject to religion and finally to ones governed by science.

Due to his work and that of people like Mircea Eliade in the twentieth century we slowly started to see that there was nothing primitive about those other cultures, they were just different. Then people like Aldous Huxley, an English writer, and Huston Smith, an American religious studies scholar, made clear they weren't that different either, but had common roots, the perennial wisdom. The similarities in myths, rituals and cosmologies and religious tenets of peoples all over the world are surprising, even as at the surface they look very different.

In comparing the myths of various cultures Joseph Campbell showed the common story lines and threads (like the monomyth of the hero's journey in "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" from 1949.

The psychedelic perspective

But then an interesting development opened a whole new vista, that of looking at rituals as a door to a wider reality, as a means to get into another mindstate. The discovery of the Mexican use of magic mushrooms, the psychedelic concoctions for the Amazon and the discovery of LSD by Albert Hofmann, a Swiss scientist, in the fifties opened the mind of at least some scientists to the notion, that there are more levels or states of consciousness. The idea took hold that maybe many of the shamanistic, Greek and Indian rituals and mysteries had to do with achieving those states, by various means. Work by ethno-botanists like Terence McKenna and the growing interest in substances like ayahuasca has changed the view of many about what rituals are and can do.

Émile Durkheim

He is seen as one of the fathers of sociology (with Marx and Weber) and was very influential in making us aware of the social structures and mechanism underlying society, but here we have another scientific flag bearer who could not escape being child of his time, his education and his character. His personality is easy to read, he was an enneagram 5 with a 6 wing, meaning someone who identified himself by what he knew, but so insecure because of his lack of emotional and intuitive connection that he needed structures and systems to help him. That he is the father of structuralism comes as no surprise and his fascination with effervescence may well be because of his early experiences as the rabbi's son in the synagogue.

The "effervescent" feelings of enthusiastic belonging, the special energy and sacredness of the Jewish congregation were probably so impressive that he took them for the root of religious life. His take on what a community can offer as more than the sum of the members resembles the

communitas of Victor Turner, and he is right, the ritual state is miraculous, especially for the brainer he was, the learned and ambitious professor who didn't really fit in and had to prove he knew so much.

In "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" (1912) he starts out with some grand views, indicating that the separation of the sacred and the profane is the root of religion and social structures, but he hardly corroborates the point, rather buries it under a lot of (borrowed) facts. He doesn't mention God, but elevates Society and the social to become like God, the cause of all.

When he talks about the development of religion as a function of the emotional security attained through communal living, he is aptly describing what he is looking for himself, his theories are mostly projections. This doesn't mean they are not relevant, one only has to see the limitations and appreciate what his nose for what we would call "politically correct" produced.

His structural thinking as a method surpassed what he himself did with it, his use of statistics (concerning suicide) was innovative even as his (again borrowed) data were skewed. So let's follow his reasoning about the universal sacredness of nature, objects and totemism as the result of that sacredness. He noted the contagion, the transfer of sacredness from object to bearer to place and vice versa, a magical process.

"A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."

He tried to prove, but in fact did no more than demonstrate on the basis of selected facts and assumed relationships that religious phenomena stemmed from social rather than divine factors, ignoring the spiritual dimension.

To link sacredness with religion was not an unheard step in those days, when myth, religion and ritual were seen as simultaneous. He just missed the insight that the sacredness of things is a real although extradimensional quality, that objects and acts possess power, that they can be instrumental to achieve the magical. He probably never sat at a campfire with those "noble savages" and related the sacred and the special feelings and intuitions of the magical to the experiences of his own youth in the synagogue, where religion, sacred objects and effervescence were obviously present and related.

And how clever, in his work he doesn't refer to the Judeo-Christian traditions and notions he was part of, but sticks to cultures far away, not straying too far from his home base paradigm. Who could blame him for tackling the sacred, but what if he would have written about the rather drastic forms of

genital male modification like the practice of penile subincision of some Aboriginal tribes.

Those were the days of the Dreyfus affair, antisemitism and nationalism where dangerous movements and it was not easy to steer clear of that for Durkheim, his reputation did decline in his last years, he died in 1917 and many of his students died in “la Grande Guerre”. He was a critical thinker though, his notions about religion (as a purely materialist phenomenon) extended to indicating the enthroning of the individual as the new religion. A social institution in his view is comparable to a religion or church, so sociology as the science of institutions can deal with them.

One of the interesting notions in relation to ritual is Durkheim’s “common” or “collective consciousness” as the set of norms, beliefs and values that morally hold society (or a religion) together against the egoistic human tendencies. He did think in statistics here, not really honoring sentiments and emotions beyond that they result in a collective position and talks about the average as in:

“The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common consciousness.” E. Durkheim

The key to society is social interaction, but the development from mechanical solidarity (from need) to organic solidarity (from benefits) with more division of labor will replace collective consciousness. As he saw religion as the strongest sense of collective consciousness:

“Religion gave birth to all that is essential in the society.”

He expected it would be replaced too, by science and the cult of the individual, but would always be a root factor.

His contribution to understanding religion and social mechanisms is that he constructed complex categorical concepts that went beyond the observations, like totemism and sacred. Painting a structure with the internal links and connections, and then see if the facts will fit is different from working from observation up. The problem was he didn’t look for motivation, feelings, emotions, such things were not in his psychological backpack. Suicide was a statistical given, not a moral dilemma.

Looking for the common ground beyond the concepts of spirituality and God he looked for a social origin of religion, the empirical root for assigning sacredness to things. Even as he accepted that for early humans everything was supernatural (blaming science for the divide), he still assumed a separation between sacred and profane for the cultures he studied and based his theses that the sacred is the core of religion on this. What he called sacred was not of divine origin, but the result of group processes where the

special energy was supposed to come from objects or nature. Here I think he was right to guess that something special (collective effervescence) happened in these group processes (let's call them rituals) but I think that was not some psychological group mind mechanism, but the entering of the ritual state of consciousness, where magic enters the stage. Sacredness then is real efficacy, not collective ideals attached to material objects, the sacredness thus not real in material sense. In other words, superstitious self-delusion, and obviously he has succeeded in keeping that the accepted viewpoint for more than a century now.

Victor Turner

The somewhat sociopathic Victor W. Turner, who took and expanded Arnold van Gennep's notions about liminality and initiation rites, was for a while very influential concerning the way social scientists looked at ritual in terms of *communitas* (the special bonding in a ritual context) and liminality (from liminal, - in a state of 'ambiguity, limbo, transition').

He himself seems to have been the living *communitas* and liminality person, enjoying conferences, role-playing, being sage, clown, trickster and teacher. I even feel that for him it all was about belonging. His ideal *communitas*, he referred to the monastic life and the contact between those involved in a ritual, was beyond caste, class, rules, a community with love.

For him liminality was not so much being in between and without identity, but centered on being beyond the ego, letting go of the mask, a state of non-self connectedness. His liminality stage, as the center of a ritual event like initiation, was the central phase of transformation. I would equate that with the ritual, inner child state of consciousness, close to the I-center I describe in the chapter about the psyche.

Nothing wrong with that, and his views and message are alive still at festivals like Burning Man where he would have felt very much at home.

Others however have used the concept of liminality much more as indicating loss of identity, separation, as cut loose from the roots, thus separating ritual from its social roots. Victor Turner can be credited for having made anthropologists look beyond the everyday life and into the marginal occurrences, the ritual traditions that have to do with the spiritual. That those marginal things are the carriers of the core of a culture is a more recent insight.

A ritual is a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests. Rituals may be seasonal, hallowing a culturally defined moment of change in the climatic cycle or the inauguration of an activity such as planting, harvesting, or moving from winter to

summer pasture; or they may be contingent, held in response to an individual or collective crisis. Contingent rituals may be further subdivided into life-crisis ceremonies, which are performed at birth, puberty, marriage, death, and so on, to demarcate the passage from one phase to another in the individual's life-cycle, and rituals of affliction, which are performed to placate or exorcise preternatural beings or forces believed to have afflicted villagers with illness, bad luck, gynecological troubles, severe physical injuries, and the like. Other classes of rituals include divinatory rituals; ceremonies performed by political authorities to ensure the health and fertility of human beings, animals, and crops in their territories; initiation into priesthoods devoted to certain deities, into religious associations, or into secret societies; and those accompanying the daily offering of food and libations to deities or ancestral spirits or both. Victor Turner

Xunzi



Lévi-Strauss

Postmodern structuralists like Lévi-Strauss were much more focused on the dichotomy, on classification, deconstruction of the whole, looking for binary opposites to explain society, ritual and the human mind. Lévi-Strauss was in my view more of a marginalist, interested in understanding in terms of differences rather than in looking for bridges and common traits. He assumed the West was different in its development, addressing the ‘cultural discontinuity’ between the West and the rest of the world, especially in the last centuries and in the context of progress, capitalism and colonialism.

He talked about “dépaysement” meaning “homelessness”, “uprooting” or “marginality” and tried to explain culture (and society) as the result of differences, while at the same time kind of upgrading “the primitive” beyond the totemic visions of earlier anthropologists. He didn’t accept a common heritage but saw the differences, the struggles, the inequality as the root of the discontinuity, the West has abused the primitive.

Lévi-Strauss claimed he looked at different cultures to understand how the mind works, assuming there is a basic mental scheme that works for all

more or less the same. In looking at the parts (deconstructing), ordering and classifying he was more interested in divergence, revolution and change than in unity and holistic interpretation. He didn't accept some universal development path beyond that the binary opposites leading to a Hegelian (dialectic) synthesis that shows in how a society and the mythology and ritual in it is organized.

Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology saw a dichotomy everywhere, people are thus this or that, belong to this or that part, but he pointed at rites and mythology as the constructs, bridges to unite the two (life and death, good and bad, raw and cooked).

Now I agree with the notion of progress (a very Western idea anyway) as not being the common root of development "the once-common path of development", but maybe there is another, deeper basic drive to be found in ritual than just bridging. I fear that the guilt trip that Lévi-Strauss and the postwar anthropologists have laid upon Western society (we, the colonial exploiters) has backfired in the sense that all our "help" toward the Third World has not really helped them, we just forced Western thinking and paradigms on them.

We have, with all our modern gear and rational thinking, corrupting them even more than in colonial times. Lévi-Strauss saw modern man as pulled toward contradictory poles of 'condemnation of emotional shocks' and 'denial of differences', but these seem very much his own challenges, as he experienced the confrontation of intellectual ideals and the diversity of cultures, of ideals versus experience. He honored the experience above the intellectual climate of "science". In a way he "blamed" our mental structures (and our focus on opposites) for (unconsciously) structuring our lives.

This fits in with the notion of his time, that society could be fixed, a leftist view of the world in a time when intellectuals looked at communism as the promised land and were fighting the establishment. They in a way were Cold War thinkers, looking at separation, at opposites, trying to bridge but feeding the enemy ideas doing that. That we maybe all share a need for ritual beyond marginality kind of escaped the European intellectuals of those days. I think that ritual is a basic need, coming from something beyond and deeper than the mind and has to do with our relation to the other dimensions. Anthropology has looked mostly at the individual-social axis, Durkheim in the sense that social structures influence individual thinking and perception, Lévi-Strauss assuming the opposite, the mind influencing the social, both not accepting the third world of magical spirituality. They looked at set and setting, and came up with interesting theories, but ignored the magical.

Ritual is a such a complex matrix that we can look at how the deconstructed parts help to constitute the whole, but the whole is more than the parts. This

whole may have dimensions not present in the parts we can perceive from a limited perspective.

The Australian aboriginal has such a different view of time and reality, that studying his acts will tell us little about his inner reasons, unless we are willing to make the jump to his whole (holistic) paradigm, which is nearly impossible. Notably the dualities, oppositions and dichotomies one assumes are present in all cultures might not exist in that form.

The me-mind might be the all-mind, the us-them or I-you (self-others) for instance is maybe not what is important for an Ainu or Aboriginal or deeply religious monastic, sacred and profane are not necessary opposites. Our mind does like to think in pairs, in me/other and good/bad dualities but is this the only or even the natural way, or only the rational?

Levi-Strauss' looking for "concrete" terms to describe the differences remains rational, ignoring the extradimensional, it's like making a 2D movie of a 3D event, the spiritual that eludes description is just not part of the equation. Social behavior is not only governed by (as he believed deconstructable in components) communication via the normal senses, but we react to much more inputs like thought waves (or mind-fields) via our hidden senses I call primes.

So ignoring this extradimensional communication it is hard to discern a hidden universal code in different cultures. The common structure that is left out of the observation is the unity of the three worlds we try to refind (in ritual, psychotherapy, art, play). Even that unity can be experienced differently, depending on the perspective, we tend to ignore what we don't know. The reality experienced can be spiritual like the Aboriginal Dreamtime state, tangible real or just in one's mind (imagined or hallucinogenic).

I could be called a structuralist myself as I believe there is an underlying structure, a general principle to both the individual and collective acts, and this has to do with the way our psyche works and how our view of the world reflects that, but I see the whole or holistic as the root of the structure in the psyche, the internal disputes are there, but not as an opposition.

Michel Foucault

The ideas of another influential social scientist can also be analyzed in the light of a personal preoccupation, in this case with power and sex. Maybe not the first one thinks about in the context of ritual, but as I see self, identity, magic and power in ritual as important angles, the French philosopher Michel Foucault comes to mind.

He was very influential in directing attention to Western Esotericism, the disguise for what really is the academic study of magic and that's why I got interested in him. Although in some ways a tormented man, who died as the

first public person of AIDS in France in 1984, he was optimistic in the sense that change (in humans and society) was possible. He was rather courageous in admitting he wasn't consistent, but evolving and his work was not "the" but "a" answer to his questioning of how we are in the present, how subjectivity is all we know and how society developed in creating notions about self, power and communication.

His ideas look quite different from mine, his notion of self is much more the face we show to the world, and thus closer to what I would call personality or shown me, but the essence of his work has to do with what tools the self has to find itself and express itself. His notion of the self as being defined by a continuing discourse in a shifting communication of oneself to others points at a different view on what the self is and does.

He denied the view of a person having an inner and fixed 'essence' that is the person's identity, but saw a dynamic pattern. He based his ideas on his work in prisons and madhouses, where the inmates often do switch between subpersonalities, so when reading about his "self" I see that as pointing at the external form, as the mask that acts, talks and communicates.

I don't think he would called himself as devoted to the study of magic or ritual, but his focus on "technologies of the self" is very close and calling them:

"operations over the body and soul that account for the transformation of ourselves in order to obtain happiness, wisdom, immortality, etc."

would equally well describe practical magic.

These 'technologies' include self-contemplation, self-disclosure and self-discipline, Foucault saw them as ways to enter into discourse. Language in this way is the vehicle of expression. The episteme, the ways acceptable scientific discourse was defined was in his view one of the identifiers of the paradigm (as Thomas Kuhn uses this word) of a historic period. Such epistemes were defined by the way truth or knowledge was conditioned, justified and framed as "scientific", not as an outspoken qualification, but more unconscious, all pervading. He tried to bring out what characterized such periods in his "Archeologies". The timeframe he refers to in much of his works and quotes, the Greek and Roman antiquity, was of course full of magic, ritual and cults.

Foucault describes his work as the history or the diagnosis of the present, as the analysis of 'what today is and how is it different from yesterday?'

He clearly had an interest in power and power relationships and this would point at a personality focused on the third chakra and type 8 enneagram personality, intuitive, slightly anti-hierarchical and original.

I would characterize his notion of the episteme as power-based. He rejected common notions of people having some form of implicit power, but saw

power as a technique or action in which people engage. Power is a relation, not a thing, it's exercised but not possessed. He didn't equate power with what the State represents, but remarked that power operates at the most micro levels of social relations and is productive rather than repressive.

Truth is a major theme in Foucault's work, in particular in the context of its relations with power, knowledge and the subject. I notice here that truth and power are both third chakra elements and are closely aligned that way. In a nearly Hinduistic approach Foucault defines 'spirituality' as the 'practical methods the subject uses to transform him or herself in order to gain access to the truth, like in the Vedic expression 'ya evam veda.'

Maurice Bloch

Based on his work on Madagascar Maurice Bloch who is sometimes described as anti-anthropologist, related social anthropology to linguistics and cognitive psychology. Cognition and social and cultural life are inter-related in his view. There is some structural functionalism and methodological individualism in the views of Bloch, with Marxist tendencies, a focus on power, ideology, and politics. He was family related to Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss and grew up in post-war late-colonial times.

Concerning ritual, he sees different phases is a ritual, that have to do with entering a different time-awareness and then re-entering normal time. This time jump is also noted by Roy Rappaport, but not seen as a logical aspect of entering another state of being (consciousness) with access to another time-dimension as I do.

Bloch also notes that there is a vitality jump in those involved in rituals (fairly intensive situations in Madagascar) they bring back from their 'trip' more understanding and more vitality, being hungry, sometimes aggression. Some of the effects he describes of such an experience, like an inflated ego and lucidity are characteristic of many rituals with either the use of substances or much bodily activity like prolonged dancing.

His notions about ritual are therefore valid, but not really applicable in rituals where such conditions are not present. There are different ways, like meditation to influence the neurotransmitter balance that brings one in a different state of consciousness. His idea, that the inflated ego-state affects the political and social situation and could cause even wars, might be valid for some states (similar to cocaine-induced intoxication) but feels more like his personal identification with inequality and the pure but romantic indigenous tribal people.

Bloch stresses that the basis of our knowledge, the knowledge that we use to making inferences, is based much less on culture (and collective memory) than anthropology tends to believe. He is looking for deeper roots of

knowledge than culture, referring to Noam Chomsky's ideas about language as the essential human way of dealing with knowledge.

Roberto Assagioli

I don't think the originator of psychosynthesis had much interest in ritual, consciousness is what this Italian psychologist was mostly concerned with. His notion of subpersonalities was influential and requires that I distinguish them from my ideas. He was influenced by Freud, exchanged letters with him, was a friend of Jung, but had his own approach and got quite a following, who somewhat dogmatically follow his methodology, which is rather comprehensive, but peculiar. His approach was based on his notions about the various levels of consciousness (the egg-diagram) and his star diagram where he comes up with 6 influences on the self, imagination (fantasy) and impulse (action/desire) are what differentiate his model from Jung's.

The wide array of psychotherapeutic methods he used are not very different from what we see in the transpersonal approach, with the exception of his subpersonality focus. He sees subpersonalities as functional, willed semi-autonomous subsystems within the personality related to circumstances, a natural and not dysfunctional multiplicity.

This is different from my approach, where I see them as defense mechanisms originating in alienating traumatic experiences and as separate masks. They are usually not willed, but happen because of triggers. In the extreme, pathological form (Identity Disorder) the masks don't even know each other.

His work tends to be mostly about spiritual growth, reaching the higher unconscious level, idealistic and a bit elitist, far above the sex and power focus of his contemporaries.

"The central foundation of psychosynthesis is that there is a fundamental difference between drives, impulses, desires and the will. In the human condition there are frequent conflicts between desire and will. And we place the will in a central position at the heart of self-consciousness or the Ego."

He clearly sees the will as the important factor, the directing agent in the personality, a function that can be trained and developed. This places him in the same vein as Crowley, who also goes for the harmonization and unification of the individual and the universal will.

It's clear that he himself was a willful man, probably an enneagram 8 type like so many luminaries from the mid-twentieth century, where WWII favored black-white thinking and acting, not much space for the grey middle road. His focus on will kind of fits the projections of a benevolent dictator, who only believes in his own path.

If he associated (some say returned) will to psychology, like Crowley did so to magic, this is only a partial reality, a third chakra energy focus. It's where he comes from, like when he expresses the importance of self-consciousness as the unity of willing and being, "I am aware of being and willing". The will he sees as essentially the activity of the self which stands above the multiplicity. It directs, regulates and balances the other functions of the personality in a creative way as the conductor of an orchestra, dealing with drives, desires and takes different postures.

There is assertive will, controlling will, but also the accepting will, the yielding will, the dedicated will. Assagioli is obviously also influenced by Advaita thinking as he points at the idea that we are dominated by everything with which our self is identified, we assume we are the content of consciousness rather than consciousness itself. The experience of the pure "I" brings the freedom. In this his idea correlates with what I develop in the chapter about the psyche.

Meaning: the religion-ritual debate

The view, where religion and ritual were seen as inseparable, stems from Durkheim, but people like Turner did not separate the two either. It may be that people like J. Frazer did see it as a separate field, but he then linked myth and ritual. Only recently the idea surfaced, that ritual stands on its own, and deserves its own science, as Frits Staal suggested. He was the one, who with his thesis that rituals were meaningless, changed the course of ritual theory.

Staal, one of the foremost authorities on Vedic fire rituals, argued that a ritual has no meaning, in that one performs it for itself and it doesn't matter whether all those hymns and gestures are empty of meaning, just doing it is enough. Rituals in his view are no folkloristic events serving the gods and expressing myth, but help us structure our lives, a social purpose.

He sees them as important, a ritual is organizing our activities and lives in a certain way and there is a hint at magical efficacy, but as a serious scientist of the late twentieth century he didn't express that very loudly.

He did recognize the roots of ritual, pointed at the rituals of animals, and as they existed long before language or myths existed, accepts that ritual came first. He also argued that ritual played an important role in human development, ritual forms the basis of scientific thought and of language. He sees mantras not as texts with deep meaning, but as ritual sounds without a meaning, maybe even the precursor of human language.

His statement that rituals are meaningless and thus should be taken for what they are, a series of acts without meaning but with a structure, a form, a ma-

trix, in fact points at the real meaning of ritual, they make sense, as I argued before.

The acts and ritual processes provide a path, for the officiators and the participants, that cannot be expressed in cognitive terms. It is not cognitive, can hardly be described in words, as I argued elsewhere is something we have inherited from pre-selfconscious times. Yet it works, has psychological, social and magical effects, there is rational and irrational (virtual) causality involved, the acts (songs, libations, ingestions) make sense beyond “meaning”. There is efficacy, result, transformation and even magical manipulation of reality, that is the meaning of ritual.

Staal’s stance and opinion was refreshing, although not broadly supported, but this has to do with the ambiguity of what meaning means.

The textual, hermeneutic approach of looking for meaning was already extended to include social hermeneutics by Hans-Georg Gadamer, but the twentieth century debate or better fascination concerning meaning had seriously impacted the study of ritual. Too much focus on cognitive aspects, not enough on what ritual is, a series of acts, a matrix of mostly non-cognitive interactions with the tangible and non tangible.

Ritual is not a language, it predates (in the original form) language, but may follow the structure of a language. Staal suggested that language developed out of ritual with mantras as a step in between.

Language is a way to share consciousness and more precisely self-consciousness. Ritual is a way to share subconscious. So to look for meaning in ritual we could interpret the structure and the matrix of a ritual as a kind of (proto-)language, where acts, sounds, timing, place, organizational levels and the other elements of the matrix provide a syntax, grammar and insight into what the purpose is and meaning is.

Meaning is what matters for oneself, but is also very much a relational thing. Meaning in the case of a ritual extends both in the inner “set” as well as in the “setting” into the subconscious, archetypical and spiritual realms.

Ritual is action, it’s not cognitive with a lot of subliminal programming and play into archetypical concepts as myths are.

It is at best thinking in action, it will force attention and intention, focus will and magically effect the astral and ethereal planes. Ritual can be seen as a way to strengthen the will and intention, as a tool to bring forth that what one ‘wills’, but aligned with the morality of the soul or inner world. In a way ritual will thus reflect back into the tangible; it works in multiple dimensions and affect much deeper layers of consciousness than the cerebral myth and formalized religion.

In the latter half of the twentieth century the social dimension received much attention, and is often seen as giving the meaning to ritual.

Victor Turner saw ritual as the affirmation of communal unity. He acknowledges that ritual is a social antistructure (outside and even against normal life) and structure at the same time, that affords both *communitas* (his term for social bonding and coherent groupism) and formalized social order.

Emile Durkheim explained rituals as the means whereby collective beliefs and ideals are generated, experienced and affirmed as real by the community. Ritual is integral to the social dimensions of religion (*cultus*).

Durkheim sees us made up of two beings, facing different directions, one in the world, the other inside and one having a real pre-eminence over the other, a moral superior one. He however doesn't see ritual as the way, the step to transcend this distinction by going into a ritual state of consciousness, a trance or meditative state as integration of body and soul.

Historical and prehistorical development

Back to the history of ritual. In old and even prehistoric cultures, the evidence of ritual activities is overwhelming. Think of the cave paintings and what we see in Egyptian temples and pyramids. Ritual obviously is much older than writing, the first, more bookkeeping than symbolic use of written accounts (cuneiform) dates from around 4000 BCE in Mesopotamia. In the Middle and Far East, ritual was a way of life; in many instances there were priestly castes that were engaged in little else. In the Greco-Roman world, public and private rituals associated with the various religions or worship of Gods were also a part of everyday life, as can be seen from the multitude of temples and shrines, often of very different cults, found at historic sites and in what writers and historians of those times left us. Yet even then, a distinction was made between magic and religion; magic was mostly seen as the more negative, selfish, secret, and usually illegitimate.

Magic was, all through history, usually differentiated from religion as being manipulative, coercive rather than supplicatory of the deities or spirits. Religious rites were supposed to aim at lofty goals such as salvation or rebirth, and are conducted in the open for the benefit of the community. Magic was seen as the dark art, supposed to deal with the lower sentiments, material and lustful goals, not something one wanted to be associated with.

This is what runs through history and even today, as we tend to call the study of the otherworld no longer theology but study of comparative religion, the magical part is often forgotten, ignored and in the eye of the materialists it's all a pseudo science anyway. Magic, white or black, is not part of the curriculum of the medical, physical or humanistic sciences and in a way never was, and yet it is part of all.

It's not only magic per se that has this dark connotation. Also myth, so closely associated with many rituals, is seen by many as a negative term, indicating a lie or false image.

It was quite normal for writers and sages in the Greek and Roman times to scold and condemn the common magic while at the same time honoring the official religion or mainstream magical cult practices like the mystery schools and oracles. Often the argument was that religion dealt with the divine, while magic was just using spirits and demons, the lower ranks of the otherworld or underworld, in a way the same argument used to demarcate high and low magic. For the Greek, ritual as in the Dionysian festival on the Acropolis was more of a theatrical event with plays about the heroic deeds in a Homeric setting than active participation. The chorus in those plays and the art on the temples does however point at the celebration and procession roots of the festivals.

Jewish ritual

The Judaic tradition has always had a great deal of ritual and liturgical regulations, but also rules preventing magical practice by the common people. That has to do, in my view about religions, with the focus on the fifth chakra, where interaction with the manifest reality is concentrated via the voice, the mouth, and the hands.

The Jewish faith is full of rules -how to behave, what to eat- and a pious Jew is overloaded with commandments and prohibitions. Looking at them beyond the obvious health and social stratification effects, as way to limit and to constrain magical interaction with the otherworld, is an interesting approach for studying magical effects. The taboo on graven images is a good example, it has to do with the fear for the power of imagery. Magic was forbidden and equated with evil, impure black magic, divination obviously widespread but forbidden, while of course the Bible is full of prophets. As in many cultures, there has been an undercurrent of mystical and magical study, notably the Kabbalah. This was considered coming from a spiritual source and thus permitted as white magic by its elite practitioners, but it was always a path for individual seekers.

It is interesting to view the Kabbalah and notably the sephirot of the Tree of Life as giving a kind of developmental model of a spiritual person, it looks like an early but fundamental psychological classification or explanatory model of magical/spiritual interaction. Kabbalah is mystical, trying to discern God's hand in everything, but has magical side to it that is less accepted indicated as Kabbalah Ma'asit ("Practical Kabbalah"). The use of charms, dream interpretation, amulets, healing (Baal Shem healers), an-

gelic names, incantations and divination, spirit possession, scrying is probably much older than the Jewish tradition and has roots in Mesopotamia. The methods and rituals must have been quite common, they spilled over into Islamic occult practice as I have witnessed in the way North African marabouts use them, usually under a Koranic disguise. The use of angelic names (The *iel* in names like Gabriel and Michael means -of God) on amulets and in incantations is taken over by Islam, also the use of many and secret names of JHV or Allah.

There is a lot of ritual in Judaism, lots of rules and laws and limitations, things have to be done in a specific way, living correctly by the book is a narrow path. The Bible is a great source of tales about magic and ritual, it also offers some insights into the ritual practices of other people and the more pagan past. These practices sometimes these were taken over from enemies or conquerors, but then there were prophets that would guide the chosen back to the path.

Of course Moses was the prime law-giver, he received many rules, laws and commandments which over time became more strict by later interpretation of the texts. In the Jewish faith in Biblical times the sacrifice plays a major role and Noah's fire after the Great Flood is like the first instance of a essential ritual element of the faith. The rainbow, the animal sacrificed, receding water, they have become archetypal. In the Vayikra part of the Torah (Leviticus 1:1–5:26) the laws of sacrifices are given as instructed to Moses by God. What is interesting here is that depending on the purpose of a sacrifice, different procedures and sacrificial animals were used.

There were sacrifices of well-being, guilt offerings for unwitting sin, sin offerings for various things, atonement and if a person deceitfully or forcefully took money restitutions had to be made, but with a 20% surcharge for the priest. The laws deal with animal sacrifices, bulls, rams or goats, turtle doves or pigeons, which the priest burned completely on wood on the altar or sometimes partly outside the camp, sometimes only dash the blood and burn parts. Then there were meal offerings which were of choice flour with oil, from which the priest would remove a token portion to burn on the altar, and the remainder the priests could eat. Meal offering could also be cooked in a pan, could not contain leaven or honey, and had to be seasoned with salt. Meal offerings of first fruits had to be new ears parched with fire, grits of the fresh grain.

In Psalms 50, God clarifies the purpose of sacrifices. It states that correct sacrifice was not the taking of a bull out of the sacrificer's house, nor the taking of a goat out of the sacrificer's fold, to convey to God, for every animal was already God's possession. The sacrificer was not to think of the sacrifice as food for God, for God neither hungers or eats. Rather, the worshipper was to offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon God

in times of trouble, and thus God would deliver the worshipper and the worshipper would honor God.

Islam

In Islam, drawing upon the Jewish tradition, magic again was and is seen as evil. But here, in contrast to the Jewish rites, ritual is sober and hardly magical, apart from some practices during the Hadj to Mecca and the rituals of the Sufis. Magic is forbidden, and partly this was in response to the overtly magical practices of Mohammed's time, the Kaaba (Ka'aba) used to be a temple with many statues and images of deities, now it only contains a black stone (in pieces) and two pillars, which remind me of the Masonic temple layout.

The Kaaba was a multi-religious and cultic (pagan) temple before it was stripped of its many statues and holy objects. Only the black (maybe meteor) stone Hadjar al-Aswad put there as a cornerstone by the Prophet (five years before his prophethood) remained, but is now in pieces.

I wonder about the original form of the stone, according to the tradition it was already used by Abraham? The prophet Mohammed and his successors have stripped the Islamic faith of most ritual references. He was, like Moses and other Jewish prophets before him, fighting the worship of idols and magical practices of his time, and came up with a limited set of religious rituals, among them the Hadj pilgrimage to Mecca, which has surprisingly, now has acquired a whole list of explicit rituals as part of it.

He didn't like sorcerers and magicians, and the schism in Sunni and Shia is not only a matter of succession, I believe it to be the result of a difference in appreciation of magical (or more ritualistic) practice.

Note that the Prophet Mohammed's cousin /son-in-law, Ali bin Abu Talib was not immediately made head of the Ummah, first came Abu Bakr (the Prophet's father-in-law), Omar and Uthman and only then Ali was chosen. I believe this had to do with Ali's appreciation of magic, he probably was a sorcerer or magician trained in pagan magic and this must have felt as a potential threat to the other contenders for the Caliphate. When he finally got the position, there was much resistance and insurrections and in the end he was killed and his son Hasan only became Caliph for a few months before he had to concede his position to Mu'awiyah, a relative of Uthman. All this had, I feel, more to do with the struggle between the magical and the anti-magical factions.

When training with my North-African marabout I learned about his fear (even today) of fundamentalist groups within Islam that are dead against any magical practice, so the magical arts of the marabouts (actually much older than Islam) had to be covered and hidden in extensive use of Koran

texts. This made me look at the ritual differences between Sunni and Shia, and there is obviously more appreciation of the magical in Shia, even as both share the most fundamental Islamic beliefs and articles of faith.

In that they tried to straighten and rationalize religious practice, Mohammed, Gautama Buddha and Luther had a similar reform objective, cleaning up the excessive magical and form-orientation of religion in their times, they were iconoclasts. I think that most of the big schisms in the history of religion had to do with the acceptance or rejection of magic (and magic ritual).

The Cathars (Albigensians) were, in their own way, a very magical sect, and the crusade against them by the Church (1209–1229) also marks the beginning of the Inquisition. Martin Luther's protest and stripping of the Catholic liturgy had a lot to do with the increasingly magical practices of the Roman Catholic church, like selling indulgences and the overly ritual (and thus magical) nature of the Holy Mass and the focus on images of saints.

Gautama Buddha had similar reservations about the practices of the Vedic/Hindu priests and the Brahmin caste. Churches, especially as they become institutions, like the idea of submission and compromise of the individual to God, the whole idea of being "catholic" points there, while the individual experience and the individual magical power is then seen as a threat to the institutional powers.

Magic is ignored, the mystical accepted as it fits within the dogmatic tenets. Even today, in the ayahuasca churches like the Santo Daime, in the form we see of it in the West anyway, there is a tendency to ignore the magical effects of the psychedelic tea, and focus on the mystical, with healing accepted as an effect but not recognizing that as a magical.

This is a dangerous omission, somewhere in line with the Noble Savage notion that indigenous customs are noble, sacred and always better than our Western rationality. There is a risk in ignoring the magical effects and magical efficacy.

The original ayahuasca rituals in the Amazon jungle didn't only serve holy purposes, they were also used to wage war, kill enemies, prepare for hunting or bewitch adversaries and in the ritual (hallucinogenic) state) this part might show up. In the chapter about psychedelic substances in ritual more about this.

Christianity

In Christianity one has, over time, cleverly borrowed, assembled and integrated many of the rituals of the preceding era and of competing religions like the Mithras mysteries, in essence the Christian sacraments and liturgy

are clearly magical procedures. The Essene, Gnostic and other esoteric roots of what Jesus preached and practiced show up in the non-canonical gospels and documents found like the Nag Hammadi and Qumran scrolls, and as the New Testament is full of miracles (the religious indicator for magical achievements) the magical roots of Christianity are fairly clear.

According to Qumran scrolls specialist John Allegro the scrolls are coded messages about a hidden use of mushrooms, he sees the Jewish Faith or rather the Essenes as a mystery cult and continuation of earlier Sumerian mushroom use. He pointed at Salomo's Song of Songs (Heb.4:4) as an ode to the sacred mushroom (*Amanita Muscaria*). Also the story of Eve and the serpent in his view are pointing at mushroom use.

The Christian rituals, often nicely coinciding with pagan seasonal celebrations and rites, have incorporated much of what I would call a complete ritual matrix, with the exception of the fertility and orgiastic (with carnival as a last relic of the old rites). Some scholars from the psychedelic movement see the Last Supper as a psychedelic ritual, that is re-enacted in Holy Mass. To compare Mass with a Vedic soma or Iranian Huoma aritual is maybe a step too far, but to recognize the consecration as the magical charging of a sacrifice, similar to the charging of water or an object with magical energy and the sharing of this in communion, makes sense. I will analyze Holy Mass in detail later.

The Church has always labeled the rituals of competing religions or factions within the Church as false, heathenish, heretic and meted out severe punishments, from excommunication to execution, mostly on the stakes and even organized massive crusades against the Cathars and Islam. The fight against such heretical and competing religious movements, from Manichaeism (a major Gnostic religion, originating in Persia with the prophet Mani (circa. CE 216–276)) via Gnostics and Marcionites, Arianism, Paulinians, Bogomils, Catharism and Waldensians was an ongoing concern. The Cathars, also called Albigenses (after the city of Albi) or Bougres (Bulgarians) had distinct links with the Bogomils ("Friends of God") of Thrace and these again with the earlier Paulicians and the Manicheans and the Christian and pre-Christian Gnostics.

Catharism

I will go into the Cathar faith a bit more, because I had some strange experiences visiting the Cathar places in the South of France. I climbed Montségur on acid, found the fortress of little importance, the store ruins there are seventeenth century anyway, but the view on the Pyrenees was inspiring. Imagine the Cathars there, beleaguered and facing hunger and death, looking at that beauty while their enemies were down there, preparing to burn the lot of them, what a juxtaposition of emotions. It taught me something

about how we look at things, what perspective does and how the Snellian optical illusion (we think our eyes work like lenses, but in fact we can see things far away and close by sharp at the same time in certain mind states) is a limitation and manipulation of perception. Coming down from this steep hill I had another experience, it felt like I had to make love to the earth in a very intense and sexual way and somewhere I felt this had to do with the Cathar faith, but I have found little reference about that. It did make me look into the history of heresy.

Heretic movements, often anti-dogmatic and based on personal experience and consciousness, may have had rituals and magical practices that were original and effective, not hindered by what a tradition prescribed. I like this quote of Gerald Brenan:

"Religions are kept alive by heresies, which are really sudden explosions of faith. Dead religions do not produce them." (Thoughts in a Dry Season, 1978)

Although not much is known about the exact rituals of the Cathars, their consolamentum, a kind of energy transmission by laying up of hands was clearly an important ritual. And this must have been powerful one or did they have sacraments (maybe even substances) to prepare their "Parfait" for a fate of being burned at the stakes, walking into the fire singing and without fear. The Cathars are regarded as dualistic, believing in Good (God) and Evil (Satan, Demiurge, creation) as two, equal and comparable transcendental principles. God was entirely disincarnate: a being or principle of pure spirit and completely unsullied by the taint of matter, being the god of love, order and peace. The Cathars were against the Church, corrupted in many ways in those days and were anti-sacerdotal, their leaders (the Parfait) lived an exemplary life, quite different from the Catholic clergy of the time. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who was very instrumental in the crusades against Islam, and although opposed to the Cathars, said of them:

"If you question the heretic about his faith, nothing is more Christian; if about his daily converse, nothing more blameless; and what he says he proves by his actions ... As regards his life and conduct, he cheats no one, pushes ahead of no one, does violence to no one. Moreover, his cheeks are pale with fasting; he does not eat the bread of idleness; he labors with his hands and thus makes his living. Women are leaving their husbands, men are putting aside their wives, and they all flock to those heretics! Clerics and priests, the youthful and the adult among them, are leaving their congregations and churches and are often found in the company of weavers of both sexes."

Now Bernard of Clairvaux in his days was one of the most powerful leaders of the church, started the second Crusade, has a hand in electing popes and

was instrumental in allowing the Knights Templar certain privileges like tax exemption. The Templars were instrumental in bringing much of what the Arabian culture had preserved from old (mostly pagan and Egyptian) wisdom to the West, like the use of irrational number dimensions in building (2, 3, 5 and golden mean).

Here again Bernard of Clairvaux played an important role. This changed the building style of notably cathedrals and marked the era of the Gothic cathedrals like those in Sens and Chartres. Irrational numbers in architecture make buildings less vulnerable to resonance distortions from earthquakes and allowed a building style much beyond the rather simple masonry of the Roman era. The miraculous survival of the Cologne cathedral in the midst of very serious bombing in WWII could be due to it. It was much less affected by the vibrational frequencies of the bombs that destroyed the very close by Hauptbahnhof and Rhine-bridge.

This knowledge was known to earlier civilizations like the Egyptians but got lost when the Roman-Christian empire destroyed whatever traces they could find of the pagan past, like the library of Alexandria. The Templars must have recovered some of that old wisdom, but were at variance with the official church, some of the knights in Montségur were supposedly also Templars.

The very cruel Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars also instigated the creation and institutionalization of both the Dominican Order and the Medieval Inquisition. Dominique de Guzman, who founded the Dominicans, believed the heretical movements could only be fought if priests behaved even more pious and perfect than their opponents.

Medieval Inquisition, from 1184 onwards in various guises, exemplifies the struggle between the magical and the dogmatic obedience to fate and the Church. It has cost the lives of many, heretics, saints, scientists and innocents. The early (medieval) Inquisition got a really bad name and is often associated with the suppression of witchcraft. This is, however, not totally correct, they were less cruel, more organized and better supervised than is usually perceived. For instance they themselves didn't burn or execute heretics, that was left to the civic authorities. The Church did speak out against heretics like Thomas Aquinas did:

"Wherefore if forgers of money and other evil-doers are forthwith condemned to death by the secular authority, much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death." (*Summa Theologica*, c. 1270)

Magic and witchcraft were seen as different from heresy. In medieval times, the great sages often dabbled in both religion and magic. People like

Gerbert d'Aurillac and Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great) were active in the then often occult sciences as well as in ecclesiastical matters. Medieval Inquisition paid little attention to sorcery and magical studies (like alchemy, memory studies) and even several Popes dabbled in alchemy and it was only with pope John XXII (pope from 1316-1334), that sorcery became heresy and thus liable to prosecution by the Inquisition.

Magical practice with pagan roots has always been discouraged by the churches and those in power; it was deemed dangerous and evil, and only the official religion with its own magical rituals was accepted. This of course, was using the same magical tools as the common shaman, witch or healer, but with much more pomp and splendor, incorporating it in a social stratification approach that served the purpose of keeping the common folks docile and subservient. The Roman Catholic Church did its best to incorporate or wipe out the remnants of older traditions and nature-magic, but the old ways remained widespread in folk religion throughout the medieval period, the pagan roots were hard to die.

The Inquisition used worldly powers to do their nasty work, but in itself had, at least on paper, a fairly strict set of standards. The Inquisition had several layers of oversight built into its framework to limit prosecutorial misconduct.

Torture by the Inquisition could be used only after 1252 when Pope Innocent IV issued a papal bull entitled *Ad Exstirpanda*, which authorized the use of torture by inquisitors, but its use was not much found in heresy trials until the later fourteenth century. Torture methods that resulted in bloodshed, births, mutilation or death were forbidden and torture could be performed only once.

Among the possible punishments were prayer, pilgrimage, wearing a yellow cross for life, banishment, public recantation, or, occasionally, long-term imprisonment. The unrepentant and apostates could be "relaxed" to secular authority and then there was the possibility of various corporal punishments, up to and including being burned at the stake. The Church did not execute, clerics were forbidden to kill. A situation similar to how Christ was brought before Pilatus, the Roman ruler who had secular power.

Only when most of the heretical movements like the Cathars and the Waldensians were rooted out in France, Italy and the Rhineland, the Inquisitors looked for new victims (Inquisition had become an industry in itself) and turned against the Beguines, a woman's movement recognized by the Church since their foundation in the thirteenth century, as mystics. But this witchhunt was already in the fourteenth century, at the Council of Vienne 1411, they were proclaimed heretics and persecuted, many were burned at the stake.

Later, in fact mostly after the Lutheran reformation which was in itself an anti-magical and anti-ritual movement, one turned more vehemently against old pagan and healing practices, which were labeled as witchcraft and actively suppressed or worse.

This led to witch-hunts, often as a mass hysteria phenomenon, spanning a period of 1480 to 1750, widespread in Europe and the Americas, with an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 victims. For many, the procedures of those witch-hunts, the tortures and trials are attributed to the Catholic Inquisition, and the Church blamed for it. It was, however, much more a thing of the Reformation, where fear of magic and condemnation of ritual was much stronger.

Witch-hunts are quite common, even today there are reports of witch-hunts in India, Africa, and Papua New Guinea.

Ritual theory, Li and the law: Xunzi

Magic and ritual go together and are a concern of the rulers and the law. This also because there was widespread belief in the efficacy of sorcery, spells, and the rulers had to deal with this. Anti-magical procedures and punishment records are found in ancient Egypt and in Babylonia.

The Code of Hammurabi (18th century BCE) stated:

"If a man has put a spell upon another man and it is not justified, he upon whom the spell is laid shall go to the holy river; into the holy river shall he plunge. If the holy river overcome him and he is drowned, the man who put the spell upon him shall take possession of his house. If the holy river declares him innocent and he remains unharmed the man who laid the spell shall be put to death. He that plunged into the river shall take possession of the house of him who laid the spell upon him."

The social aspects of ritual were recognized early on. Ritual could be used to reinforce the status-quo, keep the power structures in place, fortify the order of things. An interesting figure in the history of ritual theory was the Chinese Confucian scholar and philosopher Xunzi (Hsün Tzu, ca. 312–230 BCE).

In China the concept of Li was very important. Li is more than just ritual, it's a whole way of behaving correctly, more in line with morality, custom and obedience. Xunzi saw ritual as important, but like many intellectuals even then, denied the real magical effects. The commoners could believe what ritual promised; an educated man should perform rituals because they served the social goal of establishing and maintaining order. In his days, the (Shang) kings relied much on ritual to establish their own position and that of their underlings and vassals. This also served to put limits on the power

of the ruler and emphasize his obligation to the people, especially in times of war and contention for limited resources. The point of the ritual rules is here to enforce the distinctions necessary for social harmony and prevent people from reaching beyond their station, an insight by Xunzi that applies to nearly all religions and societies.

He believed man's inborn and evil/uncivilized tendencies needed to be curbed and rectified through education and ritual. Xunzi had a rather rational view of nature and reality. Not believing in the spiritual, he accepted sacrifices and divination as part of the ritual system that binds society together, but did not expect any results. His view was that people just need the good order brought about through the rituals of the sages. Xunzi's insistence that human nature is bad, because people are morally blind by nature, was often condemned by later thinkers, who favored the idea that people are naturally good.

Xunzi created a program of study, an organized Confucian curriculum that would teach proper ritual behavior and develop moral principles that became the blueprint for traditional education in China. A student did not simply study ritual; he practiced and performed it.

This performative aspect was crucial to the goal of transforming one's nature, to achieve satisfaction on a personal level. Ritual has this power to transform someone's motives and character (his heart), and with practice it becomes an end in itself as part of the Way (Tao).

Xunzi also honored the use of music; he saw music as important as ritual in moral education and in governing. Much as Plato suggested in the Republic, Xunzi believed regulating music is one of the duties of the state. There should be correct music to give people a legitimate source of emotional expression, and unorthodox music should be banned to prevent it from upsetting the balance of society. Again an insight that has been used by many authoritarian organizations and regimes, churches, and movements.

Antiquity

Classical Antiquity made, like most cultures, a difference between accepted religion and witchcraft, magic, sorcery, but usually accepted divination, as it was part of the practice of the accepted religions. Plato in the Phaedrus has Socrates talk about magic, augurs and divine madness in this perspective. There are many law books that have provisions against sorcery, spells etc. like the pre-Christian Twelve Tables of pagan Roman law, where evil incantations intended to damage cereal crops were specifically mentioned. In Rome, witchcraft was punished and there were witch-hunts that exceeded those in pre-modern times, often blaming witches for causing epidemic illnesses.

The “Lex Cornelia de Sicariis et Veneficiis” promulgated by Lucius Cornelius Sulla in the second century BCE is an important source of late medieval and early modern European law on witchcraft. Tacitus used the term *religio-superstitio* to indicate the magical practices.

Understanding rituals or ritual theory, trying to understand ritual, was part of Greek philosophy but as part of theology we see an interest in the subject by the Church fathers, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and many others.

Explanatory theories: study of ritual

For a long time, magic was described and viewed as different from religion, mostly because the established religions didn’t want to be associated with the ‘primitive’ magic. However, as the study of ritual and myths advanced, it became clear that there are no justifiable differences between religion and magic, as both were considered irrational and non-causal. It is just a matter of scale; the word religion is more appropriate for larger, more organized forms.

Today, many of the old issues, like whether magic and religion are separate, are resolved, also because we came down from the arrogant position that our ‘Western’ development was superior to what the savage ‘heathens’ were doing. The similarities between Christian and, say, Vedic, Mithras, or Alchemical rituals are obvious and there are often historical links between them.

It is even feasible, that all belief systems can be traced back to a single source, probably from Mesopotamia, with branches spreading out, long before there were written accounts. The recent insights in what the function of sites like Stonehenge was, where more than 2500 years BCE pilgrims from all over Europe went to find healing, and research into the distribution of genetic materials (DNA) from certain people and tribes makes me wonder about the level of development and inter-cultural contacts in those days. Was the Bronze Age less primitive, did they have access to magical ways, effective rituals and understanding of for instance DNA-healing in relation to celestial phenomena that got lost (to us Westerners anyway)?

The description and understanding of ritual behavior and ritual has many faces. The traditional ones, usually related to religious sources and dealing with revelation, myths or creation stories, see them as valuable and necessary acts to connect with the divine and influence the future, at the same time warning against the “black” or evil forms of ritual in magic and witchcraft. In the middle ages and later, the alchemists tried complicated procedures (rituals, in their own way) to magically turn lead or mercury into gold.

Although not very visible, for fear of inquisition and similar anti-magical authorities, many people dabbled in magic and wrote about it, under their own name or an alias. There were many grimoires and secret, supposedly sacred books which, real or fake, often linked to ancient Greek, Jewish (Salomo) or Moorish sources. The division between magic and science was less clear in those days. It was, however, a dangerous game. People like Giordano Bruno, not only a cosmologist but also an expert in mnemonic techniques (*Ars Memorativa*/memory art) and Egyptian magic, was burnt in 1600 (17th of February) on the Campo de Fiori in Rome.

The history of ritual and ritual theory in more modern times, with authors like Eliphas Lévi, Gerard Encausse (Papus) , Aleister Crowley, organizations like the Golden Dawn, Theosophy, and the (re-)emergence of Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Magick, Druidism, Craft, and cyberpaganism has become a very complex tale. It has however not reached any clear conclusion about what ritual really is and what it achieves beyond the psychological and social.

Many claims are made and ritual schemes proposed, from many sides. Even many philosophers like Schopenhauer and Heidegger were fascinated by the otherworld, the metaphysical. Apart from now accepting that ritual and magic are twins with religion, little has been done or found to bridge the gap between the worlds of science and religion.

The study of ritual, magic, and myth is not a constant factor in any culture. We have seen peaks of interest in the Hindu world, but also periods of loss of interest in both the rituals and the study of them. The ancient Greeks were certainly into magic and didn't really separate magic, science, and philosophy. In the Western world, alchemy and magic had their heyday in the late Middle Ages, and interest in magic again cropped up with the development of renaissance science. The Hermetic tenets that surfaced also meant that magic became fashionable. Giordano Bruno, the Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer, was not only a cosmologist, but had a keen interest in magical rituals, especially those of the Egyptians.

The scholarly world, since the days of enlightenment, has been late to pick up on ritual and magic. In the 19th century, the subject was studied as if looking at a very primitive culture. It was through the interest in the Vedas and the work of Max Müller, a German philologist and orientalist, that more serious study into the connections between religion, myth, and rituals began.

In the 19th century, Eliphas Lévi, a French occult author and ceremonial magician, as well as the people of the Golden Dawn (Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, a British occultist) and Aleister Crowley, an English oc-

cultist, mystic, ceremonial magician, poet and mountaineer, pushed the envelope considerably.

Many theories have been put forward. Names like Mary Douglas; Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, an English anthropologist; Robertson-Smith, a Scottish orientalist; Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, an English anthropologist; Bronislaw Malinowski, a Polish-born-British-naturalized anthropologist; also Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist; Lucien Lévy-Brühl, a French scholar trained in philosophy; Sir James George Frazer; and even Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist who became known as the founding father of psychoanalysis; looked into myths. Magic is often described as the unexplained, as if science would catch up, there would be no magic left. Bronislaw Malinowski defined it as “a body of applied technology used to influence the domain a society believes are ordinary incalculable, uncertain or unaccountable.”

Later in the 20th century, Mircea Eliade, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Joseph Campbell, Victor Turner and Claude Lévi-Strauss have showed a deeper respect for the function of myth and ritual in society and religion. Truly understanding ritual, and the underlying magic, remains an exception. Too often we see writers and scientist describing them from a Western, rational perspective, usually full of social interpretation but far less concerned with the magical and sinister side of many rituals. Lots of anecdotal stories, lots of details and cultural assumptions, but few theoretic models. What misses is cracking the magical code, and using that understanding to come up with new rituals and forms, adapted to our times and mindset. The best example of ritual (re)creation we find in C.W. Leadbeater, who not only understood ritual and wrote about it, but (re)designed a whole church liturgy.

Ritual understood : Leadbeater

Charles Webster Leadbeater (1854-1934) was a prominent early member of the Theosophical Society, and is mostly known for his bringing to the West the notion of chakras and other knowledge and as being a spiritualist. His lifestyle was not impeccable, but in my view he is the foremost interpreter and (re)creator of ceremony and rituals. In the liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church he has created a new blueprint for understanding not only the original intentions of the Catholic Holy Mass, but expanded and deepened it. His creation and the intricate details of each movement, setting and phrase is not a half forgotten and worn-out re-enactment, but a very alive and vibrant event. The actuality of the Leadbeater rituals is amazing for those who have even only an inkling of what rituals are supposed to be. He used the laws of magic, and the correspondences that are at the root of them, in a masterful way.

More recent Nevill Drury in his book “Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic” gives an interesting account of twentieth century magic in the West with primers on Kabbalah, alchemy, and tarot, but his focus on the left-hand path is a bit fashionable. Sex, tantra and Crowley and how the Golden Dawn was influential are certainly part of modern magic and cyberspace has made communication about these subjects easier, but it’s only a part of what magic entails, maybe two out of the seven chakra’s.

He sees twentieth century magic as mostly concerned with will and intent, aiming at transformation of one’s perception as in specific effects or changes in one’s sphere of consciousness. He states that that it is in the issue of will that magic differs from mysticism and religion. The magician assumes that the gods will respond if one undertakes certain ritual or visualization procedures.

Drury describes this as: “That he or she can will to effect”.

He notes that the traditional techniques of invocation and sacred formulae have been legitimized by existential philosophy and human potential psychology by describing them as emanations of the creative imagination, forces of the transcendent psyche. Thus magic as addressing archetypes of the collective unconscious. Drury points out, that this explanation is not shared by many modern magician, who see their pantheon as entities belonging to another plane of existence and magic as a vital means communication with them. He calls the type of magic aiming at transforming one’s perception of the world from profane to sacred the High Magic, or gnosis.

New theories like Rupert Sheldrake’s morphogenetic fields and the ‘new physics’ have stimulated the thinking about the link between consciousness and perceived reality, with magic and rituals a prime example of mind over matter issues. Gregory Bateson’s notion was that rituals frame our notion of reality and are embedded in meta-communicational patterns. Modern developments are the revival of paganism and witchcraft in various forms, such as Wicca.

The cyberpagan movement, with Mark Pesce and others, started to use internet as a ritual platform.

Pesce views witchcraft as a religion of harmony with yourself and the environment, harmonizing yourself with the cycle of time and being able to deduce what things are appropriate to the moment.

Pesce uses ritual and magical routines in cyberspace like when he brings a new website online, before it goes public, he places a page of invocation and blessing on its root page, to realize a sacred intention for it.

Homeopathy and Radionics can also be regarded as a form of magic.

The understanding of phenomena like perception, consciousness, and the whole notion of observed reality sheds new light on what magic and thus ritual can be. The notions derived from Quantum Physics, the wave/particle duality, and non locality now indicate that the whole universe is linked and ‘dancing.’

Observation is a factor in manifestation, so magic might be more ‘scientific’ than was accepted before. This “New Physics” idea that the physical universe is the product of a “process of consciousness” is not really new; it is also the basis of Eastern esoteric philosophy. I like to add that my view of “time is the carrier of consciousness” also points back to the very early human understanding of time as an illusion.

Revealed or human construct

When talking about the origin of ritual and excluding the notion of extraterrestrial influence (which would only perpetuate the question of origin) the question remains where the inspiration comes from. Are rituals, magic, and religion revealed, or are they only human constructs, based on deeper psychological processes and projections? Most religions claim a divine intervention, some divine entity who revealed the moral codes, holy scriptures or rituals. This often became the basis of their faith. Bible, Koran, Vedas—there are many examples. Although it is clear that there is human influence in the transmission, translation, and dissemination of these texts and traditions, it is believed to be divine revelation. There is also a school of thought believing in some kind of perennial recording of all and everything, the Akashic records, but these are only available to some advanced souls or individuals charged with some kind of assignment to “channel” or disseminate such information.

Whatever the case, I can only refer to my personal experience. It did happen to me, that certain ritual movements (mudra’s) and/or their meaning were revealed to me, usually in a trance state.

One particular movement of the hands ‘came’ to me at some occasion, and I have asked many people what it meant. It took some ten years before I realized that it was a gesticulatory bridge between the Christian and Muslim posture, the way of holding the hands prayer. It is the transition between holding your hands as in prayer and then moving them in a surprising circular motion toward reading a book, but keeping the fingers connected when making the move.

Another gesture transmitted: the traditional ‘how’ greeting of American Indians with the palm of the hand facing forward and open to indicate ‘peace.’ It became clear to me that this was related to the sign of the full moon, indicating to others that one was on a pilgrimage to honor the ancestors and

therefore requested a peaceful passage. Hence the hand was not stretched and flat, but slightly bent as to indicate the circle of the full moon.

I would say that these and other experiences were more like touching an existing body of wisdom than a personal revelation and that there is a state of being, for me very much related to love and connectedness, where it is easier to tap into this wider and more universal knowledge. I could even relate this to magical power, as at that level understanding and power come very close (ya evam veda); they merge as the deeper relationships become clear. Changing things turns out to hinge on very little effort, often just putting one's mind to it brings the change.

Energy follows intention, thought manifests itself in matter. Not on the crude level of making objects appear from nowhere, but things just happen. Synchronicity is no longer accidental, but the result of the magical focus.

Anthropology rationalized: indigenous knowledge

Anthropology, once started with looking into indigenous practices turned inward, and sociology and psychology took over, looking for mechanisms and patterns that were so abundant in the old wisdom schools like the Vedas and Upanishads.

The scientific study of ritual for a long time was associated with anthropology, at least outside the religious theological sphere. There were ritualists and people studying and reviving older magical tradition, but they were outside the academic field. After rejecting the cultural value of indigenous and aboriginal people the latter half of the twentieth century, boosted by the sixties, was a period of embracing the esoteric, the hidden. The strange became popular and the new colonialism, looting the third world for indigenous knowledge and touristic entertainment, started.

The anthropologists became like prospectors, looking for interesting bits to take home, where sociology, psychology, linguistics and pharmacists happily used them to underpin their new insights.

New fields like ethnobotany and ethnopharmacy sprung up, spiritual tourism became popular, yoga, sweat lodges, meditation, ayahuasca and tantra were appropriated, Eastern teachings turned into pop-Buddhism and Zen, sanyassin sex and summers of love, festivals and marihuana.

Looking over the fences and then appropriating what was found happened everywhere in science, medicine and trade/economy. Strangely enough much of what was figured out as new and revolutionary and given interesting names in science were mechanisms and patterns that were present in the old wisdom schools like the Vedas and Upanishads, but discarded as irrational because magic and science were irreconcilable.

toward the end of the twentieth century indigenous knowledge as opposed to formalized scientific knowledge was increasingly acknowledged as a source of understanding not only the individual cultures and habitats but of the complex ecological and social challenges the world as a whole faced. The West had to do something, disaster loomed so why not look a bit further, although this mostly was limited to rational, factual themes. There was a certain paternalistic benevolence, studying the locals was seen as development work, those poor nations needed our superior insights.

International and national organizations, inside and outside governments (NGOs) were busy educating the people, pumping money into the third world, establishing Western infrastructure, education and neo-colonizing the countries they were kicked out fifty or forty years earlier.

This when anthropology became part of the indigenous knowledge (IK) wave. Let's see what these poor people have to offer, they have sustained their lifestyles longer than us, they must have some secrets we can use!

For a while the World Bank and many others considered this to be the way to go, both as a necessity (the ecological disaster, global warming) and as humanitarian duty, the rich helping the poor (to help themselves was the idea). This by cataloging the cultural wealth, studying the ethno-diversity, visual anthropology, enlisting the locals as anthropological mercenaries, setting up local university branches to study the indigenous knowledge. Studying and '*scientizing*' indigenous systems in order that they be 'systematically deposited and stored for use by development practitioners' (Brokensha 1995) seems ignoring the cultural (and magical) context.

It was basically collecting and sampling, in the same vein as what J. Frazer did a century before, and with the same flaw, not appreciating the other-worldly. In general the study and work concerning IK was limited to the rational, had a strong ecological flavor, it concerned very local (habitat, environmental knowledge, culture) and practical knowledge, also of a technical nature. It was seen as part of the development movement, bringing progress but in Western clothes.

World Bank: development promotion

There was however, if I follow the World Bank discussions in the nineties here, not yet an unanimous perception of the concept of indigenous knowledge (IK). Some, like D. Warren see it as knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society, the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities. It contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. (Warren, D. M. 1991 "Using Indigenous

Knowledge in Agricultural Development””; World Bank Discussion Paper No.127. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.). J.M. Flavier argued

“Indigenous Knowledge is (...) the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are dynamic, and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems.”

(Flavier et al. 1995: “The regional program for the promotion of indigenous knowledge in Asia”, in Warren, D.M., L.J. Slikkerveer and D. Brokensha (eds) ‘The cultural dimension of development: Indigenous knowledge systems.’ London: Intermediate Technology Publications.)

Ellen and Harris (1996) provide characteristics of indigenous knowledge that are fairly comprehensive but limited to the rational and fairly decontextualised. (Ellen, Roy and Harris, Holly (1996) “Concepts of indigenous environmental knowledge in scientific and development studies literature - A critical assessment”; draft paper East-West Environmental Linkages Network Workshop, Canterbury).

They listed IK as local, rooted to a particular place and set of experiences, as orally-transmitted, or transmitted through imitation and demonstration, as empirical, the consequence of practical engagement in everyday life, constantly reinforced by experience and trial and error in survival conditions. Tradition is ‘a fluid and transforming agent with no real end’ when applied to knowledge; negotiation is a central concept. They noted repetition as a defining characteristic of tradition even when new knowledge is added constantly.

IK is characteristically shared to a much greater degree than other forms of knowledge, but its distribution is still segmentary, socially clustered and usually asymmetrical. Although IK may achieve a degree of coherence in rituals and other symbolic constructs, its distribution and location is always fragmentary.

Concerning the non functional aspects they note that where IK is at its densest and directly applicable its organization is essentially functional. They admit separating the technical from the non-technical, the rational from the non-rational is problematic as IK is characteristically situated within broader cultural traditions.

Even the indication ‘indigenous’ was and is ambiguous, for it has political (colonial) connotations and is not well defined in itself, but is used widely and would ‘native’ or ‘aboriginal’ be less contested? The field of IK was also indicated as ethno-ecology, ‘local knowledge’, ‘folk knowledge’, traditional environmental (or ecological) knowledge (TEK)’.

But then a couple of major crises happened, the internet bubble and the financial 2008 crisis, while in the meantime the economic balance tipped,

China, Brazil, India and other countries outgrew their status, the developing world emerged with a new selfconscious attitude.

Institutions like the World Bank lost interest in the notion of IK, it became politically dubious and the anthropologists went back to study at home, where new tribalism, urban tribes, groupism, the hippies and cult movements were great subjects and most of them were not magically inclined, so all sociological, psychological and rational theories could be applied.

Of course this is a somewhat exaggerated picture, for at the same time anthropology did dive into the extradimensional aspects like in the study of shamanism.

A new focus emerged, there were anthropologist like Krippner who actually accepted the magical, the otherworldly and the efficacy of what those healers, medicine men, witches and brujos concocted. Their practices were, as Krippner posed it '*demytified*', studied in the context of belief systems, cultural embedding and traditional roles.

Without really embracing magic as the missing ingredient of anthropological studies, it is called synergistic linking, virtual causality or vaguely referred to as supernatural practices, it is accepted as part of the reality of the people.

And rightfully so, I argue. What the people living in the rainforests, the arctic or desert areas have embedded in their language, myths, rituals and practices constitutes knowledge of a different order, but with roots in perception and interdependency often much deeper than the materialistic Western science.

Focus shift, not harvesting but understanding

I am not discarding the idea behind IK. There is a lot of practical knowledge, technical understanding embedded in indigenous cultures. They know, based on experience, how to deal with the specifics of their environment, and the Western world can learn from this. More important however is how this knowledge often didn't result from rational reductionist experiments like Western technology and science, but arrived by means science would call irrational, superstitious, illusionary. This primordial source of understanding (still accessible as I argue elsewhere) has been ignored or ridiculed for several centuries now. This even as our Western culture has its roots in prophecies and 'given' or revealed guidance (Bible, Koran).

Where IK becomes interesting, with a new focus and maybe a different name, is to see where and how they have kept a connection with the irrational, the otherworld as a source of information and guidance. Much of their understanding is magical, derived from another level of reality but at the same time is sustainable, effective and survived even the onslaught of modern times. Now as modern physics, neuroscience and psychology are

slowly probing into the anomalies of our rational space-time paradigm, indigenous cultures have often kept the links to the extradimensional and supernatural open and have retained knowledge about these synergetic links we have put away in museums and archives as irrelevant and outdated, but pop up in movies, novels and SciFi.

Their culture is created and recreated not as a rational set of laws and rules, but as a web between the worlds using these synergistic links (correspondences), their magical practices, rituals and traditional customs.

What the indigenous (or traditional or primitive as in closer to their primes) people, tribes and cultures have to offer is much more than some ecological tricks, some use of plants or habitat, it can entail a wealth of global and philosophical insights.

The dreamtime of Australian Aboriginals is both a reservoir of local knowledge as well as a whole different view on reality, a different cosmology. I will illustrate this with what an Aboriginal sees as distinguishing characteristics, note how different this is from the rational and deconstructed World bank classification of IK.

This understanding is very relevant and even vital to our future, as Aboriginal Woorama (www.aboriginalrights.suite101.com/)(2007) pointed out concerning the logic systems and ways of knowing of the Australian aboriginals, giving eight clear characteristics as follows:

- . Their worldview is not reductionist, but holistic. Holistic Knowledge is the cornerstone of a unified Aboriginal worldview, everything is related, all knowledge in this worldview is inseparable from land, place, spirit, language, kin, law, Story.
- . Their Communal Knowledge ensures that knowledge is not collected and stored for personal power and ownership by individual specialists, but is developed, retained and shared by groups.
- . Ancestral Knowingness is about recognizing knowledge as a fluid, changing force that flows from land, spirit and Ancestors. This ensures that Aboriginal ways of knowing are not seen as genentic or even cultural, but Ancestrally generated and constantly evolving, and therefore unextinguishable. The Ancestral urge to learn comes from within. This internal basis for knowing develops learning autonomy, an independent (yet still intensely social) orientation which is the foundation of Aboriginal child-rearing practices that many westerners deem negligent.
- . Intellectual Biomimicry allows people to develop and draw upon nature-based metaphors for deeper understanding of abstract concepts, as well as using ecosystem-like webs of knowing, a way of thinking that was rejected in Western modernism and replaced by synthetic chains of

reasoning. Indigenous “webs” of logic mirroring complex natural patterns are better suited to solving problems of sustainability.

- . Circular Logic involves repetition, returning to concepts for deeper understanding, and cyclic views of time and processes. It represents a deeper, more complex way of reasoning than Western linear logic, which presents knowledge as a simplistic progression from one state to another and has created hierarchies and a canon of knowledge that exclude and marginalize powerless groups.
- . Indigenous Pluralism is a traditional way of knowing that draws down knowledge from many surrounding language groups. Aboriginal peoples are not customarily insular and static in their thinking, always learned multiple languages and cultures from the world around us, intermarrying and adopting across language groups.
- . Synergistic Knowledge as an alternative to the Western binary oppositional logic that demands adherence to one absolute and rejection of its opposite, comes from the Aboriginal principle that when opposites meet, the result is new creation rather than conflict and destruction. A good example of this is Ganma from the Yolngu of Arnhem Land, which is about the creation of brackish water that occurs in the wet season when salt and fresh water mix, but also represents an entire social system and model for belief and behaviour. Aboriginal rationality instead allows conflicting ideas to coexist simultaneously (eg. autonomy and relatedness are both pivotal to Aboriginal identity), tension and balance between opposites being the source of both new creation and social cohesion.
- . Deep Narrative is the final element of Indigenous knowledge as explored in this listing of Woomera. It can complement and enrich Western exposition-based learning. In the Aboriginal cultures, stories are not childish fables but are rich with deep knowledge about law, ethics, geography, medicine and more. Dreaming Stories, tens of thousands of years old, have shown the world was round. Narrative is the vehicle for all the ways of knowing outlined above. Deep Narrative can contain more complex information than Western exposition, which tends to fragment knowledge for specific scrutiny and separate it from cultural/land/social contexts.

How about this piece of wisdom?

The mask of society, the mask of ritual

As I believe societies display the same structure as the individual, notably hiding the true self behind masks, anthropology and the study of ritual should not only look for the surface, but try to understand what is hidden, what is the core, the inner child part. The true Indigenous Knowledge is not

what is displayed, shown, there are deeper layers that are essential. Just as for the individual a ritual is a way to let go of the ego, in a culture ritual is a way to arrive at the core beliefs.

Studying the Vedas and the rituals they were often referred to as just linguistic expressions, the meaning is in the words, the hymns, while the acts are considered practical and meaningless. That the structure of the ritual, the formal sequence does indicate a deeper meaning, and contains the real message for the participants at even subconscious levels, as Jan Houben suggests, is usually overlooked.

It feels as if we have misinterpreted the linguistic context as the real thing, while the actual physical context, the ritual acts carries the essence.

As I see it, the true ritual is covered with a mask of words, as conveyed by hymns and descriptions, orally transmitted and written down maybe hundreds of thousands of years later. I believe more understanding of our perceptive capabilities, beyond mirror neurons and memory traces, and including what we perceive from the supernatural or otherworldly will reveal to us what rituals really are.

7 Myth as the mask of religion

In anthropology myth and ritual are seen as the two central components of religious practice. The relationship between them has been the subject of much debate. My take on it is that ritual really belongs to a different stage of development, of the evolution of life, the human race and of the energetic and spiritual development of a culture. It has pre-cognitive roots, while myth is cognitive and self-conscious. Ritual stems from a more intuitive, more nature and magic connected time and level of development, myth is already a somewhat cognitive construction.

Now in later stages of development myth, which requires language and symbolic meaning, often merges with ritual. It then becomes part of a process of addressing the subconscious, bringing one into sacred time, sacred space. It is then, just as ritual, a link and a process toward a state of consciousness that relates to the deeper layers of our psyche and being. Myth is more than coping with a mind looking for explanations. Myth offers a connection at deeper levels, emotional, archetypal and even at the body level, as we identify with the characters in the myth. Myth is content but also process, in that sense a performance, an act of both receiving and transmitting (magical and mystical) messages about how things are connected.

Myth is a narrative, but also a worldview and a cosmology, it has to do with an image of the otherworld and is closer to what we call religion. We could call myth the science of religion, the framework that constitutes a paradigm of the religion. Religion hides behind the myth or myths, as it is much easier to tell (sing, play) stories than to transmit theological dogma.

Humans like stories, they identify with heroes and saints, feel a bodily connection (embodied cognition mechanisms) imagining and reconstructing the tales in their mind's eye. The symbolic messages are absorbed easier, often subconscious, stories are great programming tools, as modern psychotherapy has realized.

Religions, as the general indication of practices and implicit belief systems, are usually full with stories and mythological themes, the creation myth being a prominent one, offering an explanation or at least an image of how the world, humans and the cosmos came to be. The contents of myths offer the framework for the religious paradigm. Although presented by the clergy and rulers as true stories or histories, they have of course hidden masks and imagery, with many symbolic layers and reaching the subconscious.

Stan Krippner argues that myths are imaginative statements or stories about existential issues that have implications for one's behavior. He sees ritual

as a sequenced series of behaviors that attempt to obtain a goal. That goal may be individual or communal.

Apologists

One of the questions philosophers and theologians have wrestled with is the rift between what is usually ascribed to the Gods or God, being above all sin, the source of all morality and supreme in power, presence, knowledge and understanding and then the complete opposite of that in how they act and are portrayed in the myths. There are many examples, but just think about how the supreme Greek Olympian Zeus frolicked around, shape-shifting, deceiving, seducing, not a very elevated lifestyle to say the least. The same is true for the Indian Hindu deities, the stories about them are equally full with debauchery and deceit, not a great role model for the pious believer.

The playful, fertility and lust-oriented behavior of the mythical figures is like a second and third chakra mode of being, less cerebral and more primitive, but also less concerned with a mask or Freud's super-ego mode. So maybe these mythical roles did fit in with the older stages of the development of human religiosity, but as soon as transcendent monotheism took hold the older myths became a bit of an embarrassment.

This might have become more obvious after the jump in consciousness around 3200 BCE, a crucial moment in human evolution according to Lucy Wyatt (*Approaching Chaos*, 2010). The emergence of self-consciousness (the Paradise story of Adam and Eve) might have historical roots in that time frame. The need to deal with the old myths of the Olympians, the Vedic nature deities and find some explanations (apologies) became even more obvious in what Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age (800 BCE-200 BCE, with Christianity and Islam included 800 BCE-800 CE).

The conflict between the religious (cerebral) and the mythical conception of the deities was obvious. These differences had to be explained away and Andrew Lang in his 1887 book "Myth, Ritual and Religion" gives an account of how all kinds of apologies were made over time. One was looking for an explanation, a way to reconcile the ethical elements of the faith with these strange, zoo-morphic, lustful and amoral aspects of the myths.

Greek philosophers and poets tried to ignore the more unethical wanderings of their Gods. They blamed mistakes in etymological interpretation of words like Plato did by way of Socrates in *Cratylus*, projected physical processes in the mythical adventures or like Euhemerus described myths as distorted or exaggerated record of facts like the adventures of older hero's and forefathers.

The interesting notion in Lang's approach is that he ascribed the two seemingly opposing conceptions to two different moods, one of contemplation and submission, one of playfulness and erratic fancy, he compares them to Love and Lust, far apart and yet near. How close to Plato's two winged horses in the *Phaedrus*! He however he didn't see that link and tried to see them as development stages, the wild one of the myths superseded by the tamed, strict one of morality, but with fall-back degeneration. If I do accept, with Plato, the two moods as being always part of the human psyche and indeed necessary to prevent stagnation, the wild side of myth and the tame side of moral religion are just two sides of the medallion.

Lang defined religion as "the belief in a primal being", slightly different from E. B. Tylor's "belief in spiritual beings". He noted degeneration of religion, from an original devotion to "Märchen" or fables even in Christianity, and kind of acknowledged that the "original" savages he saw in Australian Aboriginal tribes and other "primitives" were less inclined to the "sacrifices of human beings to a blood-loving God" and ordeals with poison and fire to which Darwin alluded. So he saw degeneration tendencies in both religion and the pre-religious savagery.

I think the two faces of myth and religion are rooted in the human psyche, the interplay between the two is necessary for progress. In the context of the model of the different selves I developed they can be seen as different layers, different masks of the underlying root contact with the otherworld. In the contact with extradimensional, where ritual was an earlier development stage than religion, there is both the pure, strict oneness and the chaos of indeterminacy. Both faces demand a place in our psyche and thus in the expression of religion. Note that in most rituals there is also this ambiguity, next to the strict liturgy there is the coyote mind, the playful, unexpected, deviant.

Axial Age views

Karl Jaspers (*Origin and Goal of History*) and Karen Armstrong (*The Great Transformation*) have placed much emphasis on this Axial Age time frame in the religious evolution of mankind, when the great religions emerged. There was amazing synchronicity especially around the time the Greeks Ionic Enlightenment with Plato, Socrates and Aristotle spawned those great philosophic insights, but also Buddhism, Taoism and other less anthropomorphic views emerged. There are different theories like that of John C. Landon's (*World History and the Eonic Effect* 2005) explaining the rhythm of progress as a play of freedom, but I personally think it has much to do with solar cycles and climate spikes, maybe there were periods when travel and exchange was much easier and the observed synchronicity was the result of direct contacts. This doesn't mean I reject non-random

convergence, the Darwinian (emergent) explanations are obviously too limited to explain all. In the chapter about time I argue that evolution is a remembrance of the future, somewhat closer to the Hindu notions of a cyclic cosmos.

There were other axial times, the neolithic change toward agriculture with cultivated grains around 10.000 BCE is probably as important in the evolution, recent finds like the Göbekli Tepe excavations in Turkey illustrate this. This stone-age mountain sanctuary with large stone construction elements up to 50 tons, inscribed with mostly animal representations, changes many notions of early religious development. It points at the importance of zoo-morphic roots, already noted by the nineteenth century totemic anthropologists like E.B. Tylor, A. Lang and later E. Durkheim.

The Great Flood, dated around 4000 BCE in Mesopotamia, also was a major event, but there may have been such floods elsewhere at different times..

The whole spreading of the Mesopotamian culture, technology and religion around 3400-3000 BCE marks a paradigm shift of sorts. Some kind of major change must have happened, leading to a connected culture spreading from India to Ireland as exemplified by the monuments like Stonehenge as a pilgrimage and healing sanctuary dating back to at least 2700 BCE, in the same time the pyramids were built in Egypt (4th dynasty).

Maybe there were major climate changes, comets or volcanic eruptions, that caused such changes, maybe changes in solar radiation or magnetic shielding of the earth caused DNA mutations and new directions in human evolution.

Cataclysmic disasters have influenced human development, the Santorini Minoan eruption around 1627 BCE is maybe related to the Exodus and other historic events and may have been the root cause for what Stephen Jay Gould called punctuated equilibrium, according to which evolutionary change occurs relatively rapidly. Another more esoteric hypothesis is that experiments with DNA manipulation have caused mutation of the human consciousness toward self-consciousness, Laurence Gardner promotes this idea.

Modern anthropology and paleontology now accept that early humans and pre-humans were walking on two feet before the brain started to expand. The 1926 retardation theory of Louis Bolk concerning human evolution and why we grow up with so much fetal characteristics (apes grow up quite different from their foetus form) has received some support from Stephen Jay Gould in his book *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (1977). It is obvious that humans develop much slower than other mammals and that this retardation (neoteny/ juvenilization) has something to do with human thinking. We are born very early compared to other mammals, need a lot of care and time to

become independent and develop ego and sexual maturity, we are a special kind of animal in this respect.

Ritual versus and combined with myth

So I see myths as a stage in religious development, less censored by cognitive deliberations than the formal religion. They are necessary and effective in the light of the human tendency to cloth and cover one's deep inner me with archetypal imagery and indeed masks. Masks and symbols to insure the continuity, honoring past beliefs like the zoo-morphic and animistic roots of religious thinking, the understanding of magic once so prevalent, all this in tales and stories so different from the morality of the newer deity paradigm.

Yet it pays to look at how the two main parts of the religious matrix, myth and ritual, were seen by researchers in the past and where their views do support other notions about the role and essence of ritual.

The myth-ritualist theory of the so-called Cambridge Ritualists like Frazer and Jane Ellen Harrison holds that myth does not stand by itself but is tied to ritual or even derived from it, others see them as more separate, just sharing common ground or see myth as the origin. In the approach of James Frazer (*Golden Bough*) myth emerges out of ritual during the natural process of religious evolution. Frazer argued that man progresses from belief in magic (and rituals based on magic) through belief in religion, to science. When man loses his belief in magic, he justifies his formerly magical rituals by saying that they reenact myths or honor mythical beings, Frazer argued. He did see ritual as primitive and superstitious, in line with the general notions of his time, but if we take his "primitive" not in the derogative sense, but as stemming from an earlier stage in development.

I think he was right there, but his notion that the one produced the other, the "primacy of ritual" ignores that they come from a different angle. Myth is later than ritual, but also comes more from the mind and is not an organic development.

I tend to see ritual more as coming from down (the body) up and myth from above (the mind).

Bronislaw Malinowski and Mircea Eliade, within the totemic notion of ritual, also noted that an important function of myth is to provide an explanation for ritual. They obviously recognized the time line, myth explains what was there before, but more what is above, the heavens and fate. It's great to see myth is "a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality" but this already assumes some self consciousness, a level of asking questions about why (philosophy) and how (science). Animals don't do that, but they display ritual or at least ritualistic behavior.

Myths are stories, probably at first not more than tales of heroes and experiences, later the explanative and philosophical concepts crept into them. In creation myths there are the beginnings of a scientific explanation of how thing came about, of course building upon intuitive understanding or knowing in a gnostic sense (of the heart). Sometimes these myths find support in modern physics.

This idea of original spiritual awareness and practice changing over time, becoming more cerebral, seen a divinely given rather than as natural thing to do also resonates with the distinction bible scholar William Robertson Smith (in 1889) made between ancient and modern religion: in modern religion, doctrine is central; in ancient religion, ritual is central.

Ritual is, over time, elevated from the motor and intuitive level to the cognitive, but lost something in the process; the link with the natural magic that caused it in the first place. By giving it words (like in myth) it became framed, disconnected from the intuitive nameless. The reinforcement and social effects Walter Burkert noticed in myths and rituals coming together, becoming more cerebral and sacred, has thus a price, the original meaning got lost. Ritual over time became less gut-based and more theatrical, re-enacting myths, old memories and habits at the cost of direct experiential contact with the otherworld, which for the “primitives” was the real world, like the dreamtime of the Aborigines.

Another notion I oppose is the coupling of belief and ritual, in the sense that, as Edward Shils pointed out: “belief without rituals is possible, ritual without belief cannot be” or becomes a mere ceremony, an empty ritual.

Myth as part of the belief system then is seen as more primal than ritual, but there are also views that the two are independent. Here belief as a religious conviction doesn't fit the bill, belief as a gnostic, intuitive inner knowing does. In my experience I can only acknowledge that a belief system, in the sense of a deeper knowing, is necessary for the ritual experience, but then I have never met anybody without some beliefs of some sort.

Psychedelic trips in this perspective are indicative, as they make belief systems, inner worlds and all kinds of imprints rather visible, the imag-



Rainbows, biblically signs of God's covenant with Noah, are experienced as heavenly messages, especially as one happens to be around crop circles.

inary (or real in another way) worlds one visits are representations of inner belief systems.

Faded origins

To understand what the relationship is between myth and ritual we have to look beyond what we now have as rituals. The rituals we know are usually too far removed from the origin, have become too much of an intellectual construction and of course this leads to a closer link and interweaving with myth, also a cognitive thing.

Religion, the organized dealing with explanations of the structure of the universe, took over from the indeed primitive, from ritual as an expression of magical awareness. In modern times, many original rituals have vanished or became empty, some have survived in another form. Religious ritual is no longer experienced as an essential part of life, in the rational West it is seen as archaic, irrational and superstitious, but of some psychological value. Ceremony, the non-magical form of ritual is only acceptable in the context of nationalistic or sports events, with the emphasis on the social, the feeling of connectedness that the 'wave' or the national anthem produce. That the yelling crowd believes otherwise and that their energy magically make the "home team" win, is not seen as proof of magical efficacy. Many a sportsman believes his mascot or talisman does influence the outcome of the game. Science is of course eager to see this as placebo effects, explaining away the supernatural or magical as a mere psychological effect.

Science is already a very cognitive game, far above such mundane things as intuition, feeling, knowing from the heart. How could scientists assume or even guess that in the time rituals emerged cognitive functions were less important, maybe even less present. That the efficacy of repetition, contagion and all the other magical laws was known, felt, a reality that didn't need explanation. That the people just knew what to do, as an intuition. Ritual stems from a level of development where magic was the norm, not the exception. Ritual in that perspective is also the result of an intuitive need for security, for safety, for repetition of the familiar like animals do and as we see in pathological obsession. Repetition appeases our nerve system.

The development of ritual and later myths can also be traced in how a child develops. A young child with a far more magical awareness than adults, creates security by creating small rituals, with parents, a doll, adding meaning and story as the mind develops. If at some time parents or society impose a model or a belief system (with "adult" myth and ritual) that offers alternative mind and body appeasers, they are accepted or rejected, but become part of the personality structure anyway. I will come back to how the psyche and ritual are related later.

By now it will be clear that I am not looking at ritual in the classical anthropological or socio-psychological sense. I try to discern what ritual means; how it is staged; what set, setting, and correspondences are; and how this translates in effective results on the psychological, social and magical levels. Meaning and purpose are related to the origin. The relation between myth and ritual is important, but I do believe that ritual was first and that myth (and religion) is a later development, in society and in the development path of a child.

Now all this doesn't mean for me, that ritual and myth are just tools and biological necessities, they seem to resonate with very fundamental levels of what life and even existence is. Here the connection with the primes becomes important, ritual (and myth) are in my view related to the connection with the extradimensional.

One can try to understand rituals in a rational, systematic and logical way, at an equal footing with religion, but a word of warning. Ritual is not a rational cognitive procedure, it is not a mind game, it comes from deep within, from a level where words and rational understanding don't count. There are deeper messages and meanings in ritual that elude the normal perception or interpretation, most magical or occult qualities are hidden from sight and mind. In fact, magical efficacy doesn't even come in easy and easy recognizable bits, it is more like homeopathic dilution - less is more. "The gods love what is hidden".

Ritual came first, but later conformed to religion

Rituals play a role in most traditions and religions as they are seen and experienced as a way to communicate with the Divine, the otherworld, the paranormal, the gods, nature-spirits or the self. As these religions are for a large part mental constructions of a mind in need of meaning, over time the rituals have often become complex re-enactments of myths. Myth and ritual in this sense together are the pillars of many a practice and religion and it is understandable that they were seen and studied as equal partners, as the central components in what establishes a religion. In the literature the connection between ritual and myth in that religious context is heavily discussed, are they inseparable, what is their dialectic relation, how do they influence each other? This has to be separated from the question of the origin of ritual, as the primeval ritual is quite different from a ritual in a later, religious context.

As for myth, this feels like a way for the mind to seek security by providing a cognitive explanation, order in an otherwise chaotic and threatening world. Philosophical answers dressed up as a logical story. The myth, often containing a worldview or cosmological ordering, appeases the mind.

Other views: fixing reality

The view of many scholars is different, they look more at the social function of ritual or see, as Freud did, myth and ritual as a way the unconscious manifest. Quite an acceptable view, if we include the notion that our unconscious also picks up information at a deeper level, through the primes. In the context of more established religion, myth and developed ritual are more equal and then seeing them as bridging a fundamental gap between body and mind makes more sense. Myths are from the domain of words and beliefs (thought), ritual is in the domain of action. A myth is thus a system of word symbols (legomenon), a ritual a system of objects and act symbols (dromenon), different and yet in the ritual where a myth is used one can see the synthesis.

Ritual was and is seen as a universal category of human experience, but so is myth as part of most traditions. Catherine M. Bell in her 1992 book "Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice" points at the dialectic nature of myth-symbols versus ritual, thought and action are different and yet come together.

Jane Ellen Harrison (in *Ancient art and ritual*, 1927) "Ritual then involves imitation; but does not arise out of it. It desires to recreate an emotion, not to reproduce an object. A rite is, indeed, a sort of stereotyped action, not really practical, but yet not wholly cut loose from practice, a reminiscence or an anticipation of actual practical doing; it is fitly, though not quite correctly, called by the Greeks a dromenon, "a thing done."

Mircea Eliade described myths, rituals and symbols as a complex system of affirmations expressing the ultimate reality notions of a people, what I would call the inner belief system. In his view reality acquires significance by its relation with the unseen, it is a function of the imitation of the celestial paradigm. In other words, everything is seen as an image or representation of the otherworld and we anchor that by repetition. Eliade sees that an important function of myth is to provide an explanation for ritual, the myth is the narrative resurrection of the how the mythical gods and heroes acted, and as such the justification of the ritual as an imitation of the divine play. It's like going back to the times of the mythical figures, a time-machine like vehicle. And here he also sees the separation of sacred time from profane time.

"In imitating the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythic hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time."

says Eliade in "Myths, Dreams and Mysteries"

This feels as a somewhat limited view, in a way ignoring the magic part. The ritual time-machine of Eliade only goes back to a religious past, to a

cognitive need for explanation and divine intervention, not to the time where ritual arose from gut feelings, from primal intuitions. His eternal return to the mythical age, the Great Time, is a mind trip, while a ritual is essentially a means to leave time and space altogether. Only being subordinate to the divine ultimate reality and imitating the myths is excluding the human co-creational and magical role, as ritual can also be used to change reality or our notion of it. In its primeval form this was what it was, a magical act.

The ritual-from-myth approach from notably Edward Burnett Tylor sees the relationship between myth (explaining the world) and ritual (dealing with the world) as analogous to the relationship between science and technology.

The opposition and bridging between thought (belief) and action comes back in the theoretic models and views of many anthropologist. Ritual is such an interesting confluence of the cultural and the social, so central to the world of belief, behavior, religion (*and magic*) that ritual theory is a cornerstone of anthropological science.

I deliberately kept magic here between parentheses, in fact the elimination of the reality and efficacy of magic in nearly all this scientific work is what makes most of it so uninteresting and nearly bloodless. Even as scholars like Frazer, Durkheim and many others accepted totemism and sacrifice as the basis of ritual, and described it as making a connection with the otherworld, they kind of kept a rational distance from believing all this to be real, effective, necessary, essential beyond the social effects.

I could hardly ignore Joseph Campbell's "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" (1949) a well known study of comparative mythology. His theory of the journey of the archetypal hero states that the same patterns and stages of self-discovery surface in many places. He says about this monomyth:

"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

Campbell describes mythology as having a fourfold function for human society.

- The Metaphysical Function: Awakening a sense of awe before the mystery of being through participation in mythic rituals or the contemplation of mythic symbols.
- The Cosmological Function: Explaining the universe as it is perceived, a kind of proto-science.

- The Sociological Function: Supporting the existing social order, confirming the status-quo, often validating it by reference to some kind of divine intervention.
- The Pedagogical Function: Guide the individual through the stages of life, rites of passage.

All these functions are of course applicable to ritual in general.

In “A Short History Of Myth” (2005) Karen Armstrong makes the somewhat obvious point that mythical thinking is different from the rational or scientific-minded thinking that predominates today. She notes that even the earliest men of the Paleolithic period seemed to sense a gap in their lives, an ambivalent separation from the world of their myths.

I don’t agree with her approach that burial and grave-goods point at myth and religion rather than ritual, she mixes up myth and religion sometimes.

That *mythos is yoked to transformative ritual* is too sweeping a statement. In later times, especially in the context of Greek mysteries this might be true, but not in the early ritual stages of mankind.

Myth and ritual are both more form than content (logos if you like) and address deeper layers than the cognitive. Also her claim that monotheism was there before polytheism and that the earlier transcendent concepts of God were replaced by more accessible spirits powers and deities to facilitate participation in the sacred feels a bit too much “noble savage”. The totemic identification of tribes and people all over the world points otherwise, I rather believe all was seen as sacred, there was no philosophical paradigm, the connection to the all was felt and expressed in ritual long before religion emerged.

She does make clear that different stages in development have their different myths, but doesn’t put this in a framework beyond a one-dimensional historic development line. Her somewhat non-descript spiritual, vaguely Buddhist inclinations shine through, the focus on the first axial period and the interpretation of the second axial time comes in a bit awkward, but I do agree that modernity’s rejection of myth is disastrous. She says:

“We are myth-making creatures. We need myths to “help us realize the importance of compassion . . . to see beyond our immediate requirements.”

“We need myths that help us to venerate the earth as sacred once again, instead of merely using it as a ‘resource’.”

Myth is not about irrationality. Like science, argues Armstrong, myth extends “the scope of human beings,” that is, it enables “us to live more intensely” in this world. The same imagination that goes into religion, also makes it into the arts. Armstrong writes:

“A myth is essentially a guide, it tells us what we must do in order to live more richly.”

Modern myths

We make new myths, new masks to cover thing up. Politics these days offer us plenty of myths, the reasons for war are obviously fabrications, but also the whole notion of democracy is a myth, the alleged threats from drugs, terrorism, Islam or the various Illuminati conspiracies are myths, and creating myths as in “brands” has become an industry.

Internet, social media and the cloud are in a way new myths, tales hiding what lies behind, easy words and meta-memes we accept as nearly God-given tools, a new dimension resulting from science, the religion that replaced the old beliefs. These modern myths are just as rooted in subconscious pattern and geared toward shielding from the true inner core of politics, business and science as the myths of old. And our present day semi-Gods like Gates, Obama, Beckham or Jobs have two faces just like Zeus and Indra before.

Let me again emphasize that myth is a process, a way to experience meaning and as such a great companion and sister of ritual.

8 Art: originator, performer, work and maker

Making or combining objects, decoration, creating a special place, a special atmosphere: today we call it art or craft, depending on the originality and reproducibility. In the early days of human culture and rituals there probably was no distinction. Supposedly sacred objects have been found in burial grounds, around old campfires, at special energy places and in shrines, but are they fine art or just functional tools in process that involves mindset, setting and magical correspondence?

My three world model again offers a good way to look at art. To start with, what does art do connecting the mindset of maker with the setting, and vice versa how is performed or produced art influencing the observer? This is where much study and theory is available, from the old Greek via Kant to the modern views of art. One can argue that art is either on this set-setting axis or exists beyond the physical, but the magical qualities of it are usually ignored.

Art as a correspondence between the setting (tangible) world and the magical realm is obvious, but mostly studied in the context of symbolism, not with efficacy in mind.

One of the functions of art that is often overlooked but important in the ritual context is the quality of transporting viewer, listener or reader into a state that is closer to his or her inner core. It's partly transcendental, partly psychological and

One could say that art in that sense is a transport mechanism, a vehicle to reach a different state of consciousness. It can do this by surprise, because of novelty or shock, because it links to archetypical imagery in our subconscious or because it reminds us to anchored past experiences. This magical quality is obviously what makes us appreciate art, but is hardly acknowledged in art theory. In that sense overlooking the magical in art (theory) is similar to what has happened in ritual (theory).

There is something to the idea that in historic times myth, ritual and art emerged and developed in connection with each



Art often serves ritual purposes

other, something Jane Ellen Harrison illustrates so nicely in her 1913 book “Ancient Art and Ritual” about the Greek culture.

Art and ritual go often together, but I think art follows and is in ritual context more magical than merely mimetic. Of course a bear dance would use props reminding one of the bear. This is however more to make the magical connection, not so much the mimetic (and thus limited and imperfect, far removed from the ideal truth) copying of nature (or the world of ideals) the way the ancient Greeks described the process of making art. Harrison says about the connection between the two:

“It has an important bearing on questions vital to-day, as, for example, the question of the place of art in our modern civilization, its relation to and its difference from religion and morality; in a word, on the whole enquiry as to what the nature of art is and how it can help or hinder spiritual life.”

She also writes:

“these two divergent developments have a common root, and that neither can be understood without the other. It is at the outset one and the same impulse that sends a man to church and to the theatre.”

This might be true of more recent art-forms, including the Greek plays, theatre and architecture, but this is a later stage. Once self-consciousness became part of the human brainpack this merging obviously took place, in historic times they were already inseparable. In the Paleolithic setting however art objects were probably merely a reproduction, a replica or decoration. What is now displayed from those eras in museums are not so much art objects as applied craft with little aesthetic considerations and certainly no identification of the maker. Maybe there is some identification with the forefather-hero who was the maker or caretaker of such an object.

The whole discussion about mimesis and the role of the maker as connecting and copying what is out there kind of ignores the magical. Even as Plato accepts that poetry derives from “divine madness” he ranks the philosophers much above them as they truly seek the truth. Aristotle considered human beings as mimetic beings, feeling an urge to create art (and literature) that reflects and represents reality. Both Greeks obviously didn’t fully acknowledge the magical aspect but Aristotle does honor the effect of art giving rise to catharsis and thus to a big change in mindset.

I argue the primeval ritual came first, art as a separate discipline evolved later, even as objects were probably used very early to represent some forces or Gods or were considered special and holy by themselves. Objects as such don’t mean much beyond being (mimetic) representations or having some unusual or beautiful appearance. Humans like that, but so do some animals.

There are birds are attracted to shiny objects and in Papua New Guinea there are birds (Bowerbirds) that create small construction and use colored objects in a little display to impress potential mates.

The development of ritual

There is much ritual behavior in animals not too far removed from the human ways. Singing, dancing, tournament and territorial “lek” behavior is quite common in animals, and there are many animals who like to use psychedelic fruits, mushrooms or alcohol. So ritual or ritualistic behavior was there from the start, and as ‘human’ consciousness grew it acquired more meaning. I think ritual went through a gradual process as an important part of human social and cultural development and only much later became like the equal and companion of myth. I argue elsewhere that fire and ritual were the two main factors in facilitating the development of tribal societies beyond a small group and Dunbar’s number limitations.

Myth has to do with language and self-conscious symbolic language beyond indicative sounds came later than ritual. There are many theories how myth and ritual they are related, but by looking at indigenous cultures we see that ritual dance and celebration is probably the first expression of a communal event. The at the beginning descriptive stories and sign-language recollections at the campfire, at first to remember the adventures and experiences, later developed. As humans progressed, but this took maybe millions of years, they would bring in the supernatural and cosmological in trying to make sense out of the powers around, and then as a magical re-enactment to secure success for the future, using props and crafted artifacts to anchor the stories and myths.

Expression and primitive art (in whatever form) had to be functional. How else can we interpret the cave paintings but in a ritual context and as an effort to connect to the unseen, to make sense out of a world and maybe even magically influence the outcome of a future fight or a hunt. Maybe the paintings were less a reminder, but making them was the ritual act. The first paintings, the first statues, the first carved representations, but also the first songs and dances were expression, in that sense art but probably very functional ritual art. So art and ritual, art and religion and art as a magical act are in a way much older than what we now call the fine arts.

Aesthetics play a role, beauty is a divine quality, but is also in the eye of the beholder and thus a cultural thing.

Art in general terms is obviously an expression of an individual but within the context of a culture, a platform and a paradigm, the work was originally not much connected to the maker but to whatever purpose there was for such an expression. Possession of artifacts, probably limited to a select few and in the context of a lineage, leadership or initiation, was more important

than who made it. Even if a specific object was connected with a specific divinity, demon, hero, ancestor or person, it was a symbolic connection, not an artistic one. The one who commissioned it was more important than those who made it. Visual artists as such were rarely recognized by name until the 17th century, writers and playwrights were known by name much earlier, like the Greek Homer and Hesiod (7th or 8th centuries BC). Even the oldest buildings like the pyramids commissioned by pharaoh Sneferu (4th dynasty around 2650 BCE) and later his sons like Khufu (Cheops) were named after the rulers who had them built, even as Sneferu seemed to have taken a very personal interest in the design and architecture of these monumental tombs.



A Zombie Parade (Dusseldorf 2013). Is this art, artistic or just the need to be noticed?

Art as a connection, a correspondence

Ritual in itself can be seen as an art form, but there is also ritual art and art made in a ritual context, so maybe it is good to start with the question, how art figures in the three world ritual model I use in this book.

I will start concentrating on the older, less individualistic and functional art. Art in pre-individualistic times meant skills, crafts and science. It was often mimetic, an imitation, representation, mimicry and as such a magical link, a correspondence to the otherworld of unseen and intangible forces, but also a link to forces and events unreachable for the humans, like the stars, tornado's, earthquakes, etc. The magical notion (law) of similarity must have been understood fairly early.

The mindset of the originator (the one who commissioned it or made it) had, in the case of art in a religious context, much to do with his or her world view and notions of the otherworld and the spiritual, limited to whatever the culture and technology allowed. The purpose of the art was probably not to express an individual emotion, but to contribute to whatever the ritual context was like to help focus and elucidate the emotions of the atten-

dants. I think it's fair to assume, that the magical qualities (the correspondences) were the most important, looks were secondary, aesthetics mattered only in so far as it would stir up certain emotions. One can imagine that certain masks or garb would bring about awe or fear, whatever was deemed useful in the ritual context. My view on that artisan type of art then is that it bridges the three worlds, and as such art, theater and ritual are all ways to unite them in a meta-dimensional context. They are the links between the realms inside, outside and the extradimensional.

Certainly much religious art was designed to be used in a ritual context, it was part of the setting of a ritual. What mattered were not only the visual aspects in decoration, paintings, but also the layout of the sacred sites, the styling of implement, the garb, the music, architecture and the artful use of words, gestures, dance and even cooking. In that sense the religious and magical art used in a ritual context could not very well be individualistic, they were functional in the setting, less a display of a specific artists and more anonymous than we see today in the fine arts.

Of course this or that craftsman was better at it and would probably be asked to devote more time doing what he did better, but this was a functional thing, his talent was a part of the whole. In the days of the Gothic cathedrals the craftsmen contributed their work and creative energy without their name connected to it, it was a work of honor, of course they were often paid for it, but not always. We only have an vague idea about the individuals who painted in the prehistoric caves, who were the designers of the great temples and buildings of antiquity. Sometimes we know the name of a great sculptor or we find the tombs of great architects like in Egypt, but in general ritual art (and craft) was anonymous.

The link with the symbolic meaning of an artifact had often more to do with the past (ancestors, church founders, saints) than with whomever made it. The one who commissioned the work decided, the artisan had limited freedom in how to make it. The purpose was the most important, the desired effect on both the participants (onlookers, congregation) and the spiritual. This could be emotional effects like creating an atmosphere, mood and sense of holiness and certainly the liminality and loss of identity would be part of that.



The seal at King Tut's tomb

Imagine, as Aldous Huxley so aptly pointed out in his *Doors of Perception*, the impression of a Gothic cathedral or royal court upon a poor peasant, with never before seen or heard striking colors, heavenly music, smells, overpowering dimensional impact. Or the experience of a boy in an initiation rite, crawling into a dark and narrow cave to meet the creatures of the underworld, the shadow play and sounds that would make him ready for transformation.

Ready to enter into that ritual state, where true magic on all levels could happen.

The lengthy preparation and impressive liturgy of the mysteries like the Eleusinian (Eleusis in Greece) Mysteries, initiation ceremonies in the cult of Demeter and Persephone were intended to leave a lasting impression, deeply anchored with the help of psychedelic trance.

In ritual context art usually has pragmatic purposes, and the question is not whether it works as an enhancer of mindset, group setting or the magical correspondences but in what proportion these goals are intended or experienced.

toward the end of the middle ages this idea about individual expression became more important, painters, sculptors, composers became famous and often rich, art became a business. Names were attached, signed; the artist, if recognized for his abilities, got a status, became somebody in society.

It remains an interesting question, whether the spiritual (correspondence) value of a work of art gains or loses if the name of the maker is attached to it. Would Michelangelo's David be less or more impressive if we didn't know who sculpted it? I sometimes think that anonymous art has more value. There is less karmic attachment for the maker, less ego. There is this notion about things contributed to the general good anonymously, such acts are more 'holy' than things with ego attached.



*Medieval religious books were embellished, but usually the maker remained anonymous.
 (Photodisc)*

Art has been characterized in terms of mimesis, expression, communication of emotion, but in a ritual context I would see transformational impact (bringing people into that ritual state) as the most valued. In ritual the decorative and symbolic functions are more important than uniqueness or aesthetics, the purpose is to draw the audience toward consideration of the more spiritual things, induce transformation and reverence.

Body art

There is one timeless category of art that kind of bridges the individuality and the belonging to a group and that is body art. Mutilations, tattoo's, piercings, very fashionable these days, but of course age-old. Many cultures and subcultures use body art, to establish a marked difference between us and them, either very visible or hidden from view, as in circumcision.

Tattoo's are often used and applied in a ritual context, as a sign of initiation, bonding or belonging. These days, with so many tattoo's and piercings it is more a sign of being different, unique, an individual, although the effect wears thin if everybody has them. Yet many people choose a specific tattoo for symbolic or spiritual reasons, they try to manifest a deeper meaning with that specific tattoo.

Ritual can be seen as a (conceptual) art form in itself, the styling, choreography, wording and liturgy, creating and performing rituals was and is a challenge. Even if within the limits of a prescribed liturgy there is freedom to perform, to feel, to convey emotions, the priest(s) can make the difference. And as I think true (egoless) creativity is very close to what I call the inner child or ritual state, just as magic is, true art is magical, transformational, moving, ego-dissolving.

The value of art

(Fine) Art these days is considered valuable, if it has uniqueness, imaginative qualities, the originality and aesthetic considerations are more important than skills or time spent. Art is now seen as something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses, it's getting to be a consumable, something that adds to life's quality. One could say, much of the fine arts these days is vanity, beyond necessity as a way to connect to other layers and other dimensions it is business, and a fairly fabricated and manipulated one too.

It does have aesthetic and emotional value, good music, a great performance, a moving movie, but we have to distinguish between mere psychological processes and the magical resonance an art-piece can have. The purpose of art can be manifold, it's like ritual, it can have psychological, social

(political, hierarchical, religious, philosophical) and magical-spiritual purposes.

Here I like to point at the energy associated with certain pieces, certain works, performances etc. I believe that any object or concept gains energy because of appreciation or attention it accumulates (in one of those extra dimensions) and can be perceived by our primes. A Buddha statue that has been seen and revered by millions has more energy than a similar piece just out of the mold. This could be explained in terms of morphogenetic fields, but I just want to point at the fact, that the more people see (and give attention) a certain image, the more energy and value it has.

This also goes for people and places, the more people look at someone or visit a place, the more energy they bestow on it. Famous people don't need to be special, as long as they made it into the mindscape of the masses. This can be noticed not only with images, but also with names or other identifiers. In Egypt the pharaoh's were very aware of this, they needed their name to be preserved (in seals) and mentioned in rituals, so they would live on in the afterlife.

The danger of having a well established identity is that it becomes very hard to escape it. Letting go of that identity, something we need to grow and reach our inner child, means overcoming the energy pattern we created, our ego. This has manifested not only in the minds of other people, but our environment is full of it, the objects we are attached to, the choice of furniture, our Facebook page, we are a prisoner of our image.

In fact this is an argument in favor of not signing a work of art, a book or anything we produce. Anonymity means the maker is not attached to his work, and is more free to progress and seek new avenues of expression.

Identity

Contemporary art is more an individual expression, in artworks (art as objects) or concepts (happenings, performances, idea-based arts) that are compelled by a personal drive (art as activity) and convey a message, mood, or symbolism for the viewer to interpret (art as experience). Having participated in a few happenings myself, helped organize festivals and conferences, I like the notion of conceptual art, even as in the end then everything becomes art.

To bring an idea to expression, from some impulse or association to the level where there is an actual event with actual participants, even if this happens in cyberspace, is a creative process, challenging and transformative. In that sense new art forms emerge, like computer games. Both my sons are involved in that discipline and I can see the creative challenge (and the business acumen necessary) that drives them. Their work comes very close to creating effective rituals, they use visuals, sounds, myths,

imagination and even deception and sleight of hand scoring techniques, in fantasy worlds that have mythical proportions (they don't do kill-games). I even believe, that one day there will be games that will use refined psychological techniques and age-old initiation procedures to help gamers grow toward higher consciousness. The computer game *Journey to the Wild Divine* (2001 by Kurt R. Smith and Corwin Bell) with biofeedback technology points in this direction, but regrettably few other games in this direction have surfaced.

Creating art as a ritual

Is painting, sculpting, composing art in itself a ritual process? For many it is, they follow some internal or external ritual procedure, concentration or meditation exercise and often describe this as opening up to another dimension. The creation process of art is experienced as connecting to senses beyond the normal ones, but then the input or feelings are translated into an expression in normal dimensions, form, sound, images, words. This process is similar to what I see as the core of ritual, going to a deeper layer of the psyche, where a contact is made with the extradimensional. Of course this is often an internal kind of ritual, but there are more expressive ways of creating art. Action painting is a way to combine conceptual art and a happening actually producing art objects and can be interpreted or experienced as a ritual act.

Intellectual and cultural property

It seems like a non item, but there are rights involved in rituals. Intellectual property rights in the legal sense, but cultural heritage property right as well, and ignoring these is not only unfair, but could cause serious problems. Many indigenous groups now consider their ritual (including the songs and other elements of the ritual matrix) as exclusive property and protect against copycat use. They do this for material reasons, but also to prevent improper use and protect the sacredness of their tradition. Rituals like the North-American Indian "Sundance" ceremony are considered property of the tribes and normally closed to outsiders.

The issue here is that these traditions have not only a right to own their rituals based on intellectual property laws, but there is a moral right. Also these rituals often are not without risk, only well prepared people should participate. The commercial exploitation of the Ayahuasca rituals of the Amazon is a case in point, a whole business developed, luring many to visit the region for participation in such a ritual. It has become a tourist trap of sorts, not all ayahuasceros are really qualified and serious accidents have happened.

Maker, performer

Another issue, related to the question of authorship, concerns the relationship between the original maker, the author of a ritual, the performer or priest, the participants and the ritual itself.

In the world of literature there has been a long lasting debate about who and what an author is, how much separation there should be or could be between work and author, writer, scriptor. The traditional practice of criticizing texts was to connect and include the intentions and biographical context of an author to the interpretation of a text.

In his 1968 essay “The Death of the Author” the French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes argued that writing and creator are unrelated, author and work should be separate, the work stands by itself. “To give a text an Author” and assign a single, corresponding interpretation to it “is to impose a limit on that text.”

Barthes points out that any work is a complex layering of convictions, a “text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations,” drawn from “innumerable centers of culture,” rather than from one, individual experience of what he called a scriptor.

French philosopher, and anthropologist Michel Foucault in a famous 1989 lecture on “What is an Author?” said:

“The Author is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes and chooses: (...) The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.”

He describes the process of writing and the notion of “author” from the inside, as individualization, a fixing of a particular interpretation amidst a sea of other meanings. Both are at odds with the authority of an author, of literature as a political tool, as an instrument of power. Of course religious text have always served political (and personal) goals, but the criticism of people like Camille Paglia pointed at the fact that the French post-structuralists themselves used their work as a political tool. She argued maker and work always have a relationship.

Of course one could remark as Plato did that any work is always a mimesis, a copy of what is perceived in the world of ideals and truth and as such never an invention, but always a discovery. I kind of side with Plato, as I have always felt that my own writing and especially poetry wasn’t mine, wasn’t coming from a rational mind but rather from the otherworld, where all knowledge and truth resides, and indeed received as divine madness.

In the context of ritual, many of the old traditions claim that the original was bestowed upon some wise ancestors, maybe written down much later. The

Hindu Vedas are claimed to originate with some rishis long ago, who ‘received’ them in some way. They are considered sruti (“what is heard”), orally transmitted and only written down roughly in 1500–500 BCE. This means there are no copyright issues, but a lot of translation and interpretation differences, the same as with the Bible and many other religious texts.

Copy, adapt, change

In performing a ritual the original intention of whomever designed (or received) it has to be honored, and in many traditions one sticks meticulously to whatever was written or orally transmitted, as one lost the understanding of why things, movements, exclamations, etc. were there. Repeating a previously existing ritual and thus conforming to its morphogenetic field has value too. Repetition has practical advantages, one can let go of the form and concentrate on the content, the intention, the mood, without having to consult the manual or textbook all the time.

The performer, priest or officiator can try to stick to the form, but it cannot be denied there is the aspect of performance, the ability to represent the perceived or true meaning of a ritual. Some people can lead a congregation into the heavens, even without much personal touch or deviation from the liturgy, just because of their personality, their aura and energy. Others try to make the best of it, but perform poorly. The standard approach is to specify as much as possible, limit deviations, in order to achieve that even a mediocre performer still can get the message across.

New and old rituals, ritual innovation

There is the common notion, that rituals have to follow the traditional format, fixed ritual prescripts to be effective and diversions or new rituals are therefore less legitimate (or seen as heretical). This idea of perpetual continuity is fairly strong and is seen by many as essential, doing what our forefathers and ancestors did connects us with them, honors history and the tradition. Especially when there is only an oral tradition and the ritual is also the carrier of the common memory, the container of the cultural values and paradigm, sticking to the tradition makes sense. Another reason for following very precisely the layout, texts, songs and liturgy passed on from the past is that the understanding of the original ritual matrix got lost and sticking to what is remembered or written down is the only way to hope for the same (often idealized) efficacy as in the past. In Vedic rituals, where for instance the nature of the magical potion Soma is lost, this seems to be the case. Then there is the argument, Sheldrake points at this, that repetition builds and increases the morphogenetic field.

I believe there is another reason to use a format, that has become a routine in the minds of the participants, as this allows to let go of the cognitive and concentrate on the feelings, the atmosphere, the experience. This will be less self-conscious, but allows to reach deeper levels and connect to the inner me. In other words, the more thinking, the less being.

There is, however, also a school that believes we should make our own rituals, that newness and invention are allowed and give fresh energy and focus, even in the context of an existing tradition. All traditions must have started somewhere, so why not innovate. The Christian rituals heavily borrowed from earlier traditions but there must have been an element of newness, freshness that obviously appealed to many in the early days. If a religion or practice wants to grow and adapt to new circumstances it has to allow for change, immutable rituals tend to become empty, repeating a petrified past without alive quality. New forms, new ritual matrices can then help to revive the tradition. This thinking is quite common in the neopagan, neodruidic and various modern craft movements, people like Crowley and G. Gardner have inspired many to design rituals.

In these more modern mystery traditions creating rituals is a major part of the whole thing, the new ritualists develop, within some framework, their own interpretations and forms of ritual. This has also to do with the focus of many of the adherents and initiates of these groups, they look for personal growth and spiritual development in the psychological sense and enjoy the social, the being together and then new rituals are a great way to cooperate and exchange. The danger is that the set and setting become more important than the magical efficacy, the participant feel good and the group bonding is fine, but the magical content is lost in the energy of creating and performing the new form.

So for rituals, both sticking to the tradition and inventing new forms make sense, but from a different perspective. It is interesting to see how online rituals, definitely one of the new trends, will develop. There one can both borrow from existing prescripts and introduce whole new formats, only time will tell what works best.

9 Mysticism and ritual

The mystical experience I had in the summer of 1989 was one of the most significant of a series of awakening calls and insights that year. After traveling extensively through the USA, also going to Hawaii in search of the inner fire and experiencing the Pale volcano from close-by, I did a course at the Esalen Institute (Big Sur, Ca).

After a week of Zen meditation with Eli Jaxon-Bear and GangaJi I actually became quite fed up with these endless sittings. Obviously the process of becoming aware of who I was and maybe wasn't had some effect was going on. Eli was a bit of an Advaita chap, who kind of stressed that the I wasn't the self and that we were covered in what we believed is the self but actually is an illusion, similar to my notion of mask etc.

Also brother David Steindl-Rast was there, an inspirational and very real man, with whom I had some deep conversations. So one day I realized it was time for less meditation and more action and kind of decided on a magical and somewhat ritual act. I went out to climb a somewhat isolated rock in the ocean, took a stone that came from the canyon there and a chisel. I started to work on my projections, chipping off pieces of the stone for everybody I disliked or hated. Kind of letting go of my illusions, as they were part of me, but also preventing me from feeling my deeper self. Doing this quite concentrated but also on a beautiful place with the Pacific at my feet, the sounds and sights were soothing and fantastic, I went into a kind of mystical state.

Not being a good visualizer normally, I got some kind of image coming to me. I saw my life unfold in all its perfection, I became the experience, lost the experiencer, in short I went through a unitive experience. This was very moving and intense, I looked up at the sky, there was the sun but also the moon, everything had meaning. The two crabs I passed climbing down were for me clear signals about two occurrences of cancer in my life; I saw my house; this was prophetic and mystical. It took me weeks to digest, with ups and downs. Everything I believed in changed, was embraced and had to be given up for another belief, and that had to go too. The mystical experience did repeat itself alter, although less intense and reinforced this total change in my belief system. Not an easy process going from a very rational physics education and a rather square family man to this spiritual and mystical being; from a master of my life to someone who accepted the universe and whatever guided it, to guide me.

Although I thought this was a very private experience I found out when I met GangaJi in Amsterdam in March 2008 (and never met her in between)

that she remembered me well, for I was the guy on the rock, It turned out the whole Zen-group kind of watched me sitting there without me knowing. She told me it was an unforgettable sight, kind of confirming what I felt there. Her reaction was a confirmation after nineteen years that what I experienced there was real, as real as mystical experiences can be. It might be that GangaJi influences played a role, she is considered by many to be an enlightened soul, but at the time of the incident she merely was Eli's wife.

Oneness

So back to ritual. One of the functions, goals or processes of ritual is to achieve mystical oneness with the divine, for an individual or the community. The other, the magical goal is to affect reality, the future, and this includes purposes like healing. This can happen via trance-states and sometimes exuberant dancing, possession states, breathing and emotional explosions, but also at a very quiet, individual level. The mystical near-death experiences are obviously not of the ritual kind, neither are the spontaneous mystical occurrences we sometimes have in nature. The occurrence of such states is mostly seen as a gift, grace bestowed upon us.

Many people report that participating in rituals and ceremonies has elevated them into a higher state of consciousness and has given them sometimes extraordinary experiences, including the feeling of bliss usually associated with mystical experiences. Often they get in touch with what they perceive as 'ultimate' or deeper layers of reality, whether in their inner or outer world. It is good to dive a little bit deeper into mysticism, as rituals are definitely one way to prepare oneself for mystical experiences.

Mystical or magical

There is a fundamental difference between the magical and the mystical. The magical is about acting, influencing reality via the otherworld. The mystical is receiving, opening up to what is out there. This distinction is not usually very clear, but for me it is a starting point in understanding the ritual state. One could say the mystical is the feminine, the passive receiving and sensing part of being in the center of the inner me, in the I dimension that gives access to the extradimensional. The magical, where we aim at changing something, influencing the outcome of some process, is a male thing. It is an active state, using the actuator part of the primes that gives us access to the otherworld. Both mystical and magical are usually present in a ritual context and when I talk about the ritual state, both are part of it.

This distinction is an important one, for although in many rituals the focus is on the mystical the magical state is always there too. So when in some religious rituals the general purpose is to reach a mystical state, some partici-

pants do pick up a bit of the magical and can influence not only the ritual person but other participants as well. This is why I am not in favor of for instance the psychedelic rituals with ayahuasca or iboga, where the magical aspect is kind of ignored. The substance brings both mystical and magical energy and when the ritual leaders are not aware of this, it can become dangerous. I noted that very few of the “Western” ayahuasceros or ritual leaders have any notion about the magical aspects. The danger that voluntary or involuntary sorcery, projection, possession or spells happen is always there. Healing, often a stated purpose of such events, is magical and needs to be contained, by what is called ‘holding space’.

There is another kind of mystical experience: the possession state that can be described as unconscious channeling. Here the person being possessed or acting as a channel often is unconscious of what happens and takes on the personality of an deity, a discarnate being or a deceased one. Messages are picked up, sometimes coming through as automatic writing, as words or hymns or otherwise conveyed to bystanders. Some people channel in a half conscious state, some just relinquish their awareness to the entity of force. Some artists use such a mystical state to produce their art.

Different or the same: further classification

I have to admit that I have reached mystical (and magical) states not only in quiet retreats or beautiful nature, but in dancing around a fire or participating in all kinds of rituals in sometimes a very active way and yes, those include what we could call tantric rituals. Some experiences were very different from the individual, isolated vision quests and journeys, some were very cerebral, others very bodily. Some were of the mystical union kind described by people like Meister Eckhart and the Christian mystics, some were more cognitive states of understanding, some were very sensual, feeling a very deep connection with the earth, the group or a partner. They were however all about being in that reality beyond the material, that dimension out there or in here where magic is the rule, myth and archetypes are commonplace and the ultimate truth is or feels manifested in such wondrous ways. And it is in the variation of conscious states, of different wander-modes that I started to see the different kinds. I will try to give some rational kind of classification of these various mystical states.

To classify these different states and expand beyond my own limited experiences I again use the chakra model. Other models are equally good, but I used the seven chakra model before to illustrate the development of ritual and religion and here it seems like a good model to distinguish between the mystic states. I think there is a mystical state for each chakra (and a magical one too). Each of our energy modes has a state that allows access to the otherworld, but these states are different.

The mystical union state (Unio Mystica) is clearly the one related to the heart and as such the only one acceptable to the Catholic Church and therefore equated with mysticism in the West. Then there is the third eye state (sixth chakra) where one can see relationships, understand complex situations and this could be called lucidity. It is what many people experience in LSD-trips: they 'know' things, have insights and although much of this is forgotten after the re-entry, some is retained.

In this way or in (lucid) dreaming sometimes one can reach unusual levels of (cognitive) lucidity. Other rimes prophetic or oracle-like understandings of truth, future or past like as in cosmogonic visions. I think that many inventions and discoveries are obtained from and in this state, from those moments of clarity and access to a wider knowledge or wisdom.

Then there is what could be called the tantric state, when sex brings a spiritual connection and ecstatic experience.

The fifth (throat) chakra mystical state is related to action and (artistic) creation, automatic writing and sometimes comes out as "speaking in tongues", glossolalia.

Shamans, I suppose, may more easily get into a first chakra state, connected to earth and nature.

The third chakra mystic state has to do with power and truth. It therefore could be a state in which one perceives the Divine omnipotence. The seventh chakra mystic experiences are a bit harder to pinpoint. Maybe genuine spiritual and utterly incomprehensible beatific experience can be ascribed to the seventh chakra.

So there are mystical states of altered consciousness different from union, experienced in trance or ecstasy and often achieved through ritual. I think many of these 'other' states are indeed comparable or similar to what is traditionally seen as mystical. Is shamanic trance less 'connected', less mysterious than what Meister Eckhart experienced?

The experience arrives in a different way, but is the 'plane' or 'level' of the experience or the reality visited so different? It makes sense to compare trance, the intuitive flash, channelling and ecstasy, drug induced oneness, samadhi, satori, the states some reach in their vision quest and other 'journeys' and label them in general 'altered state of consciousness' but accept they are either magical or mystical and can be classified in some model like I do with the chakras.

This is a somewhat systematic approach, more related to where the mystical energy is focused and what the experience brings.

Ritual to reach the otherworld; a staircase to heaven

At first sight, the image of people dancing around a fire has little to do with mysticism and yet in such settings they do sometimes enter into another state of consciousness that I consider mystical. Usually mysticism is seen as an individual experience, some saint or holy man connecting to the All or One in quiet isolation, somewhere on a mountain or in a cloistered monastery. According to that traditional view, not even in the middle of his prayer or devotional practice, but when he is or she is sleeping, resting. Then the mystical rapture happens, an extraordinary experience that comes unexpected, hoped for, but always like grace, as a gift from the divine plane. I see ritual as one of the stepping stones toward the mystical state, poetically speaking as a staircase to heaven. It is not the only way to get there, mystical experiences happen for other reasons, accidental or by volition, but the ritual way is a common way. For me rituals are part and parcel of the 'normal' mystical and the magical experience, and as we see that even the great saints and mystics have their little procedure (or in some cases extensive preparation, fasting, cleansing, meditation) in order to attain those higher (altered) states, that is not too bold a proposition.

And I agree, having had quite spontaneous mystical experiences that just happened or were triggered by some emotional state or exceptional meeting. But I also experienced ones induced by fairly strict Zen meditation or by a good bit of 'journeying', wandering around in the psychedelic otherworlds of the LSD-25, DMT, Ketamine, Ayahuasca, Psilocybin, Alcohol and numerous other entheogens, usually in a ritual context though. There are gradual differences, and 'looking over the hill into the promised land' is an apt description of the psychedelic trip but in general the experiences have a common pattern, one reaches inner worlds of beauty and intensity beyond description, where love, truth and unity melt into a state of bliss and awareness never suspected.

Plotinus: Henosis

Now there are many writers with great insights in mysticism, but I like to start with Plotinus (ca. 204/5–270 CE). He was one of the major idealists and is considered as the founder of neoplatonism, but his ideas also offer a bridge between East and West (the Greek/Egyptian) philosophy. He recognized three principles: the One, the Intellect, and the Soul.

I like Plotinus, because he points at a reality behind the senses and acknowledges that the all, the transcendent "One" beyond being and non-being is also in yourself. According to Eustochius, Plotinus' final words were: "Strive to give back the Divine in yourselves to the Divine in the All."

His “One” is prior to all existents and being, identified with the concept of ‘Good’ and the principle of ‘Beauty’. Plotinus compares the One to “light”, the Divine Nous (first will toward Good) to the “Sun”, and lastly the Soul to the “Moon” whose light is merely a “derivative conglomeration of light from the ‘Sun’”.

Now his notion about the One is very much to that what Shankarya or Adi Shankara (Advaita Vedanta) came up with some 550 years later. Describing the “One” is not just an intellectual conception but something that can be experienced beyond all multiplicity in an ecstatic union. Plotinus writes, “We ought not even to say that he will see, but he will be that which he sees, if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish between seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one.”

This experience of mystical “oneness”, in those days called ‘henosis’ is what makes Plotinus so interesting, he obviously was a mystic and reached some level of realization through devotional practice. To get there, closest to the Monad, one must engage in divine work (theurgy) and here he points at the Egyptian traditions, but also other traditions, he traveled to the East (at least to Persia). This divine work means a virtuous life, but also going through rituals intended to unite with the Monad (the One). These rituals mimic the ordering of the chaos of the Universe into the material world or cosmos. His approach was ascetic, he rejected matter as an illusion (non-existent) and was thus a true idealist.

All of “creation” emanates from the One in succeeding stages of lesser and lesser perfection. The first emanation from the unmoved Divine Mind is the nous (logos, reason) and then follows the World Soul, identifying the lower aspect of Soul with nature. From the world soul proceeds individual human souls, and finally, matter as the least perfected level of the cosmos, but still divinely caused.

The culmination of Henosis is deification, becoming like a God in crafting one’s own life as a magnum opus, understanding the relation between the macro and microcosmic in the Hermetic (Toth) sense. He talks about reaching a state of absolute simplicity, dissolving the nous, becoming a tabula rasa or blank slate. Henosis for Plotinus was reversing of the ontological process of consciousness via meditation toward no thought (Nous-consciousness) and no division at the point of unity, where the individual becomes pure energy and potential. This resembles as what I describe as letting go of the ego, reaching for the center of the inner me, the divine spark of the I.

Nous as being, this being and perception (intellect) manifest what is called soul (World Soul), stepping from eternity into time. This clearly point at the idea that consciousness comes before time and time is a step toward manifestation.

“For there is for this universe no other place than the soul or mind” (neque est alter hujus universi locus quam anima), indeed the ideality of time is expressed in the words: ‘We should not accept time outside the soul or mind’ (oportet autem nequaquam extra animam tempus accipere).”

Other names for mystical experience

There are many words and indications for the mystical, like samadhi or satori. In Eastern Orthodox theology it is called Theosis, the process of coming into union with God.

Fanaa is the Sufi term for “dissolution” or “annihilation” (of the self, the ego), while remaining physically alive. Persons in this state obtain awareness of the intrinsic unity (Tawhid) between Allah and all that exists, including the individual’s mind.

In Indian religions moksha (“liberation”) or mukti (“release”) means the liberation from samsara, the cycle of death and rebirth.

Mysticism 2.0

Why not a mystical experience for everybody? In the Greek culture this was achieved (at least for the elite) by way of the mysteries (Eleusinian, Dionysian), there are many rites in the various religions and cultures aiming at such an experience. It is part of the esoteric Jewish tradition to believe that everybody, sometime in their life, be it at the moment of dying, has an opportunity to reach the divine and to connect to God. And many, many people confess to having had, at any time, such a meeting with the deep unity, the ultimate and sometimes horrifying truth or the incomprehensible beauty. This happens under different circumstances, often being in nature, often after some difficult moments, as part of an ecstatic or trance experience, and the many stories about OBE (out of body) experiences sound fairly mystical too.

There are quite a few respectable scientists who believe(d) that the psychedelic experience has at least mystical aspects, among them Stan Krippner, Stanislav Grof, Aldous Huxley, and Huston Smith. Professor in psychiatry Charles Grob did scientific research into the effect of psychedelic substances (ecstasy, psilocybin, ayahuasca) to help curb anxiety in terminal patients, but reported a high incidence of mystical experiences. He told me that, based upon the suggestions of Ram Dass (Richard Alpert) he added a ritual setting to the treatment to create a setting where this mystical state was facilitated. He noticed that patients that did achieve such a state benefited more and were less anxious and worried about their impending death.

A single and even fairly low dose of a psychedelic would bring transformation and acceptance for most of the patient in his experiments.

Knowledge alone, lacking the spark of immediacy, starves the human being of the substance of reality that is essential to life'

in "The vision of Hume", David Appelbaum, 1996.

There are many descriptions of mysticism and extensive literature, with Evelyn Underhill, William James and Aldous Huxley as keystones in a field that is so full with definitions, theories and 'authorities' that it is hard to see the trees for the forest.

There are, in short, as many mystical truths as there are mystics, it seems that nearly everyone coming down from these mystic heights (or highs) has something to share, be it a poem, a painting or sketch or a full blown revelation like the Prophet Mohammed received from the Archangel Gabriel.

In that forest one has to cling to one's own tree, so to speak. So one has to go with one's own understanding and even better, one's own experience with mystical journeys, revelations and altered states.

Most mystical literature is a ex-post description of a mystical experience, lacking the immediacy of what most deem indescribable, beyond words. That doesn't mean, that those renderings aren't among the most introspective, poetic, artistic and moving literature, paintings etc. we have.

Psychedelic experiences, in many ways related to mystical experiences, have yielded more direct testimony of these states, but often what is written down or recorded doesn't make much sense, consciousness at that level is not very logical or rational.

So in analyzing mysticism, we have to rely on ex-post personal accounts, personal interpretations and personal theories and classifications, on ideas rather than on facts. Then what is true, what is projection, how to discern between the ultimate truth that in my mind is there at some level, and the personal coloring and projections on top of that. They come in a great many shades, those colorings, from the outright religious to the jungle overtones in South-American shamanistic renderings, and we could easily classify the numerous stories of alien abduction as a kind of mystic experience and what about those channeling all kinds of entities. Without taking the whole of ESP and supernatural occurrences into the fold, it is clear that we have to be careful in accepting the various 'truths' as such. Not only are they sometimes conflicting and tinted by the backgrounds, education, tradition and culture of the 'mystics', on top of that comes a whole load of personality issues and projections. It takes a deep understanding of the psychological issues and upbringing of a person to kind of filter the truth out. With the additional problem, that the mystic in most cases is not up to any criticism,

doubt or evaluation, they usually come back or down ‘fully loaded’ with what they see as nothing less the ultimate truth.

Transformation

Both in magical and mystical states transformation can happen, the psychological (mindset) is certainly addressed.

It can be a personal, psychological transformation, one just sees aspects of oneself thus far not noticed, or recognizes certain reaction patterns and their traumatic origins. It can also be like a given insight, something more related to the notion of a sacrament, a grace that is bestowed, as coming from an external source, but with the same transformational effect.

Bliss and truth

The mystical experience, even if we accept we can only know it by description or by remembering and thus filtered by the mind, is characterized by passing beyond the borders of the mundane, by going beyond the separation. That usually comes with two ‘gifts’; one the state of bliss or total happiness and peace, the other the feeling of having had an extraordinary important experience, often with insights that are felt to be so deep and profound, that they need to be ‘carried back’ into the world. About happiness, that is hard to qualify, as it is very individual. (See also Appendix V)

Is happiness a matter of serotonin levels, a state we can achieve by taking the right pill? Is it a function of our psychological state, our emotional maturity, our understanding of the world in general, is my happiness your happiness? We know, from the research into brainwaves and EEG’s and the electrical activity of our cortex, that meditative states generate recognizable patterns of alpha-waves. There are numerous indicators of being in a peaceful, relaxed state. But again, is that happiness, is that bliss or do we have to rely on the ex-post descriptions of that state?

Can we measure, with rational, scientific means, the level of happiness, bliss, the depth of the mystical state, the spiritual resonance? Maybe the neurobiologist, cognitive scientist, the brain-researchers or hormone-chemist can come up with some yardstick, some chemical acid-tests, specific voltage levels or frequency patterns that would “prove” the mystical state or allow to measure how “deep” this is. One tries to point at brain coherence (left-right) and other synchronization patterns, but I doubt that many of the self-anointed holy of this world would accept such a test, what if they flunked?

Other classifications of mysticism

In general, there is a grouping in nature-related versus religious-related mystical experiences. In older times the nature-related ones were suspicious, one was easily branded as a heretic or pantheist, with grave consequences, being excommunicated not being the worst. This happened or nearly happened to many mystics, Meister Eckhart was one of them, this inspiring medieval mystic got into trouble, confessing he saw God in all, in the essence of all things. Giordano Bruno (and how many went unnoticed) even paid with his life for his unorthodox notions. As sometimes mysticism involved or bordered on sensual experiences, hallucinations this was a serious problem, was the person a saint or a witch possessed by the devil?

Here the Church usually made choices of a political nature, if a certain “holy” person was recognized by the public as being holy, a miraculous healer and careful to stay within the canonical and dogmatic borders, he would be called accepted as a pious person and maybe become a saint afterwards. Otherwise imprisonment or worse was the (Inquisitional) deal.

Sometimes it was a matter of choosing the right words, women with sexual visions in a convent could describe this as a spiritual event, the consummation of their marriage to Christ.

No separation, being one with all, experiencing the connection with all and the All or God, crossing the border between the ‘worlds’, there lies the essence of the mystical experience. In the extensive literature about mysticism there are a lot of subjective descriptions of whatever that entails, what that no separation means. In most cases it is hard to classify or distinguish between the aspects of that experience, as they kind of mingle and flow into each other.

Zaehner, according to A. Bär, classifies mystical experiences in three groups:

- . Pantheistic, the oneness experience, a feeling that all is one, God in everything, love as the binding force
- . Monistic, feeling that the human soul is identical with the Godhead, one is God, Atman is Brahman, God is inside
- . Theistic, the connection with a transcendent Godhead, far above us and different from man, but connected to by the eternal soul.

In most descriptions, at best a reminiscence of the experience and almost all mystics emphasize that the experience itself is beyond words, all these three forms figure. However, as some traditions have a theological problem with the idea that God is in everything or humans claiming to be God, we see that many descriptions and published revelations are limited to the the-

istic. This feels like a logical result of censoring mysticism, after all those transgressing from the accepted had a fair chance of burning at the stakes.

The discussion about what was to be considered a more holy or deeper mystical experience, whether it was better to bring back clear notions or to have grand visions, were questions the Church fathers contemplated at length. That each mystic or inspired individual would see or experience what was in line with their focus, intent and energy patterns in body and mind obviously didn't matter so much.

However, I think that apart from the above Zaehner classification, which for me is only about the source the mystic connects with and mostly relates to the Gnostic knowledge of the heart, there is a classification of the mystical in another way as I indicated earlier in this chapter.

The connection between the worlds

Connecting is a word that comes up a lot in the context of rituals and mysticism. Connection between the worlds, between inner and outer, connection with the spirit, the higher self, other dimensions, the vocabulary is vast and only loosely defined. There are quite a few classifications of 'worlds' or dimensions around. The scientist, especially the mathematician, can easily work with many dimensions, but in the physical world we have the three spatial dimensions and time. When we talk about dimensions in reality, one can speak of heavens, in some religions there are seven, some traditions see an upper- and an underworld, some distinguish between the tangible, the world of ideas and the world of spirit, and there is of course also the notion that there is only one underlying reality, that of consciousness and the rest is a dream, maya, an illusion. Then there is the distinction between the outer world and the inner world, with quite a few concepts around as how that inner world is layered, with subconscious, collective subconscious, unconscious etc.

Whatever the case, there is the general idea that ritual connects, that it ties in with essence of religion as re-ligare, to link again. This assumes that we can connect, but this is nearly universally accepted. Ritual, magic or religion would be an utter senseless concept if we couldn't.

There is the philosophical school of duality, with God and the spirit (in the sense of consciousness) operating outside the material world. In Cartesian wording, there is a split between mind and matter. But if God and spirit operate outside the material world and have no effect on it, then what do we care, perhaps we can safely ignore them altogether and why perform rituals at all, except as some kind of auto-hypnotic therapy.

On the other hand, if God/Spirit/Consciousness does affect and interact with the material world, maybe even 'is' the underlying matrix, then there must be a way to interact. Why not define ritual as precisely that, as a way to interact with the underlying matrix, the implicate order, heavens, or whatever form (projection/illusion) we choose?

Maybe it is good to mention here, that gods, goddesses, angels, elementals and such might have a 'real' existence or at least represent 'real' energies, but that many believe they are only the creation of the (human) consciousness which creates and sustains them. Either way, in ritual we consider them to be 'there'. It is the conjunction of the symbol and the person that will bring forth the change in consciousness.

Mysticism as a material effect

Consciousness is, for incarnate humans, related to what happens in our brain as modern brain-research has often has demonstrated by showing the particular brain patterns of electrical/chemical activities in the brain generated in various states of consciousness. However, the conclusion that therefore consciousness resides in the brain, that the 'meat' computer in our head is solely responsible for what we are, do, experience, think, as materialists state, is quite controversial. Seeing humans as machines, as Julien de La Mettrie and more recently Marvin Minsky and Daniel Dennett do, accepting mere matter to account for human mentality, reduces mind to matter. Their rational materialism, with consciousness as an emergent quality of matter, doesn't go well with the notion, that consciousness is at the root of all existence, not emergent but always there.

People like Ray Kurzweil, who describes himself as a patternist, have a notion or rather dream of "spiritual machines" capable of consciousness, but this, according to their critics like Prof. William Dembski:

"reduces the richness of the real world and spirituality to computational absurdity".

Mind over matter, as the magically inclined believe, or mind reduced to matter, as materialist do, that is the question. According to Ray Kurzweil, evolution is on a clear track and will soon include the merger of biological and non-biological intelligence, downloading the brain and lead to immortal software-based humans. For me, Kurzweil himself is a magician, on a Faustian path to recreate a Golem. His work, however, serves an important goal, showing that we have to seriously tackle ethical questions about computers, nanotechnology, genetic engineering and such.

10 Set, setting, and magical correspondences

A three-worlds approach to describing, rating, and staging ritual

Things are complex and talking about ritual and magic they become very complex. In order to illustrate my views I have to use simplified models, like the three world graph and indicate them with references that make sense. The indications set- setting and magic serve this purpose.

Looking at ritual and magic one has to find a scheme that bridges the theological, the philosophical, the social and the psychological together, in a way that allows examination of the situation in a holistic approach and yet allows reductionist analysis.

Seeing ritual as both inner and outer reality “work” I added magical correspondences (or “links”) to the set and setting formula, and in way this is the same as adding the magical effect to the psychological and social effects of ritual that science already accepts.

This obviously points at a three worlds (or spheres) view of the wider reality, being the inner world (of our psyche), the outer world of physical reality and the magical world, the extradimensional, and together they form the metadimensional.

These three worlds can be depicted as the three points of a triangle, each connected to the other two.



Urban tribes develop their own rituals, like this group from the Ruigoord community near Amsterdam

Three realms

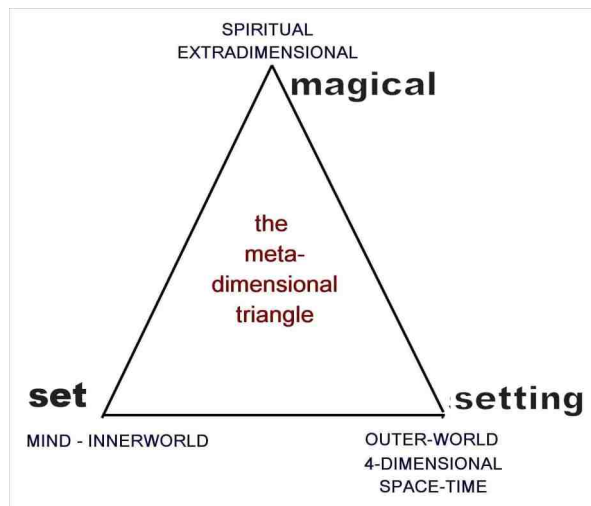
I use a three world model, not because it is the best one (I imagine far more complex models would be more accurate), but because this gives me a workable framework. The inner world, the outer world and the unseen, spiritual world are fairly easy concepts, if I would differentiate and separate things like the extradimensional into Plato’s world of ideals and a divine

realm things get complicated and in my discourse I don't need this. In fact I gladly leave such distinctions to others, questions like whether a ritual addresses atypical Gods, demons or basic principles is not what matters. Rituals work (magically) because there is a connection with the extra-dimensional, let that be enough.

Set, setting, and magic (correspondences) are easy indicators for the three realms or three worlds or three axes I use in my model. This of course has a bit of hippie taste to it, but then the psychedelic experiences have given me some real insight in what rituals are and do, without the limits of daily reality. Moreover, the great minds of the psychedelic movement have influenced me deeply, people like Albert Hofmann, Alexander Shulgin, Terence McKenna, Timothy Leary, and many others have helped me, guided me, and mostly tolerated me; allowed me, as Tim cried out so often, to "Think for Yourself". I also have noticed, off and on the record in the many interviews I did with entrepreneurs, spiritual teachers, artists and reality hackers, how the psychedelic experience was a turning point in their lives.

I have used the set, setting, and magic approach to look into rituals and what they mean and do, irreverently extending the guidelines Timothy Leary posed for tripping, I included the magical dimension, but appreciate his work in the psychological and social directions. He did not only shout one-liners on the stage, but has done serious work trying to understand how the mind and the world interact. He

always amazed me by how strikingly he choose words to describe complex situations or interrelations.



Using this model is not unique, but a practical choice and it helps me to bridge the gap that exists in the literature and thinking about ritual.

Looking at what has been written about rituals and their effect it is obvious that both the more or less intangible innerworld of a person, and the world around are involved, but what about the intangible out there. Usually the scholarly studies of ritual ignore the magical otherworld, they do look at what happens physically, at the psychological for the personal and the social for the interactions with each other and the environment. This limitation, as we can see in the work of Frazer has often led to limited descriptions of particulars and excessive details. The interaction with the third realm, the spiritual or otherworldly, is usually ignored or described as superstitious and non-effective. Interesting for anthropologists maybe, but hardly worth a scientific look, even in recent studies.

In the chapter about water, and how rituals are used to exploit surplus or shortage I mention the work of Lisa J. Lucero concerning the Maya culture and its dependency on water. She talks in great detail and with astonishing insight about how the setting (the water situation in Yucatan) was the mayor cultural factor, but hardly looks into the efficacy of the large scale rituals in that culture.

From the other side

There is of course another approach, outside of science and academia. The (non-scientific) practicing magicians or would-be magicians look at thing from the other side of the rational fence. They are focused more on what worked, what they felt and suspected, on their experiments and successes, also in their published works. Aleister Crowley being the great example, they mostly write or talk about the otherworld and how to address and influence it by acts, utterances and thought processes this side of reality. They did look at the three worlds but their insights are not considered as covering real knowledge.

Of course a lot has been carved, written or otherwise put down in books, scrolls, symbols and such. One can look at all the various laws and rules set forth by the various authors, copy what has been written in grimoires and on the many websites dealing with magic, magick, craft and witchcraft, but it is hard to find a systematical or practical approach for describing, staging, assessing, or validating rituals that isn't colored by the tradition involved.

This is understandable, being part of a ritual or magical (religious) tradition one has to preserve the status-quo and stay within the confines of the tradition. Rating or comparing rituals could lessen the strength of belief in one's own. Except for connecting to a real or constructed past as in much exegesis serious interest in what ritual really achieves is easily seen as heretic. The system over time petrifies and becomes protective and closed. Not from the start, in the tradition of the Church, obviously a great ritual and magical tra-

dition, we see some interesting diversions and influences from other religions in the early days. Later on the theology that dealt with the otherworld had to stick to the dogmatic outline of the papal guidelines, a pattern we see in many religions and schools of thought.

Wisdom is not knowing

*How can it be found in the world
How can it not be found in the world
How can it be given
How can it be received
as it is
Knowing wants to be free
a connection in the soul
no separation
no knowers, no known
just stillness
not of the mind
but of the heart of hearts
the stone one,
inscribed by the Gods we meet in others
For wisdom is not knowing
not knowing is love
feeling the truth
I am only different
as I have not yet learnt
to be the same*

LS

Mannheim '94

11 Seeking the truth, the real thing

We go to church or attend spiritual gatherings not only to feel good, be in a nice environment with like-minded people and maybe be blessed by some magical outcome of our prayers, but we also seek the truth. We want to hear, but even better experience that what is connected to the ultimate reality, the deep truth. Not the truth from our textbooks, but a truth that touches us. This we expect from the texts, the songs, the preaching and sermons, the charisma and the behavior of the priests or pastor. We are willing to look beyond their human limitations in the hope to perceive some of the eternal truths of their and our faith. Attending or participating in a ritual nearly always has this aspect, it hinges on our quest for the truth. It can be clothed in beauty, as beauty and truth are close relatives, if not the same at the deepest level. For some truth is power, for others truth is love, the divine combines all and is all. It can also be experienced in *communitas* or effervescence, as Turner or Durkheim called it, the feeling of oneness and togetherness that makes us feel good and ‘real’. For some the mystical state, surrendering to what is and will be, means entering the realm of ultimate truth.

Whatever it is, we hope to find it in a ritual, and expect whatever happens there to be true, real and not a fake performance.

Truth and true

There are many ideas about truth, but in the context of a ritual we are not considering rational truth, something that can be proven or is an objective fact. In ritual truth is something we feel, something that makes us feel good, makes our spine shiver and is like an attractor to enter the state of connectedness, with others, with our selves and with the otherworld.



Truth (1896). Olin Warner (completed by Herbert Adams). Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building

Truth in this sense has to do with ideas and ideals, things of a higher order than the mere facts. In religion, ritual and other contact with the otherworld beliefs become very subjective, one believes in the power of this or that deity, in that Jesus or the prophet Mohammed reveal us eternal and not worldly truths. We then believe there is a wider reality out there, where truths exist of a higher order. Being true to this is a virtue, something that has value and in extreme cases is worth fighting or even dying for. Being righteous, as in living this truth, makes one belong to whatever the religion is, not being an infidel.

Truth in a ritual is no longer a logical or factual relationship, something that can be falsified by reason, and even the rational morality like in Kant's categorical imperative gives way to a higher level of ethics and ideals. The validity of these higher truths can not be proven, but has to be believed and accepted.

There is, however, something deep in us, that knows or feels these truths. This is not only a cognitive process, something in us resonates with truth. We do feel if something is true, the hairs on our hands raise, there is some energy that makes us literally feel the truth. Truth resonates, one can have a physical reaction if a new or important truth is encountered.

One's spine can freeze or jitter, there is a special energy effect. In fact using a pendulum or a 'touch for health' diagnostic procedure is accessing a deeper truth, we know intuitively.

Later in this book I will relate this to what I call primes, senses for the extradimensional qualities like truth, beauty, timelessness, love and morality. For some people this works even for factual, worldly truths, for many this is what they feel when going to church, listening to music or being in nature. We make a connection with something out there, which is beyond a rational description, so we talk about beauty, oneness, connection and truth, sometimes about deities, energies or demons. Whatever it is, it is true, subjectively true, a personal truth we can share with others or keep to ourselves. It's a relative truth, but we tend to see it as part of the absolute, usually forgetting we have filtered and maybe corrupted it.

In a ritual situation there is no truth or dare, no discussion about the values and ideals, just an acceptance that the total truth is out there and hopefully a realization that we, as humans, can only grasp part of it. To do so, in a way bowing to what is much larger than we are, is part of the ritual process of dissolving the ego and gives us access to deeper layers and wider truths. Ultimately the wider truth merges with concepts like love or power, as at the deeper levels the identity not only of our selves but of everything dissolves into the oneness we indicate as God or the all.

Truth can be related to information, the fact that something is true or false is information, or at least a bit of data. If it conveys information depends on what we do with it, data is only information if it affects something, otherwise it's just random noise. In that sense knowledge is a limited concept. Only if it influences something, if it resonates, does it become information, and only in the context of it being connected, and why not can that love, can we talk of wisdom. The correspondences, the links between the worlds, are often perceived as a higher level of truth. In the Vedas the correspondence are considered as equal to power (*ya evam veda*), and here one obviously refers to the magical correspondences.

The correspondence theories about what truth means emphasize that true beliefs and true statements as expressed in thoughts, words and other symbols correspond to the actual state of affairs (objective reality) but don't usually apply this to the otherworldly truths. Plato's 'ideas' are true, but seen as a special category of 'things', a dimension in itself, where relationships can be true or false. That truths are relative, depending on the context and the fit into a whole system is what the coherence theories of truth indicate, but then the problem is what constitutes a whole system. Fencing off special areas where a certain consistent logic applies like in mathematics are not very relevant for the wide open reality we live in.

What is relevant in the context of ritual is that truth is socially constructed, something noted by constructivists like Marx and Hegel. A religion is as much a social construction as it is revealed truth, and even a personal mystical truth is colored by experience, circumstance and prior beliefs. Religious truths are often consensus truths, fortified by dogma and group mind mechanisms. If one repeats a certain truth often enough, anchors it in the belief system of the faithful, it maybe flawed, but is experienced as true and we are good in even adapting our perception to such a truth. Think about the notion of a flat earth was believed, even in the eye of a curved horizon. Individuals who rely on their own truth, on what they themselves experience and feel, are quickly labeled heretics if they wander from the prescribed consensus truths.

The higher truths at stake in a ritual or religious context cannot be proved, but there is the pragmatist notion that in the end we will know.

Just as the cyber-luminaries say "information wants to be free" we could say that in the end "truth always works", something that doesn't work is false.

William James argued that truth is a *quality*, the value of which is confirmed by its effectiveness when applying concepts to practice. History however teaches us it can take a while before certain truths are falsified.

Many statues and paintings of the truth show her, truth obviously is a female thing, holding an mirror and often there is a serpent in the picture. Maybe the search for truth and self-consciousness, the biblical sanction for eating from the Tree of Knowledge, are the sneaky gifts bestowed upon humans to make sure we don't find back our way to Paradise.

Satsang - Truth

I have attended many so-called satsangs, a meeting with truth with and from some spiritual master. This kind of spiritual encounter sessions originated in the East, where enlightened masters shared their wisdom and presence with their disciples. Westerners liked the approach and the practice of satsang has become fashionable. They have a more loose format than the traditional churches do and allow for participation by the audience. Such sharing of wisdom have been quite popular since the early nineties in Amsterdam and teachers came from abroad, sometimes for weeks, to give these satsangs. Some came to my center to do this and I have met and interviewed quite a few. Many are from the Advaita Vedanta tradition. This is an early Hindu-Vedic understanding of the oneness of all beyond form.

The satsang givers were usually taught by people like Ramana Maharshi and his pupil Poonjaji.

Usually these satsangs were opportunities for those with problems about the self, their path, their relationships, their material situation, to express those on the stage in front of the teacher, who would use a fairly standard set of responses, basically mirroring back the questions. The response pattern that was used the most was to ask: who is experiencing this or that? Not that many understood this to mean that they had to question from where their questions and problems came, that they had to step out of the ego, the notion that they were that. The idea was that there is experience, but the eternal soul is not the experiencer; what we think we are is not what we are inside. There, in the deeper level the experiencer, the I dissolves and the experience alone remains, the ego gone, the false self disappears.

Fair enough, this is a basic truth found in many traditions and paths and it helped me to understand these two dimensions in myself and see the subjectivity of whom I think is me. But what really happened there during those satsang events? Why do people go to these meetings, which in a way are rituals. The attraction of the satsang is obviously not only to meet "truth", the stated purpose, but for many it is an ego-kick to be on stage, in the seat, being the center of attention for a while, free to weep, cry, be silent, and maybe feel oneself for real. Then I noted the social aspect, usually it was the same group of people that would go to whatever satsang was offered, so one could feel among friends, like-minded people. The majority

of the attendants had some kind of Osho background, knew each other and were open enough to get into a “holy state”.

So in this sense the satsang worked, it gave people a personal (set) and community (setting) boost. It would qualify as ritual, with props, praying etc. The service would last for hours, there were the usual photographs of the teacher’s teacher, singing of Bhajans (mantra-like Hindu songs) and indeed some people got away with great insights.

I personally wasn’t very impressed with the spiritual quality of what I called the “Satsingers”. They repeated a fairly simple mirror technique, an approach that worked but was not rooted in what they called ‘enlightenment’. I have to admit they were nice and affectionate when on the stage and obviously well versed in telling small stories, making jokes and establishing a heart contact with the crowd. Not all of them were very sincere when off-stage. I often had to deal with these teachers in a different setting, about money, status issues, interview appointments and noted that very few of them really “walked their talk” in private. So there must have been something that elevated them to this role of “spiritual teachers” when facing the congregation. They grew in a way to a higher level of understanding, they made sense, were empathic and instrumental in the change processes of the participants and as such, the whole deal was effective, at least for some. I began to see that the whole satsang approach was a ritual, for them too, that elevated them to another state, allowing wisdom to shine through.

I learned from them. Their notion, that I and ego and self are not the same, slowly formed the basis of my own concept about the psyche. I began to see how this strange combination of thinking, feeling, experiencing, and conscious and unconscious decision making, which we call “I” or “me” or “self” could be described.

Two in one, the true and the false self

Their approach of separating the self in two parts, the lower self or ego and the higher self or soul is comprehensible, makes sense. It pops up in many forms, as true self and false self, the inner child and the mask, in the separation of being and becoming. There are many variations on this theme. The understanding of one’s self as multiple me-forms is quite a process, but we all at times feel there is a better, deeper self somewhere in us.

Even as it is logical to focus on the particulars one encounters in the me one thinks one knows, and seek ways to remedy the defects there as most psychotherapy promises, there is this longing for what lies beneath that.

I myself have for a long time only looked at how I could get in contact with this hidden part in me, the part I learned to see as my inner child. I was amazed how I became what I am, a person focused on knowing, smartness,

power and truth while deep inside me there was this intuitive child that knew the answers, but didn't care and just wanted to play.

The approach of the Advaita teachers thus offered me a good anchor, and combined with what I learned from the transpersonal approach and the general new age focus on spiritual psychology I even developed my own brand of inner child analysis. This model, which I called it Lucidity (see appendix XI), is useful in analyzing the different masks (personalities we develop and think we are) and the relationship of mask(s) with the inner child, but doesn't cover the whole picture.

Of course I was looking for a better model, but as usual, we only look where the light is. I was finding only what I already knew, what confirmed my projections and my focus on what I considered "spiritual", looking higher and higher up but not at my feet.

But then some synchronistic incidents helped me. Insights and meetings, sometimes a line in a book, even remarks in a comic strip reminded me that I had to look beyond my projections. I realized what I missed in the Satsang approach. There and in the models of Roberto Assagioli, the Enneagram, Zen, astrology and most of the transpersonal methodology the self image is separated from the higher self but not really from the projected, displayed personality. That what we show is again different from the true and false self and the cause of much problems in daily life.

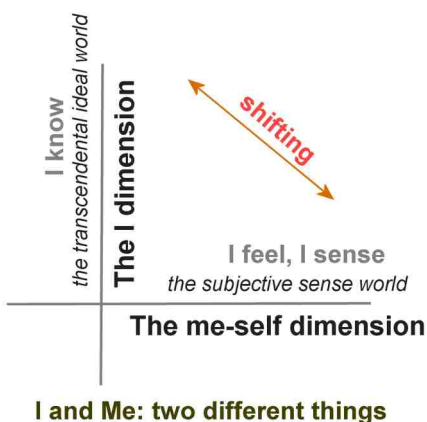
This points at an oversight. Transpersonal therapy is more concerned with the deeper layers and the inner me than with the daily problems of not feeling understood by others. The focus on identifying the soul as different from the self image kind is great and offers many insights, but clouds that what causes much of our psychological worries, the question why do other people see me different from what I think I am. The two selves approach is great for spiritual insight, but ignores the practical psychology, the struggle to reconcile the self image with the projected image. The spiritual approach in the Advaita Vedanta satsang needed to be bridged with my daily worries and limited self-perception.

I needed a model that places the true and the false self in a wider perspective. This brings us to the psyche.

12 The psyche: the inner battlefield of selves

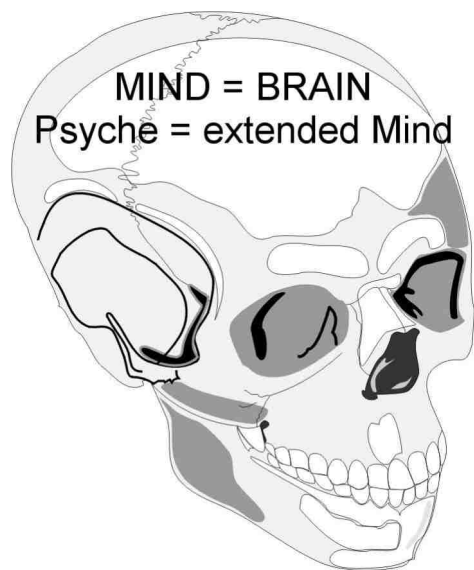
What is it that makes me do things, think, worry, compare and judge? What programs or mechanism inside me keep me busy planning, thinking, questioning? What is it that I consider me, myself, I? Why is there one part in me that wants to finish things, produce and perform, while the other part wants to do new things and is distracted by new options all the time?

This is not a matter of a true and a false self only, a simple model that distinguishes between a real self and a social self. There is more at stake, but this requires me to look at the whole complex of mind, consciousness, will, perception, senses and time. I will do so at length as I feel it is essential to understand the ritual process and how ritual has to do with the inner world of our psyche, but also how we relate to the outer world and the spiritual realm. I will start in this chapter with outlining my model of the psyche, the structure of how we think, perceive and act. Using the word psyche is because it offers a wider perspective than mind, it goes beyond the brain and also offers me the option to see it beyond the human level. In my model of the psyche, the selves (ego, inner child) deals with functions and structure, I will deal with the processes of the psyche like consciousness, will and psychology in subsequent chapters.



Ritual and psyche are connected, but how? There is this tempting idea, that in a ritual I have to give up the ego and will find magical powers in the hidden, inner me self. But how does this all work? Ritual and ceremony are of all human times, but was it there from before the individual self? Were there pre-humanoids or early humans without a developed self doing ritual? Were they less self conscious and maybe happier?

When did this mind of ours became self conscious, when did we start to speak? Did Neanderthals do more than make some mating and warning sounds and using some primitive instruments to make music? Did they perform rituals and why and to what effect? They had fires, but did they know how to make fire? Were they self conscious or only group conscious and



why did Cro-Magnon early humans better and are more noticeable in our gene pool and what happened when other genes from the Mesopotamia area reached Europe at some 10.000 years BCE?

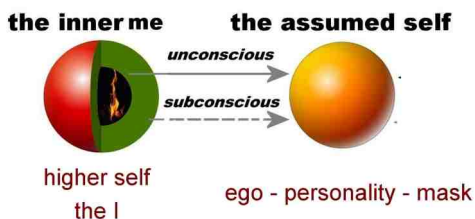
Many questions, but few answers. The roots of ritual are deep. Archaeologists have found ritual traces in the oldest civilizations. There are ancient burial grounds all over the world pointing at an afterlife notion and cave-paintings of seemingly ritual stances. This indicates a source for rituals from very deep in our system, maybe deeper

as this self consciousness we think separates us from animals. Even animals often display behavior that could be described as ritualistic. Especially repetition seems to have deep roots in our neurological makeup, extreme (obsessive) ritualistic behavior can be a signal or symptom of mental disorders.

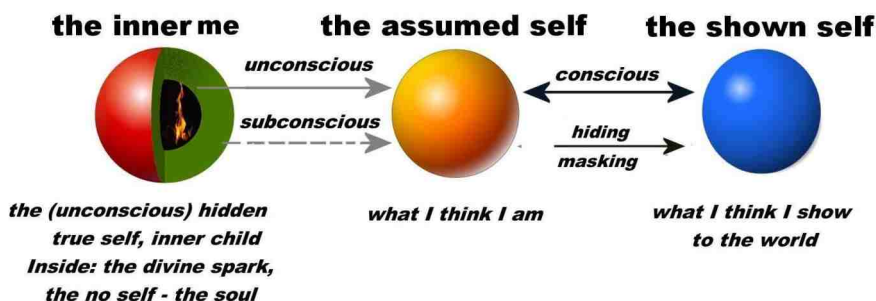
But how does this relate to or even transcends the conscious mind? Is ritual just a work mode of the neurological system, a way of releasing tension or is it related to the whole underlying complex of the psyche and evolution?

Many questions lie beyond what brain-research, philosophy and psychology so far have figured out and maybe this book is because they were never answered. Is there a truth hidden in what ritual is and does?

In the three world model I use the psyche is of course related to the set (mindset) but what matters is not only the internal workings and processes, but how there relate to the tangible world outside (and this involves, somewhat arbitrarily, the body) and to the intangible spiritual realm. Materialist might deny the existence of such an otherworld, but in this book I assume it exists. The communication of the psyche with the tangible world is both receiving (our senses) as well as sending and active through our actions, movements and this includes non-actions. The psyche also interacts with the extra-dimensional through what I call



The three self images



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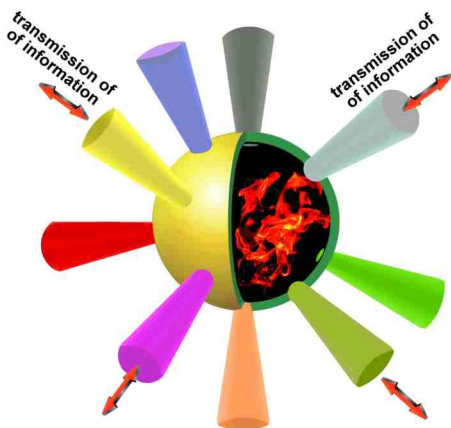
primes, a subject which will come back in many chapters in this book. The interesting question, even for me, is how our thoughts influence the tangible world. Is this because they influence the extradimensional and the extradimensional then relays them to the tangible? Or do we directly influence the tangible without this detour? This distinction is not very important for what I argue about ritual, but a direct link between psyche and matter could be used to defend materialism. The question is then how this would function, are there maybe fields or radiation mechanisms we have not yet been able to measure, but do exist in the material dimensions? I stick to the detour notion, we influence matter by way of addressing the extradimensional, the magical realm.

The psyche and the mind

When talking about the psyche, it is hard not to bring in concepts like will and consciousness. However, in order to develop the concepts and models gradually, I will deal with them separately, as I see them as the processes of the psyche, the dynamics.

I see the psyche as the structure, with elements and layers that can be distinguished as separate parts, while consciousness is a process. Think about brains and mind, the physical brains are the structure, the mind is what uses that structure, as a process.

This division is a bit artificial, for psyche and consciousness are two ends of the slippery stick of cognition, but it helps to clarify the models and schematics I use to explain how I see the ritual process.



Primes:
the inner fire connections
of the higher self

I prefer to use the word psyche, because it's a bit wider than the mind, which is usually seen as what the brains bring forth. The psyche is the structure of how we deal not only with thoughts, but with all kinds of information, like intuitions, body signals, sense data, conscious and unconscious messages, but also dreams, hallucinations and mystical experiences.

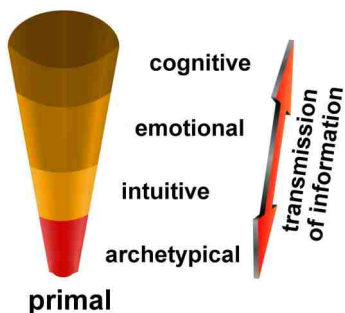
There are many models of the psyche, in the appendix NR. I some of them are mentioned, but here I will concentrate on my notion of how the elements of psyche are positioned and related.

Another view, but first some

definitions

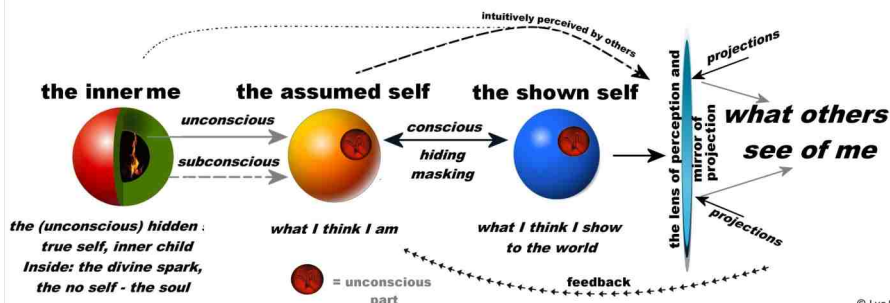
Now you might ask, where and what is this psyche, what is this I, the ego, the me, the self, the personality? Well, first we have to look at what do we mean by these words? There are different views about what the psyche is, many are related to mind and, brains. There is a tendency to use the word mind rather than psyche. I don't really like that in the context of this book, because it points too much at the brains, the contents of our skull as the source and seat of the psyche. I think our psyche is wider and is instrumental to much more than thinking. In replacing psyche with mind we also have to call psychology mindology, a bit awkward.

One sometimes uses the term Mind at Large (Aldous Huxley did) but that opens it up much wider than just the individual, it involved a higher level



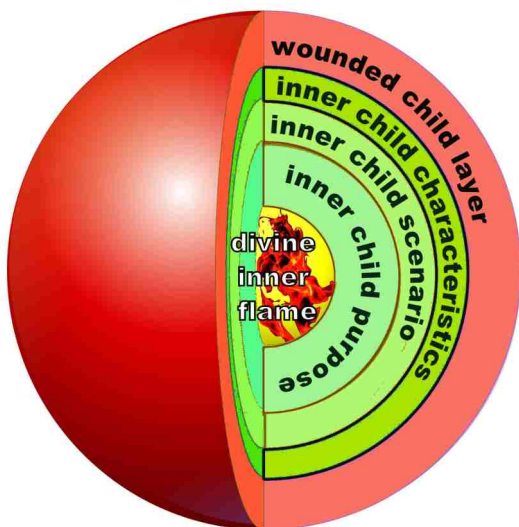
*Between primes and
conscious cognition there
is a lot of filtering, noise
and distortion*

The three self images and the others

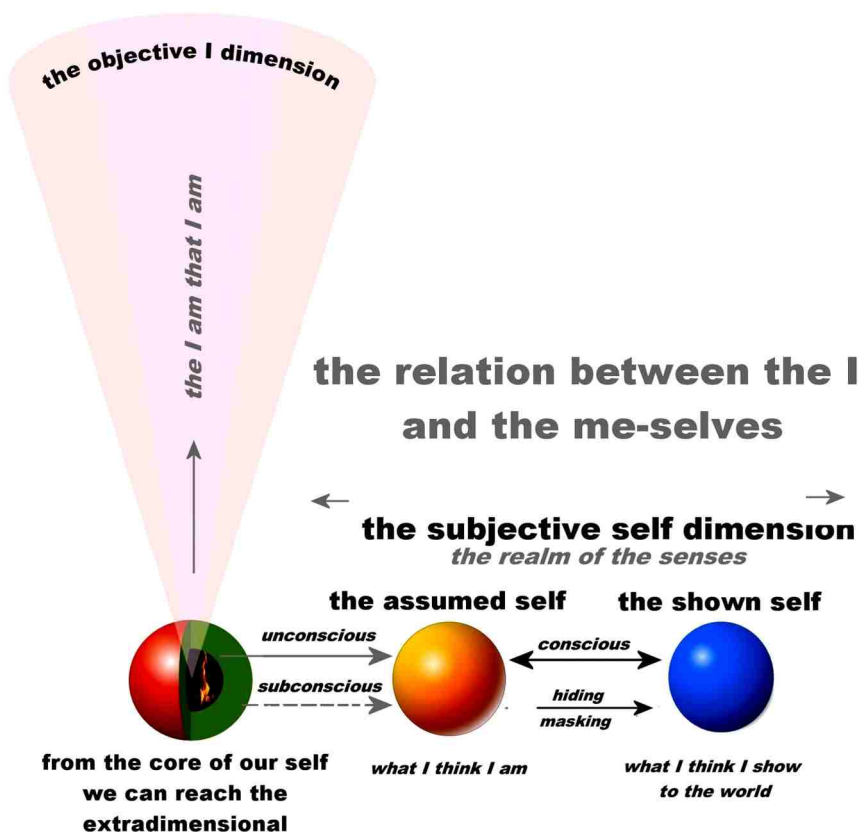


of consciousness and implies that we are connected to the all. As such that is in line with my thinking, but I would use other words. The subject of consciousness and soul will be dealt with in another chapter, also the practical dealing with the psyche and how we perceive it through all kind of methods and typology will be in the chapters about psychology and selves.

The notion of psyche in the way I use it includes the traditional notion. The encyclopedia tells us it is the totality of the human mind, conscious, subconscious and unconscious. I see it as also including other parts of our body (there is memory in our limbs, organs and especially in our guts) and the ethereal body layers. The whole idea of memory as limited to physical traces feels less and less correct, I think our mind is just a tool to connect and 'tune' to something out there (in the extradimensional), a kind of cloud of all-knowing. Perception, storing and recalling might be far less of a spacetime physical act than is assumed by science so far. I am leaving open that



Layers of the Inner Me or Higher Self



© Luc Sala

quantum processes may be part of it, but then we already talk extradimensional reality.

The traditional definition of psyche does mention human, I would keep the option of non-human psyche open. And maybe there is no limit to the range our psyche covers, as there is also the connection to what some would call the superconscious, and it is there that ritual becomes part of the picture.

The psyche is not the same as the soul, even as the Greek root is often translated as such. The soul is the core of our being, the divine spark that I see as beyond the psyche and the mind. It can be interpreted as the transcendental counterpart of the psyche, but also as a separate part of our being in another dimension. In that sense the true I-point at the center of our subjective self lies at the crossroads between the normal sense dimensions and the extradimensional.

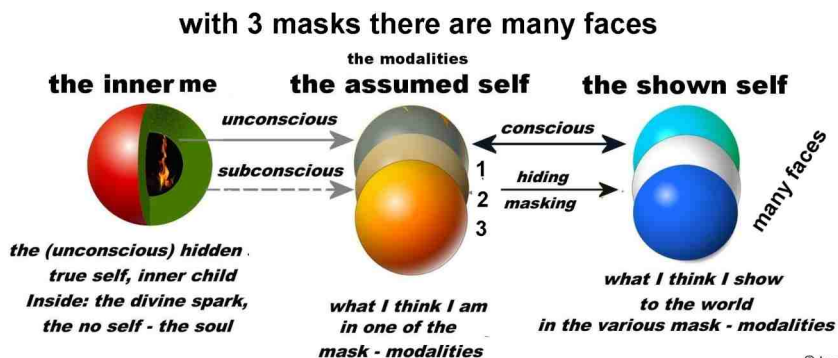
Of course there has been a lot of thinking and theories about the psyche, the self, identity, etc. I have grouped that together in a separate appendix, (nr. I) where the history and views about this can be found with some commentaries. In this chapter and that about the senses I will outline a different and unique approach which unites together the broad fields of what I would call surface therapy and spiritual growth paths. Both are partial approaches to deal with the subjective self or selves. In ritual both are present, but the true magical lies at the spiritual sides of things, psychologist and therapist deal with (mind) set and setting.

I think we have to fundamentally accept the psyche as multidimensional, allowing access to the normal and to the otherworld. This means that we have to look at least for models with more axes, more dimensions. As the logical mind has trouble dealing with more than three, at best four dimensions, graphical representations, topological maps or partial views are probably the best we can expect.

The first simplification, in a way going back to William James is that psyche has two different orientations or dimension, being the I dimension (the vertical, the transcendental) and the me-self dimension that I draw as horizontal.

I and me are different concepts if we consider the sentence: "I am looking at me in the mirror" the I is some deep identity and me is subjective, that what I perceive. I assign therefore two dimensions to I and me, with the me (or myself) as the subjective dimension. The core self or I-point is where the two dimension axes cross, and where the Cartesian (but not tangible) I as

The many me-images in a multi-mask psyche



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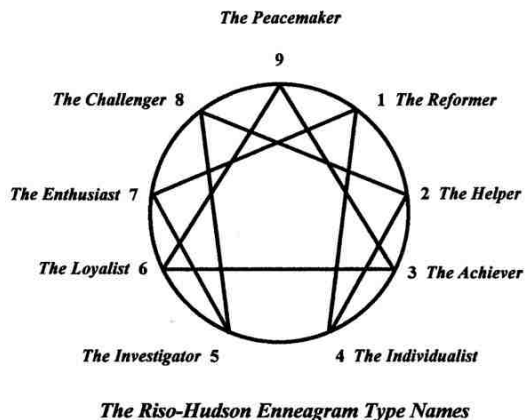
witness and connection with the otherworld resides. The I does extend (or is) in the other dimension, but is not perceived by our normal senses and thinking, I don't feel I, just me.

I will give some visual images, maps and models to make my ideas understandable. Maps are not the moon, mine are limited in scope and offer only wide generalizations, but I hope are helpful in understanding the big picture. For many pictures are better than a thousand words.

So here comes my take on the structure of the psyche. It is quite a story, but maybe the images help to grasp what I propose, a model of the multidimensional realm of the psyche and the self. There is not a single image, but many. All are probably just lenses to look at the same, showing facets of a thing that is outside human scope, or certainly outside mine.

So let's start with how we see our self, the relation with the I dimension comes later. We can start with two selves, this is a well known image separating the false from the true self, the mask from the higher self, the ego from the hidden me. It shows up in most traditions, and is generally accepted as a model on the psyche. It is however not always clear that this concerns the subjective selves or that I and me are different, sometimes because of definitions.

I developed this into a somewhat extended picture of the various self images we have, there are three "selves" and then in a later picture I indicate where the other is. At the next level of complexity, we also have, in the self (me) dimension of our psyche a number of programs (masks, personalities or sub-personalities) each with its own mode of operation, intelligence, bodily functions, quite separated from each other. I use the word sub-personality here different from its use in transpersonal psychology (notably Roberto Assagioli) where it is seen as a personality mode that kicks in (appears on a temporary basis) to allow a person to cope with cer-



There are quite a number of enneagram type names, here the ones used

tain types of psychosocial situations, which resembles what is called a social role or mask.

Self images: the subjective illusions

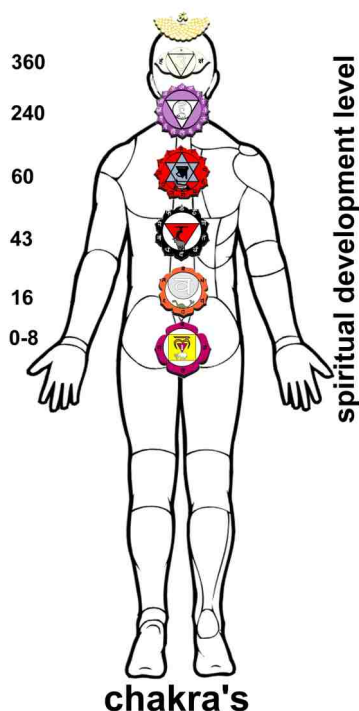
In general one could say that there are (at least) three me's or selves, and I am talking about subjective selves here. The diagrams clarify this.

There is the self we show to the world (in acting and reacting), the one we think we are (our conscious self-image or assumed self) and then the one we really are (the hidden inner child, the true self, the inner soul). This already becomes a complex picture, even beyond the different meanings of the words used. These three images or perspectives on the total "me" have layers and conscious, subconscious and unconscious connections. The central self is the one we believe we are, the identity we call the me, as in "I see me, myself in the mirror". The I saying that, the self conscious one, the witness, is not in this picture, the I is in this sense not the me, I will come back to this later. The assumed self is what we think we are, but not what we show to the world.

We usually hold back a bit in showing even our assumed self, we hide some things, embellish others, mask our shortcoming, but we do or start this consciously, even as this filter then often becomes a habit. We can let go of it and show more of what we believe is our self in certain situations, with certain people, at different times. Others do perceive what we show, but also some parts of us that we hide, maybe even to ourselves. There is an unconscious part in the assumed self, but others can also sense something at the deeper level, in the inner me. They see through you, and even respond to this hidden part, in positive or negative ways.

Inner child layers

The notion of the inner child needs some more explanation and another diagram to explain the layers I see there. Inner child is an ambiguous word used in many therapeutic systems and I tend to use it for the inner me or higher self without much specification. I see the inner child as a way of describing layers of the usually



hidden and not normally conscious inner me, with a outer layer affected by early experiences, the wounded inner child. This wounded inner child normally develops a defense layer, shielding it against the parental (mother) influence in the first year or so. This becomes the first and usually most prevalent assumed self or personality, the first mask. We could say that this first mask is what result from the interaction between what the inner child wants (came to do in this incarnation) and the reactions of the mother. I believe that if we can identify the inner child's makeup (from purpose, through scenario and characteristics) and we also know the patterns (type) of the mother we can predict what that first mask would look like.

This is where the usual typologies of the personality (Enneagram, Jung) fall short. They don't see a type at the inner child level (and normally ignore additional masks anyway).

I personally believe we come to this incarnation with a 'plan' and choose where we 'land' including the obstacles and experiences, but the model doesn't rely on this assumption.

Inside the inner me, in the core is the soul, the eternal flame that has no self, so that is why the left self is indicated as me and not as self. This is to illustrate that in the deeper layers of that part of our psyche the individuality (the separate self) disappears gradually toward the center. The deeper one gets in exploring and uncovering this inner me, the less individualistic one becomes. This could also be called more collective as in Jung's collective unconscious, where he locates the archetypes, but even this identification will dissolve. The self becomes the non-self, the non-self becomes the total unity, the mystical oneness, the divine flame, the I Am without identity. One indicates this self at the core of our being the higher self, the true self or hidden me. It's what we are normally not aware of. It is the deep hidden unconscious that however influences our behavior and thinking in many ways. Some layers are more accessible, are more subconscious than unconscious.

Sub- and unconscious

I make a distinction between the deeper unconscious, which is really hard to probe and the subconscious to where there is somewhat easier access. How deep one can go depends on the situation and the techniques used. The archetypal imagery that Jung sees in the subconscious and unconscious I consider carrier-mechanisms, vehicles to help transmit messages from and to the deeper layers. Imagine they rise up, from the unconscious levels where they are picked up by what I call primes. They rise, first through the subconscious and then, filtered and distorted through our emotional filters, might reach our conscious and cognitive levels of awareness. The mes-

sages we receive from the extradimensional and from the then reach us as fast intuitions, slower emotions and even slower thoughts.

I speak of subjective self images, but this is not just a picture in our mind. A self image is an entity, an identity that brings along a whole set of behavioral patterns, moods, reactions, action agents, bodily characteristics, potential deficiencies or diseases, sensitivities and talents. A self image is what we (on the surface) think we are, feel, do and think, even as there are deeper layers, especially the unconscious true “me” is like the secret driver that makes us think, do and experience things we consciously maybe wouldn’t consider, but act out as an automaton.

The self identity gives us the illusion of looking at our self as objective, as a separate entity or object in the universe. This is not true, what we perceive is usually an illusion, the false self. The three self images together (except the core of the I, the heart of the inner me) are apparent, a subjective deluded identification we seemingly need as part of the process of life and living.

And what about the other?

The three subjective selves are not what the world, the other, sees. Then we have to add another image or actually a whole range of images, for everybody will see “me” in a different light. His or her perception is filtered (the looking glass idea) and often influenced by their projections, part of what they see in me is a part of themselves. The filtering of the shown self is manifold, depending on place, situation, timing and what we could call the chemistry between people. Some see the positive, some the negative, it takes a very well trained psychologist to be able to look at someone objectively.

This image of (at least) three selves is not the whole picture, because we interact with what is outside. We are not alone and in the interaction with others mechanisms like filtering and projection (seeing oneself mirrored in the other) come into play. Of course the interaction with others means that the other has a similar complex of selves, but we cannot just mirror the image with the three selves to see what happens when two people meet. The separating filter and the projection mechanisms in the communication layer between two self complexes are very complex and dynamic processes, however with less relevance for the subject of this book.

Now in the picture where this image of me as seen by others is added, there are a couple of extra connections. The other(s) can pick up something from what we hide, see more of our assumed self than we were willing to share, and in some cases can even sense something of the inner me, the normally unconscious hidden one that is the core self. Another line indicates that

there is feedback from what others see in me to the conscious self, we adapt to what we perceive others think or say about us. This also indicates that the self images in this picture are not static, they change. They change or adapt depending on the situation and as we grow older.

The development of our selves through life is a subject in itself. Let me limit myself here by indicating that it is a basic tendency and need for us to develop our self image and our knowledge of who we are. It involves the creation of the ego (assumed self) but then also the process of integrating the inner me. This is what Jung called individuation, a process of psychological integration. He defined it as (in Psychological Types):

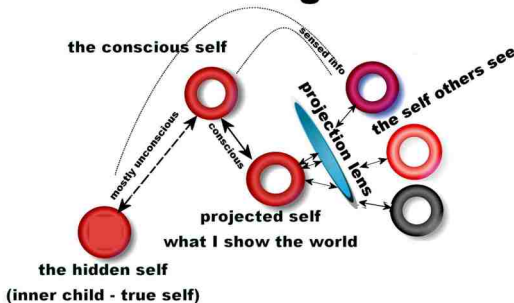
"In general, it is the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated [from other human beings]; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology."

His use of the word individuation is somewhat peculiar. It describes a process of transformation involving a whole series of archetypes and stages like persona, the shadow, anima or animus, with the integrated self as the final stage. Jung's individuated self points at the loop of uncovering the deeper layers, but for me his approach has too much the taste of aiming at being different, special. Maybe James Hillman in his *Myth of Analysis* (1972) comes closer to individuation as letting go of individuality:

Transparent Man, who is seen and seen through, foolish, who has nothing left to hide, who has become transparent through self-acceptance; his soul is loved, wholly revealed, wholly existential; he is just what he is, freed from paranoid concealment, from the knowledge of his secrets and his secret knowledge; his transparency serves as prism for the world and the not-world.

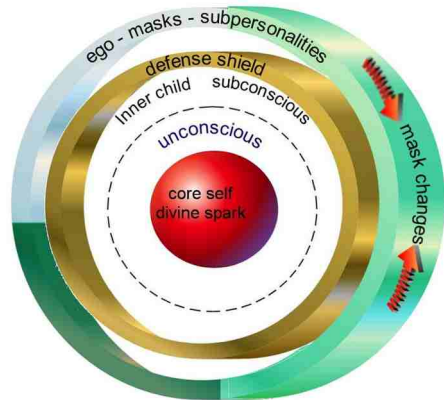
His transparent state is maskless.

The self images



I see the psychological development, from childhood on, more as from a soul driven inner child state first building the assumed self and maybe (later on) more selves in interaction with the other, the world. These assumed selves are masks, a defense for our deeper sensitivities, our original self or soul. Eventually we have to let go of them, or integrate them and use those masks consciously.

Our selves, including the outer layer of the inner child, the wounded child, are not constant, they develop. Things develop, like that we may grow in our ability to be flexible in what we hide and add to the shown self. We then start to see where we come from, recognize the sub- and unconscious parts of our assumed self (mask) and the inner me. This evolving self knowledge, knowing who we are is can be seen as spiritual growth. But recognizing our drives, identity and motives also leads to dissolving our identity. We learn to see that what we think we are (our assumed self) is not what we really are. This paradoxical letting go of the ego and yet understanding how we have protected our original and unconscious non-self is what the spiritual teachers see as moving toward enlightenment. It usually comes with more awareness of the extradimensional, in a magical and/or mystical sense, I have never met enlightened materialists.



A model of the psyche
with shifting subpersonalities

The three subjective selves on a row in my picture are relatively simple images and I could already develop from this a whole constellation about how ritual (and therapy, which is a kind of ritual anyway) would influence all the items and connections in these graphs. However for most people, the plot thickens, as their self image is a bit more complex, in fact there are, in one person, often more assumed and thus shown (projected) self images. Many of us possess more self modalities or subpersonalities or simply said, more masks.

Modalities is a more gentle designation and less invasive than sub-personality, but not so clear. Character is also a good word to describe it, but again has too many meanings and using it as someone having more characters is less common, it is used in M. Almendro's brand of transpersonal therapy, Oxigeme.

Masks, characters or sub-personalities

In reality we often multiply or differentiate the conscious selves, creating new behavior modalities, sub-personalities or structural masks to deal with

outside forces and experiences. We develop, as a result of these conditions, distinct modes of thinking, feeling, acting and reacting.

This complicates the picture of the subjective selves, but cannot be ignored. I actually believe that the recognition of this phenomenon that most of us have multiple modes of operation is what is missing in the prevalent medical and psychological paradigm.

Most people have more than one structural mask and occasionally shift between their masks, but are unaware of this. The inner child state we all have and for instance manifests in dreams is one of the states and can be perceived as a sub-personality. In altered states of consciousness like those achieved in a ritual context this is the state where we can get in contact with the inner me and I dimension.

I use the word sub-personalities but accept it's not very appropriate as I am not talking about pathological multi personalities, but about the multiple masks we wear. I call them structural masks, self-masks, modalities, but would welcome a better word.

We are a combination of selves, and therefore even what we think we are is often not a constant. What I am hinting at here is that we have not one conscious assumed self, but more. We all have multiple (sub) personalities, but only in extreme cases this becomes pathological. Or, less dramatic, we usually have modalities of the assumed conscious self that are clearly demarcated.

The first conscious, but still assumed self we usually construct is a way of coping with the situation as a baby and young child, the development of self-awareness and identity goes hand in hand with creating this self image. Beyond the original (first) mask many of us have more. We usually have unconsciously created these extra self images (with the associated behavior and thinking patterns) as a response to traumatic experiences. As such they are good protections and to be appreciated for what they offered, a way out in difficult situation, a way of coping with excessive stress, danger or disease.

These additional masks are the result of usually traumatic experiences, situations so threatening that we can only escape by creating a new assumed self. We defend our vulnerable inner me by stepping into a new personality able to deal with the situation, but retain this as a fall-back mode. We step back into it, if something reminds us of the original traumatic experience, but these cues are mostly unconscious.

A sub-personality can be seen as a different psychic program, an operating system (software) using the same hardware (the body) but in a different way. People around us will often see that we are shifting, but call this a mood or a temper.

Memory, intelligence, perception, blood pressure, etc. are different and changed, as one moves from the one to another character or mask. A good example is that some people are able to see well without glasses in one of the sub-personality modes, and not in another.

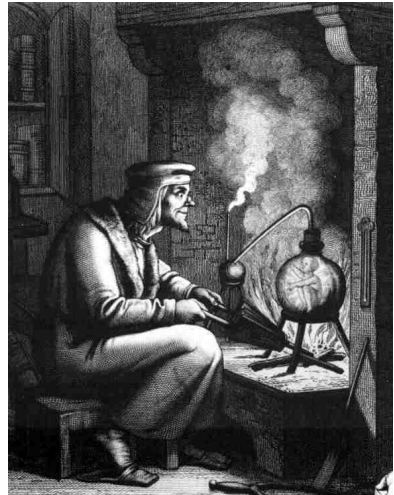
When I talk about masks these are structural parts of the psyche, modes of being and acting that underlie how we see ourselves and how we act, consciously but mostly unconsciously. We do shift between the masks, but are mostly not conscious of how, why and when we shift, we just shift into them, triggered by cues, unconscious drives and memories.

In my view the (self-)masks/subpersonalities are more or less fixed and hard to change. They develop over time, get reinforced because of newer experiences, but are hard to dissolve. Integration and becoming aware of them helps and allows more conscious shifts into them and using them as needed. A good actor or actress probably has learned how to do this.

I differentiate my notion of structural masks from the social roles we also play, the functional masks. We do have social adaptations or functional masks that also are sometimes described as subpersonalities (the way Assagioli does) but these are more consciously controlled.

Within a specific mode (mask state) we can shift between social roles and put on conscious functional (social) masks, but this is about dealing with the situation, we normally know and notice that we do.

The picture of the various selves of course gets complicated if we add more (self-)masks to it. I will use the word mask or structural mask for these variations in the assumed self. I could use other words, modalities instead of mask for instance, but this would divert from the intuitive associations. The word mask is of course related to persona (Greek for mask), but is used by many in different perspectives like by Karl Marx. I will come back to what masks mean in the social and ritual context and how masks relate to roles. I do make a distinction between structural masks and functional (social) masks, but usually when talking about masks I mean sub-personality masks or ego-modes.



Goethe's Faust creating an homunculus

The development of the selves.

The psyche is not static, it changes all the time, whatever we do, experience of perceive changes the psyche. In childhood the changes are more profound, but we “learn” till the moment we die, there is plasticity, not the downhill ride previously assumed. Especially our self image is not static and unchanging, we react to event circumstances, develop and (mostly) grow, hopefully become wiser, more tolerant and less attached as we mature. Every experience brings change, our psyche changes, our brain changes, for better or worse, “You never use the same brain twice” (Robert Turner) and this plasticity, this adapting never stops.

This development process of our selves (the inner me, the assumed self(s) and the shown self(s) goes through stages, and here the approach of Abraham Maslow’s pyramid of needs (at the top self-actualization: to find self fulfillment and realize one’s potential) comes to mind. The ranking of needs may be different for individuals and cultures, as David Pinto argues. Also the need of otherworld contact and control is not clearly outlined in Maslow’s model, but in his model we do move from basic survival to more virtual needs.

The differentiation between an inner true me (self) and an outer, false self we encounter in many traditions.

It is also noted, that we are not the same all the time, that we are a bunch of me’s, shifting between moods and modes, only believing we are one and the same. William James already in 1890 saw a material me, a social me and a spiritual me.

All these models are valid to some extent, but to distinguish between self-modes in the psyche I think we need a more elaborate model of the selves, but also a better understanding of why and how there are differences. The drives, the deep urges and needs that made each of us different can be analyzed in many ways, there are countless development models and theories.

The enneagram is an interesting one, as it distinguishes body, mind and emotion modes, Jung’s typology has value, the ayurvedic classification of vata, kappa and pita offers much, but there is also astrology. All these models yield interesting insights and practices, I like to use the chakra development model, but in the chapter about the will I use a circular Urouboros model.

Before going into that, I like to point at what I think really is at the root of individuality and being different. I believe our soul (the I outside spacetime) has decided where we land in this incarnation, and this includes our parents, our situation and thus the traumatic experiences that come with

it. So not only our inner me, but also the mask and later masks are not accidental, the school of life has been laid out for us at another level. **The body is the result, not the cause.** If we, at some higher (or deeper if you like) level, have decided to be autistic, our brain will obey and start to act autistic and display the material characteristics associated with autism. I don't agree with statements like "We are our brains" as some materialistic scientists like Dick Swaab argue.

Chakra development

I like the chakra approach not only because I recognize it in me, I can feel the difference between the different urges and energies in me, sex is different from power and the needs I feel have some hierarchy like in Maslow's pyramid, but also because it is refined enough, somewhat better than the three inclinations of the enneagram. The chakras are energy nodes (7 of them) recognized by many Eastern traditions. As we are born, we start a path through the chakras, from the very existential no. 1 (at the perineum) to the pure spiritual no. 7 (at the top of our head). Normally, as we develop from infant to mature, we gradually go up from the very basic material root chakra to the highest form of spiritual awareness. In this development the heart (no. 4) is the link between the lower material (survival, lust, sex, will, power) focus and drives and the higher spiritual chakras (5 to 7). Becoming more aware is what happens as we rise along this chakra column, this can be also indicated as growing in spiritual frequency.

The image becomes even more complicated as we have an awareness level in each chakra too. The development of the various self images (inner child and masks) is not uniform, each self can develop independently and follow different patterns. The inner child also develops and grows (sometimes falls back too). The level of the various mask can differ substantially, one can be a very 'holy' person in one mask, quite an asshole in another, and switch between them without noticing. That is, others will probably notice it, the hidden downside does show in our behavior and moods.

The level can vary, in some people there is a very well developed inner child but a rather primitive assumed self personality, in others there is a very holy outward personality, but an inner child focused on mere survival, sex or material needs. As we have more me's the situation becomes more complex, one can have and display different levels of development. This means a person can have different selves (structural masks different from social role masks) with a different focus, different intelligence, etc. Different software on the same hardware, in computer terms.

The spiritual teacher radiating holiness as he sits on his throne might, in a different situation, turn out to have less developed and more mundane traits

too. The sex, drug and rock & roll side of many guru's is well known. I will come back to this in the description of the Lucidity system (see appendix XI) and in the context of what a ritual brings in psychological terms. Here it suffices to know that each self, including that of the wounded child, can change and develop over time, and this includes healing and integration of selves. We can change, albeit not easily.

Our selves (masks and inner child) thus can be different and this again is something usually overlooked in therapeutic and medical situation, at best there is the distinction between true (inner child) and false self (mask/ego). I noticed, having looked into their mask complexes with many people, that between masks there are differences in inclinations, talents and qualities and even in perception. Some people can read without glasses in the one mask-mode, but not in another, there are differences in blood pressure, acidity, and many diseases are rooted in one self, one mask. The medical world doesn't see this, nor do most psychologists and even systems like the enneagram overlook this, Jung was one of the few who accepted that we shift from one type to another.

One can be attracted to one gender in one mask, to another in the next mask, this difference can be deeply hidden and suppressed. Some of these differences have to do with hidden qualities, things that are not directly obvious, like the level of intelligence. We usually have some notion about where we rank in intelligence, social intelligence and such, compared to others. Not always very realistic, mostly we assume we are smarter, faster, more responsive than we are, just as many of us see ourselves as less or more beautiful or attractive than we are.

Few people notice that sometimes there is a difference in intelligence between their structural masks and or inner child. Psychologists or doctors probably never look at this possibility, but it explains a lot. I guess this inner split (in IQ) happens in about 8% of the people. Examples are Leonardo da Vinci and Steve Jobs, in both cases with interesting results. Uncovering the differences between the masks is very rewarding in clarifying behavioral patterns and the sometimes sudden changes we experience and is the basis of the Lucidity approach I developed (see appendix XI).

Development of masks, exorcism

The subpersonalities develop as a defense against external situations. Traumatic experiences, diseases, accidents, there are moments the pressure is too much and we escape the situation by switching off, and then a new subpersonality can emerge.

In many cultures this process, or rather the resulting mask and behavior is seen as possession, as if an external entity has taken hold of the soul. This

external entity could be the result of a spell or some conjuration by an evil sorcerer. The effect could be different behavior or thinking, depression and disease. This often happens in a ritual context for a short period and as a transient effect, and in the Western world we know this as mediumship. The change in personality is often striking, the voice changes, the whole attitude and stance is different, there is something or somebody else present.

In cases where such a change, the emergence of a subpersonality with negative effects on health and well-being happens, when a devil takes possession, exorcism is often used to address the situation. It's not only a non-Western practice, the Catholic Church has specific exorcism rites and people authorized to perform them.

I argue that the ritual mechanisms and the cures used in exorcism could hold interesting cues about how to deal with subpersonalities in more normal situations.

The I dimension

The core, the inner fire is where we can locate or assume the soul. As this interacts with a whole different dimension, it is not a single point. It is a connection to something much larger. In that sense it is no longer individual, it is part of the non-individual, the non-self, the all. From the perspective of the assumed self, which is how we experience the world, we cannot identify what it really is, we just use a constructed projection we can call soul or God. The cultural and religious imprint we have shapes and colors this projection. We can really only guess what this I, this other dimension is, as all communication from there has to go through the channel of a constructed, shaped and filtering subjective self image. If we could ask a child, that comes into the world as a tabula rasa without self-consciousness, as far as self image is concerned, we would understand more about the soul. Children however forget about these early stages, the childhood amnesia (we don't remember consciously our baby years) cuts us off from that stage. We do have emotions and feeling then (the amygdala shows reactions) but are like animals, without a self-image or a reflective experience of time.

Remember that Jesus indicated that we have to become like children if we want to enter the Kingdom of Heaven! To understand the soul, not as the Freudian mechanical Seele but as the transcendental connection, we could try to follow what the mystics have to say. They came closer to understanding what this I-point without self-projection is, but admit they lack proper words, this is beyond or rather before words. Language and self-consciousness are interwoven, both develop in early childhood toward individual self-perception and symbolic interpretation, mostly in social interaction, the other shapes the assumed self.

The assumed self as the subjective part of the psyche is a social construction, the brain in that sense a social organ. Each of us is a complex mix of nature (the I that incarnates in the child and comes with DNA and some kind of game plan) and nurture, the social interaction and physical situation. Our cognitive processes are a subjective and complex mix of interpretation, memes, meaning and filtering, and not a constant mix either. The mystical or inner child understanding of the I as the disappearing self one has to experience individually, probably when we die we will get there.

Self-consciousness and letting go of it

The whole idea about self consciousness feels like an endless mirroring and feedback mechanism, introspection is like an inner comparison. The notion of self is something we don't bring with us at birth, it is only formed as we grow up and see ourselves mirrored in the reactions of others, the I is You idea.

It is the outward appearance, the way we have learned to deal with the world and as we usually have identified our self with this pattern, what we think we are.

Consciousness is something we bring along as we enter this world; the mirror phenomenon self-consciousness is a special sense or talent (or curse) that we develop later and to a more developed stage than (most?) animals. I come back to this in the chapter about consciousness.

That we nearly always feel misunderstood and judged has more to do, I think, with our double or triple self image (inner child/mask/shown me).

When we first meet a person, we perceive (intuitively) the inner child and only when we start to talk we mutually impose the ego/personality that we think we are or even worse, what we would like to show. So the initial response is usually biased and out of balance, the ego of the one responds to the inner child of the other and vice versa. Our stance, words and energy induce the change, we skip to the ego-ego level exchange, false self versus false self. Luckily sometimes this doesn't happen and we stay both in the inner child mode, like when in falling in love.

The structural mask, the assumed personality, is not only a pose, it is a filter of reality, a lens coloring what can come in and what goes out. It is flexible in that it adapts and shifts, into other masks or aspects. Personality is utterly dynamic and changing, even as we think we are always the same. We will adapt to the context, but within the confines of the set of responses we developed as a general mask or masks in the past.

I think there is an unconscious part in our assumed self. Maybe this is the mirror or connection with the inner me, the unconscious there, maybe a repressed part of what caused the assumed self to manifest.

Self and I and All

An important question comes up here, that of the relationship of self to the all, the superconscious, the divine if you like. Self obviously is related to reflection on me, to self awareness. But what is self for most of us? It seems to be the individuality, the me as the object of reflective consciousness and not the deep inner part, which is ultimately more like a non-self. It has a very strong social component, as we do not get it at birth, we do develop it in childhood. It is a learned thing, the result of experience and nurture and it takes a while to form. Obviously there is a period we don't remember from our early years and this varies among cultures, Western children remember from an earlier age.

The self or rather the no-self is a central to many world religions and rituals and the Western idea to equate self with individual is not the only paradigm, there is also the self as part of the group, tribe or religion. In animals like in the horse there is a physical self-awareness, but also a herd awareness, so the question remains whether this self discussion is really a human issue. Freud accepted an ego-structure in animals.

The I in this view can be considered as that what controls and regulates self consciousness, as the player, the initiator and witness. The I exist in a way in a different dimension, and can only work in a mediated form, via the self, in that sense the self manipulates what comes from the I. That I is the agent responsible for initiating (in response to input from this and the other dimension), but impulse is then mitigated through the selves to become an individual's thoughts and actions. The I is the substantial, even objective nature of a person which endures and unifies consciousness over time. The I is the ultimate teacher, brings about experiences of all kinds that only in a very detached helicopter view can be seen as beneficial in the development of that same I. If I think in terms of resonance, the I is the master program that unites all the resonances.

The (vertical) axis in the psyche that connects us with the otherworld is different from the subjective the multiple self images, it kind of offers us a link to a wider experience of truth, beauty and other extra-dimensional values. Here the I, not as the controlling will, but as the connected witness, is a more appropriate concept. This I is more objective, looks at what we do with our game of selves from a different perspective. A perspective from the otherworld and thus, as seen from the subjective plane of selves, easily labeled as divine, pure presence, holy truth, larger consciousness or mystical. This is the axis that is beyond time, the eternal soul aspect, that where we come from in incarnating. It is the pure being, not the self consciousness we develop in growing up.

Self consciousness is a subjective quality, the I axis is not about that but manifests at the subjective plane. It uses what's available in experiences, traumas and acquired programming to influence, translate and filter reality. It is the I axis which offers transcendence as we become aware of the illusion of all self images, this is why in the center of the unconscious me is the link, the point where the transcendental I axis crosses the subjective self dimension of our sense world. One could therefore call this I point the Transcendental Self or Observing Self. The other self images in this sense could be called superficial or illusion, limited to the normal sense experiences, they are constructs resulting from the interactions (the social). In other cultures or paradigms other constructs than our rather rational individualistic one might apply. I like the idea that there are or were people, like the Ainu in northern Japan, with more of a communal self that didn't know a word for I.

Now by trying to let go of the illusory selves, in practical terms letting go of the ego with its sense attachments, we can get closer to this transcendental I axis. The myriad of techniques to do so, from sensory deprivation to meditation, we encounter in the spiritual traditions and practices and notably in ritual.

"Deliberate inattention to the messages of the senses" Evelyn Underhill called it, comparing mystical states to gusts of "Transcendental Feeling" induced by some saving madness such as Religion, Art, or Love. These days we have more ways than that, like drugs or techniques to control and quiet the sympatic and parasympathic nerve system, switch off the sense system. A common trait of most systems of meditation seem to address the para-sympathetic nerve system, the breath mostly, the core process of our interaction with the outside. We can control breath to a certain extend and we can calm our body by concentrating on regular breathing, even guiding the chi-energy through various parts. However, doing this to silence the (conscious) brain is a very difficult process, try to be unconcerned even for a few seconds. But it is a path, and one can train like in yoga and meditation to dissociate from the mind, become one with the body, just being here now and thereby forget the ego. Some people achieve amazing and miraculous thing by this, the siddhis of Indian sadhu's are well known. Physicist Fred Alan Wolf takes the possibilities of this quite far in his book about The Yoga of Time Travel (2004), he believes that we can actually influence our bodystate in such a way by yoga, that we can influence the possibility of events. That doesn't imply we can make sure an event happens, we can do something about the chance it could happen.

The geometry of the I dimension and the otherworld

The I dimension in this perspective is one vertical line, but this is just a graphical indication. In the three world model I use it is a realm, but it could be anything. Obviously the normal mechanics of space and time don't apply to the extra->dimensional, which permeates our space-time continuum. But does this mean there is no space or time perception when we go there? The dream state we remember when waking up does have familiar features like color (although many dreams are black and white experiences), texture, and smell. There is also some notion of place and time in the sense that one scene follows another.

We do experience a certain power over where we are and what we do and the sequence in time, but it differs from 'normal' consciousness. Experienced 'Lucid dreamers,' who have honed their control over the dream state, tell us that they can go wherever they want and experience a certain sensation of time. There is logic in their travels, although they can go back in time and are not limited by the futilities of gravity or matter. So it looks like not all reality is gone in deep trance or psychedelic experiences or are there varying degrees of entering that state? There might be a multitude of realities or quantum-states, with different levels of non-Newtonian causality.

Individuality

Letting go of the ego, in other words letting go of the self-consciousness, is a fundamental part or stage of the ritual matrix. This comes with identity loss and a state of liminality (in between state) which Victor Turner saw as an essential characteristic of ritual. Here the warbled notion of identity individuality (or loss of it) pops up. Is individuality the last defense around our inner core or just the positive part of our personality, as Jung's individuation seems to suggest? It's not very clear, is the purpose of life being different, special, unique or should we let go of that? Especially the Western focus on identity makes it something we should aim at, and spiritual teachers use the words personality, identity, individuality in different and sometimes conflicting ways. Osho (Bhagwan) said that:

"Personality is imposed on you from the outside; it is a mask. Individuality is your very being, it is that which you bring into the world."

One could read individuality here as the soul, but still the notion of being special is important in this message. Jung individuation also gives us the idea, that being different (and yourself) is the most important.

These days we like so much to be different from others, We want to be individuals, have a special identity, be respected for our uniqueness, but this is also the ego, the part others easily dislike. It is mostly the outward appear-

ance, the way we have learned to deal with the world and we usually have identified our self with this pattern, that what we think we are. Sri Chinmoy made a useful distinction in individuality:

“Human individuality is a self torturing personality. Divine individuality is a self discovering personality.”

The importance and sacredness of the individual over and above the collective, now so prevalent in our Western thinking, is the focus of rights and responsibilities, of media and artistic expression. Even ceremonies these days are mostly about people. In sports, science (Nobel laureates) and politics it's the individual that matters. But there is a price to this, the social cohesion is faltering, our liberality eats away at charity, social responsibility, caring, connectedness and Facebook is a poor remedy. It is why rituals and notably their social effects are so important, they are the glue that holds things together. Once this was the domain of religion, now it's sports, reality tv, being famous in the media. Sociologist Émile Durkheim wrote:

Thus very far from there being the antagonism between the individual and society which is often claimed, moral individualism, the cult of the individual, is in fact the product of the society itself. It is the society that instituted it and made of man the god whose servant it is.

Why do we act

Acting and doing is very much related to the sense world, pure being (without judgment) is beyond that. There is the concept of the “sense of agency” (SA) and this refers to the subjective awareness that one is initiating, executing, and controlling one's own volitional actions in the world. This action or agent self is sometimes indicated as the executive function that allows for actions.

We need this aspect of the self to understand (or rationalize) why we act in the sense world. We act and react based on automatic patterns, stored in the brain and response mechanism in our nerve system, but we also act or think we act willingly. That we can will things is not totally obvious, neuroscientists like Benjamin Libet have indicated that what we think we “will” is dependent on unconscious processes in our brains, the whole notion of free will could be an illusion. This is slippery terrain, for in the deterministic view all we do is automatic anyway. The issue of free will and that we act voluntarily is hard to appease with rational causality, only the quantum-probabilistic uncertainty offers the materialists a way to something like free will, Roger Penrose sees some quantum processes deep in the brain.

I do assume there is free will, but only in the magical time dimension and our access to that I dimension is mediated by our subjective selves. In other

words, the I that is free to decide only exist in that dimension. In that perspective that which we thus suppose to be the free will is filtered, corrupted, reformatted by our subjective self. Free will in this sense is an exchange process with the extra dimensional, the free will dimension so to speak. There are impulses coming from the extra-dimensional and there are actions and impulses our selves send there, in a constant process of mirroring, introspection, feedforward and feedback.

The I and the selves are in a dialogue and this makes decision making so muddy, the conscious and unconscious send sometimes opposing messages. This discussion between the inner me and assumed self is sometimes quite noticeable and conscious. This dialogue leads to action impulses that we might experience a choice between divine will and the ego will with its own objectives. Following the latter leads to evil, falsehood, obsessive sin, but we do have a choice; this is the process of “better conscious” acting (The Gewissen in German and in Freud’s Superego). Not an easy process, this touches on morality and choice. Sometimes there are intuitions coming from the extra-dimensional that seem irrational but somehow related to necessity in the wider picture.

I admit that the experience of free will is mostly illusion, but so there are moments or states that we do escape this illusion and again, the ritual state is one of them. In the chapters about Will and Time I come back to this.

Memory, traces, field

The psyche and memory are closely related and there is a lot of research about how our brain deals with incoming sense data. We can now more or less see how these data influence the chemical and electrical processes, trace what happens in our brain. MRI scans, chemical tracing, the neurologist are finding out a lot about how we deal with sense input, how thoughts affect the brain, how stimulation of certain parts the brain can cause certain thoughts, how the neurons function, the hormones etc. etc. Amazing results, we seem to know a lot, and many videos and books now try to explain how we think, how we store information. I fear there is still little understanding how we actually create images, how we store and recall emotions, facts and what memories are. Are they just traces in our brain tissue, some materialistic, chemical or electric residue or is there more? I think we, our senses and primes are far more complex than we have assumed.

Memory traces or cloud access

Rupert Sheldrake in his 2012 book “The Science Delusion” makes clear that whatever the materialist claim to know and prove, there is no hard evidence that memories are stored as material traces in the brain. He points at the peculiar time-aspects of memory and how the different kinds of mem-

ory, being habituation, sensitization, behavioral memory, recognition and recall all point at some kind of resonance mechanism and thus his morphic resonance model. What we do when we remember is to tune into a field, outside of our brain, to store and retrieve what we experience as memories. He argues memory and morphic resonance extend beyond time. Another way of saying that is that memory is outside the confines of normal time. This makes thinking about memory even more complex. I argue we thus, by accessing something beyond the brain, can sense the future too, we remember the future one could say and evolution is in that senses remembering what lies ahead.

The feedback and feedforward processes between perception, memory and constructed reality are what establishes consciousness. A tricky subject, where science has traced some of the mechanisms but real explanations have not been found.

Memory is what we have stored, but often recall in a tainted and filtered way. We don't store it as a computer does it, in linear succession of bits, we mix and match, combine, select, and create a reality like when we see and experience things. We recreate reality in our mind, not because some humunculus resides there, but because we tune in to some source inside or outside and create an appropriate but not always consistent and honest mind-image. Vision is another of those psychic processes we hardly understand.

Much of our memory seems to be visual, and we can create whole visionary worlds in our mind, that are not based on sense input or stored memories. Do they exist in the brain only or are they part of a general kind of external memory and vision cloud is not clear.

Obviously memory is a crucial function in thinking, and it plays a role in unconscious, subconscious, conscious and self-conscious processes. It is, in many ways, beyond the tangible and I believe beyond the mind (brain). No doubt there is a phase in memory (and thought) processes where there are material traces, but they are just mechanical steps leading to the contact with the memory field outside. Our brains (and limbs, etc.) are just the tuning devices, they are part of the memory process like a radio tuner or wifi receiver. There is some electric activity in such a device, but we know real content doesn't reside in the tuner or receiver/router, but is picked up from waves, filtered and passed on.

The brain as a tuner

If our brains are like a tuning device, there is traceable activity when we think, recall, remember, etc. but this is just the translating and tuning mechanism, not the real content. We use this tuning device to see and perceive what we want to see, our brains seems (from a software and AI perspective)

very much pattern-seeking belief engines. But then things like will, causation and even consciousness are in a way beyond the brain, which is then the antenna and signal processing unit we use to deal with what is in the extradimensional.

Here I come back to the notion of multiple masks. We know from cases of pathological multipersonality (Jekyll/Hyde) that memories can be different in different masks. The same hardware is, by different software (masks) tuned to different layers of stored information (memory) and creates a different perceived reality. I think that more study of multiple mask phenomena would bring more insight in the question where memory resides. For instance the memory capabilities in the inner child state are, for me and in me, quite different from what I can remember in my normal (mask) state. Less factual, more associative, less short term memory and less vocabulary, but more intense, more connected and yielding insights beyond the rational.

It is in the different memories, including the suppressed but still influential traumatic memories, that the masks differ and have led to divergent personalities. What might look like similar patterns on an MRI-scan could be totally different thoughts and memories, this is where materialist neuroscience still finds its limits. Defining mask-states, as expressed in measurable characteristics and charting the relationships between physical and mental resonances concerning memories should be, I argue, the next step in neurological but also medical and psychological research.

The cloud paradigm

The whole notion of memory (and maybe also vision, hearing etc.) being beyond the brain strikes me as resonant with what now happens with the internet and our individual data. More and more we are putting data in the cloud, we virtualize the storage we once had on our own hard disk and optical media, place them somewhere out there, on storage somewhere in a vast network of cloud services, but nearly immediately accessible if we need them. The overarching paradigm of our time, going through stages of identification with the steam engine, machines, the computer and the network, now moves toward a cloud paradigm. Everything out there, accessible at any time and from any place or any device. The cloud is where we have placed our digital identity, the cloud is where we, as Facebook, NSA or credit card profile exist. "Home is where the heart is" replaced by "Home is where my data is", identity externalized, sense of self digitized.

A dangerous image, but in line with what people like Ray Kurzweil believe; life, love and self is just a program we can replicate in software. Not my idea of the wider reality, but the cloud paradigm brings us closer to such thinking, while the irony is that what we thing reality is might also be a kind

of cloud phenomenon. An image that inverts the worldview in the movie “the Matrix”, our own brains are just the plugs or interfaces that connect us to what is out there!

Where do we find the self

The self is not a separate entity somewhere in our mind, not a humunculus we can isolate, a little man somewhere in our brain. The self is a subjective notion, something we create in order to deal with the world and is rooted in the deeper I, the true self as it is often indicated. In the model of the psyche I have separated the subjective selves, with their memories, consciousness processes and memories, but I admit this is just another model, another limited mapping attempt. The self is, partly due to the different interpretations, not an easy concept. In fact one could even argue that the self is the cause of many problems, and that especially the notion of a self as being different, individuated and special is the cause of much trouble. The attention given to the individual self in the West has obviously led to progress in the scientific and material sense, but at what cost have we moved away from self as part of the whole, as self being always is based on a relationship, with space, matter, others, nature and the all? My baseline lesson in life “I am only different because I have not yet learnt to be the same” has a lot to do with this.

I think that the inner tension between child and mask(s) is root of the human condition, that most illnesses and problems in our life stem from the repressed inner child (inner self) that wants to be heard and is suppressed by the mask(s) or personalities we have developed as a defense-mechanism.

The essential magic: working on the self

Summing this all up. We have a self-aware “me”, separate from others and separate from our environment. And yet this “me” must be given up to reach the “unity” state of the “I”. This means that whomever wants to enter the realm of the miraculous has to do away with the ‘worldly’ illusions about him or herself. Magic therefore starts by giving up the “me”, the perception of self and the personality or ego we associate with it.

Ritual as practical magic centers around this notion too. Letting go of ego, of identity will give access to a vast and new extradimensional realm, expand our perception and memory beyond the tangible and normal time-limits.

Mask and masking, roles

The word mask as used in psychology and sociology can apply to the self image (the assumed self) and to the social roles or self schemas. The struc-

tural or self-masks as I use the word mask are not the same as the functional (social or role) masks, the more or less conscious shifts or adaptations of the shown “me” to different (social) situations.

The (social) masks or roles referred to in that use of the word are attitude adaptations or stances in a particular situations in daily life, sometimes referred to as multiple self-schemas or character masks.

We have many such roles and this kind of illustrates how our psyche practically adapts and covers itself.

These roles are the ways we deal with situations, they are situational and usually functional adaptations to work, school, to the normal life challenges.

They can be seen as behavior patterns or subprograms of the shown me, often they are Pavlovian conditioned responses we have stored as mini-programs and use if necessary. They were once rational and conscious adaptations, but over time became semi-automatic scripts and action plans, often efficient ways to deal with situations and people. They do have a relationship with the underlying psyche and selves, and one could say that each sub-personality or structural mask has its own set of role-patterns. These sets of roles within a structural self-mask are what we display and as such constitute a character or personality.

As we switch from one sub-personality to another we call upon another set of internally consistent roles and in this sense a sub-personality or mask can be determined as a specific type, like as in an enneagram personality type. When there are more sub-personalities and unconscious switches between them this typing becomes harder or impossible. This is the main problem and limitation of personality typing methods, what mask is being tested. In medical practice this is also why test result can differ so much. Blood pressure and other indicators might give insight in one mask, but the cause of an illness might reside in another.

I tend to use the word (self-)mask only as a modality of the assumed self. Mask switches are also triggered by situations and unconscious cues, but have their roots in much deeper experiences and are much closer to multiple identities than the social roles or more superficial self-schemas.

Structural masks and social masks are very important in the interaction between the self(s) and the social world. They establish the relationship between the set and the setting, between the inner person and the outer world. One could say, that as society developed, we need more and more masks, more theatre, less truth and less higher self. In modern times, we are constantly playing out some role, letting go of our mask has become special and requires an effort. And yet, we have to let go of both role masks and

structural masks to enter the inner me, where true creativity, happiness and free will reside.

In sociology “role-taking” as developed by pragmatic social psychologist George Herbert Mead and “role-set” (Robert K. Merton) refers to social interaction in which people adopt and act out a particular but assumed social role placed in a society that according to Mead in “Mind, Self, and Society (1934)” is an open-ended symbolic universe.

We play the role of “police officer” as a child, but also if we become one; we have semi-permanent or transitory roles for most situations. We learn these by imitating “role-models”, by internalizing myths and stories and by participating in rituals, where the otherworld roles (divine behavior) inspires us.

Karl Marx: character mask

The notion of a personality or character being a mask is not only interesting in the spiritual and psychological context but can be applied to organizations, churches and societies. Karl Marx used the word character mask (German: Charaktermaske) to denote a character disguised with a different character. He and many others since see it as a way of dealing with complex situations in society, concerning status, division of labour, trade and relationships. This concept was used to describe and interpret how people act and relate in societies and how societies deal with that. It was less a psychological concept (Marx wrote about it in the mid-nineteenth century) than part of an economical and political worldview and is different from what I describe as structural mask or sub-personality.

The “social roles” do not necessarily assume the masking of behaviour, the dishonesty and power play Marx assigned to masks. Marx used his notion of masks to point out how institutions as well as people were hiding their true intentions.

Roles are more related to stance variations (acting as child, adult, parent) as in Eric Berne’s transactional analysis theory. I also think that for instance Voice Dialogue could deal with both structural mask and role/self schemas and even with archetypal patterns in the core me, but in a different therapeutic perspective.

Masks and roles in ritual

I use the word structural mask as it better explains that the assumed or shown selves (masks) are different from what lies behind or deeper in the psyche. Personality (from the word persona also meaning mask) or character are like ego words with so many meanings and theoretical models behind them, that I try not to use them. Masks in the classical sense of assuming another role are of course part of most rituals. The most extreme is that a

person is being taken over by a demon or spirit, like in many indigenous traditions. But in most rituals there are roles and masks, there is the theatrical and performance aspect and also the need to separate the 'normal' status of the officiator from his formal position and role in the ritual.

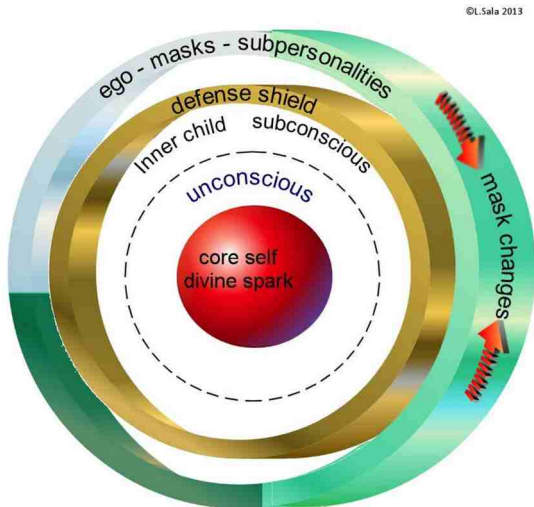
The priest or officiator assumes the official position of power and authority, in a way hides behind his or her office, dresses up and acts differently, becomes an official, often a representative of either the deity or the church that commissioned him or her. But also the other attendants and participants assume a role, play their part. This doesn't mean such a role change is not honest, it often is an effective way to establish a new and time-limited relationship between the participants, letting go of their identity and stepping into another role. This constitutes, as Victor Turner pointed out, a liminality situation, a possibility to cross the threshold and lose one's identity, one's ego. Letting go of the ego is essential in reaching the inner me state, where the magical can be touched. This is the essential message and the secret of all esoteric teachings.

A warning: the map is not the moon

The graphics used here are just a simplified attempt to explain the obviously very complex structure of selves and I. I have separated the self images as three globes next to each other, but this is just one possibility. The approach, were the selves are layers of a single globe is probably more accurate, but then it is harder to show the interactions

between the layers. Just as an alternative I will also give the graphical image using a single self image with layers.

So my map of the psyche is not the moon, just an attempt to clarify some processes and thus no better than the schematics others have made to illustrate their point of view.



A model of the psyche
with shifting subpersonalities



*A combination of a mathematical and magical worldview on balls,
an artistic project by Roberto Renout.*

13 Mindset: the psychology

The interaction of the three realms, inner world, outer world and unseen otherworld and the communications between them with the psyche as director of their interplay are more interesting than looking at the stars and galaxies far away or making particles go faster and faster. It concerns me, I, myself.

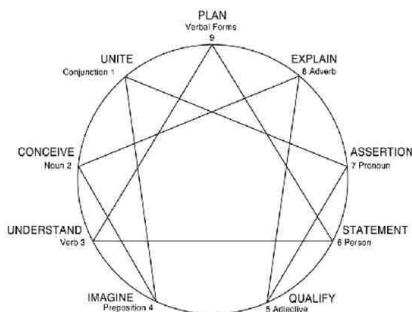
Like most people I wondered, from the time my self, my identity showed up in childhood, why I was different from others and why would I act the way I did? Why wasn't it immediately understood what I wanted or did, why would others react as if I came from another planet, misunderstand my intentions, treat me like a stranger, in short what was different in me? Of course I gradually learned to adapt, make myself clear or not clear if necessary, use my mask, manipulate the self I showed.

There remained this fascination to know why people (including me) behaved as they did. Not much was taught about it at school, you were supposed to conform, with just an occasional stroke for being original or different. As I didn't study psychology or some social science, but a hard science, the best I could figure out was that we were in a way programmed, like computers.

Apart from the general theories and models I picked up here and there, there was some materia about how people interacted and made decisions in the curriculum of the Business Administration program at Erasmus University where I went after graduating in Physics in Delft.

But these were mostly very rational models, the homo economicus was not yet seen as homo emoticus or homo incentivus, let alone homo ludens. And who would understand a word like cognitive modifiability in those days?

One of the things that fascinated me was the notion of "real". I like to meet "real" people. I got the somewhat infantile notion that if I could know what "real" people are, how I can recognize them, how they behave, I would understand the world better. But what is "real"? It is obviously beyond being nice and empathic, it has to do



Oscar Ichazo's Enneagram is a great tool to look at the assumed self, but I never found a connection with the inner child or shown self.

with honesty and trustworthiness, being oneself, intuition, egolessness, but where to find an easy answer?

There is this general notion that real is hidden behind the illusion, the false ego, but where to go to uncover this real thing. So I started looking into psychological models, the notions psychologists were working with and new ideas that emerged in the humanistic psychology, the new age and the transpersonal scene. Because of my travels and contacts with the Mondo 2000 people like Leary and Claudio Naranjo, I was exposed to many new theories and lesser known models like Leary's eight-circuit model of consciousness, Ichazo's Enneagram and the typology ideas of classical and modern psychology.

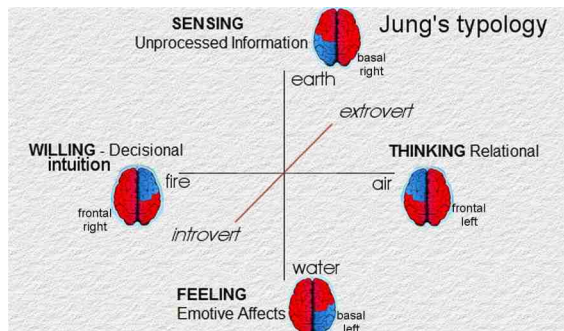
Over time I accepted the notion that we are not our one "self," but that there are more of us inhabiting (and sharing) this body and even this brain. The general model of inner-child (real self), mask(s) and shown selves I use (with all the ifs and buts of any generalization) helped me to uncover certain patterns and possibilities, while being more or less in line with the traditions of old and psychologists notions of new. The terminology is not the most important.

Indications like Higher Self, Inner Child, Persona, Mask, Personality, Ego, those words are used in various ways, by me and others and don't matter so much, as long as the distinction between the different modalities, masks, and ego-manifestations (moods, sub personalities, behavior types) is accepted. The graphical representations are maybe a better way to convey my notions, irrespective of the terms used.

As I explained in the chapter about the psyche, I consider the often used distinction between a real self and a false (social) self not adequate to explain how humans operate. In this chapter I will try to bring this model in line with how psychologists deal with the psyche (or the mind as limited to our brains as most do) and indicate a separation between the spiritual and psychotherapeutic fields.

The magical ignored

Psychology is the study of the mental processes and behavior. The word psychology derives from the Greek word psyche for "breath, spirit, soul". Psychol-



ogy emerged from biology and philosophy and is closely linked to other disciplines.

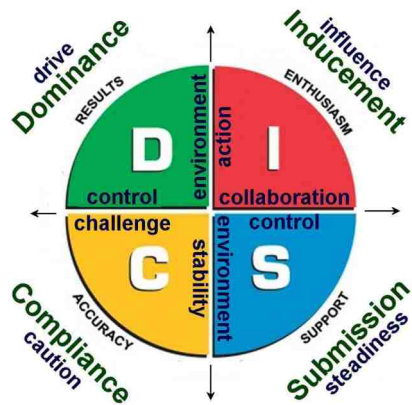
Psychology (not philosophy) usually ignores the magical per se, leaves it to the para-psychologist but tends to label them as pseudo-scientists, hoping they will prove it is all fantasy, superstition, make-belief, placebo. Psychology does look into the effects of those beliefs on thinking and behavior, and how they shape our lives, but still mostly follows Freud in believing it's all a material matter, the brain is all there is.

I like the way Carlos Castaneda makes his distinction between the tonal (the normal tangible reality) and the nagual (the magical realm), showing how Don Juan tries to train his apprentices to experience (and magically use) the difference.

Castaneda brings together and I don't care whether it's fiction or not, many approaches of dealing with the nagual. He describes many options and methods for getting there, training the psyche to let go of the programming, masks, and hypnotic convictions that make up the "normal" reality. That this leads to strange experiences or manipulations of time, mass, energy, identity, and reality is not explained by classical physics and rational materialism, but generally accepted as fact in history and seen as magical (divine, demonic, evil, saintly).

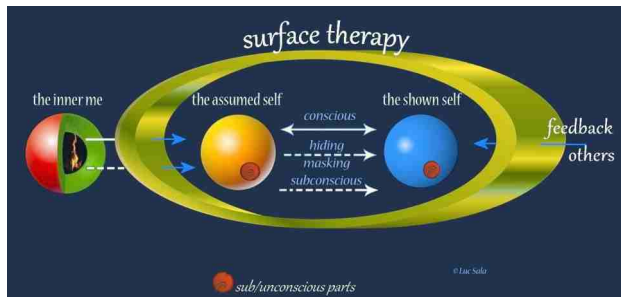
These days quantum physics is getting closer to being the science of magic, as it upgrades from the ultra-small scale of bosons and gravity-particles to more macroscopic phenomena where reality flips, thus entering the realm of macroscopic magic.

Psychology does not (yet) involve the study of magic. Then neither does anthropology, although there is a growing interest in



W.Marston-W.Clarke behavioral style model

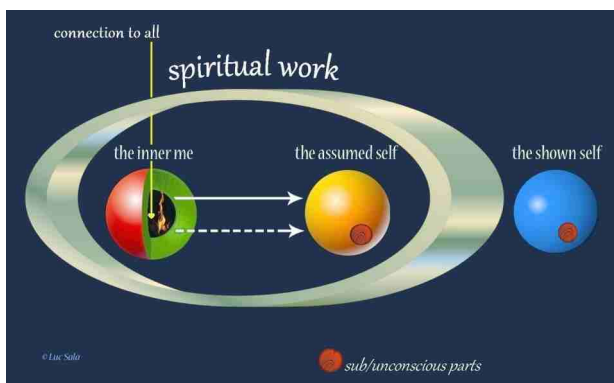
The W. Marston DISC model, with some similarities to Tim Leary's Rose



the magical practices in shamanism, faith healing and such.

Psychology, even before it was named as such, looked at how we perceive and think and how we behave in relation to thinking. Through the ages it has evolved, through the Greeks and the Scholastics (Schoolmen), the

Hermetic and Enlightenment, Kant, toward Freud and more recently the humanistic psychology, the behaviorists and now neurology widened the field.



These approaches no doubt all have value, but I missed a coherent view that includes the magical realm, a kind of overall image about how psyche, personality, ego, etc. worked and how one could influence this complex mechanism. In the chapter about the psyche I described what I found and offer as a hypothesis, but here I will go deeper into the mindset perspective.

In the context of the set-setting-magic approach ritual is obviously also a psychological process. We experience, learn, get insights through ritual. This mindset part of what a ritual achieves is hardly contested, all anthropologist notice that participating in a ritual has psychological effects. These effect are not necessarily positive, one could doubt whether a young boy really appreciates the initiation rite or the effect of circumcision, but obviously it's part of a ritual tradition.

For many the inner workings, the psychological aspects are the more important part of a ritual, like learning about one's intention, motives, energy, the inner recognition of self and ego. Peace of mind, growth, connectedness, the honoring of the tradition are the goal and enough of a result and even enlightenment comes into reach for those who use a ritual for self contemplation. In that process one comes closer to the inner self and the spiritual core without aiming at obtaining any magical results.

In the socio-cultural context, the bonding and social structure that comes with rituals has value. However, looking at practical rituals like those for rain and healing, or those before doing battle or hunting, the outer world efficacy cannot be ignored.

Usually there is an intermediary stage, where by divination or interpretation of certain signs, like the appearance of a bird in the sky, the outcome or future is 'divined'. This leads in itself to a psychological state of mind and more rational observers speak of a self fulfilling prophecy, self-hypnotic illusion, or hallucination.

Psychology and therapy

Many rituals are healing events, people perform them or go there to find solace, help, healing and often this concerns the mind, the psychology. In the days before there were psychologists, psychiatrist and therapist rituals were, certainly for the common people, important in dealing with their mindset. The priest or shaman, maybe the local witch of old was the only therapist available, unless one was willing and able to go the holy places, where again rituals and maybe better priests could help.

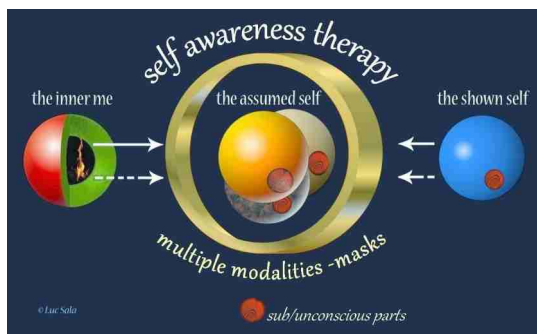
We now understand, thanks to Freud and modern psychology a little better how the psyche works and interacts with the body, but psychotherapy is still very much symptom-oriented. Some approaches work, some pills work, some therapy works, but success is not guaranteed at all. Recent investigations in for instance the effect of placebo drugs show that the underlying belief is nearly as important as the chemical effects of the drug. One has not really recognized, that this means the ritual context of working with placebos is what matters

Personality types

All through the ages one has tried to come up with a typology to classify people, looking at body, mind and behavior. There are elaborate and effective systems like in ayurvedic medicine, but the Western world has found their own methods, these days helped by statistical analysis.

There are many questions and theories about personality, character, nature/nurture influences and such. Many questions are not really well addressed, like can people change at all beyond what they were programmed to do anyway, is there a relationship of personality with time (astrology), with DNA (nature)?

One of the questions I wrestled with as I began to see how I developed



my own personality patterns had to do with the focus on the assumed self of most personality typing systems. Something was missing in most, like in the Enneagram and other typologies (Jung, Big Five, DISC, Myers-Briggs, Astrology); they don't cover multiple selves. Even complex combinations like Arnold Keyserling's Wheel don't deal with this.

These approaches were great tools for superficial therapy, group interaction analysis and managing people, but described at best the surface, the assumed and shown selves. Methods like Byron Katie's "work", asking pertinent questions about projection are valuable and help to uncover one's patterns, but they don't go beyond the surface.

I was looking for something deeper, a structural relationship between inner child, personality traits and the most influential parent. In practical terms, if we know the personality type of the mother and the child, could we deduce the inner child scenario and talents based on a common pattern of how the defense/ coping mechanisms work?

Assessing personality is hard and specialist work (especially one's own) and has become a business. It provides income for many institutions and therapists.

What they do often feels like just exterior work, patching up or covering the more nasty aspects, in order to fit in and function better but ignoring that the core of our being is what created this personality in the first place, for good reasons.

I think accepting what we are and honoring our development including the good and the bad as necessary and perfect is the better approach, and ritual is one of the ways to get there, this is part of the psychological efficacy of ritual.

Therapeutic action fields

The model of the multiple subjective self image I have described in the chapter about the psyche, offers also a possibility of classification therapy and analysis of these selves. This is very broad and I use the term action field for the categories, by lack of a better description.

I separate the work (therapy) on the selves in three main groups, one covering the show self and assumed self (or selves), one covering the assumed self image and a third, concentrating on the relationship between assumed self and inner me. The illustrations in this chapter outline these categories

There are many ways and levels where and how a therapist or psychiatrist (or priest, shaman etc.) could deal with the psyche, the personality or the soul. The enormous array of therapeutic methods and theories illustrates this, there are libraries full of books and therapeutic institutes galore.

Surprisingly, they usually do work, the therapist is the main factor anyway. The person of the therapist and his empathic qualities and experience are at least as important as the method used, as Carl Rogers argued.

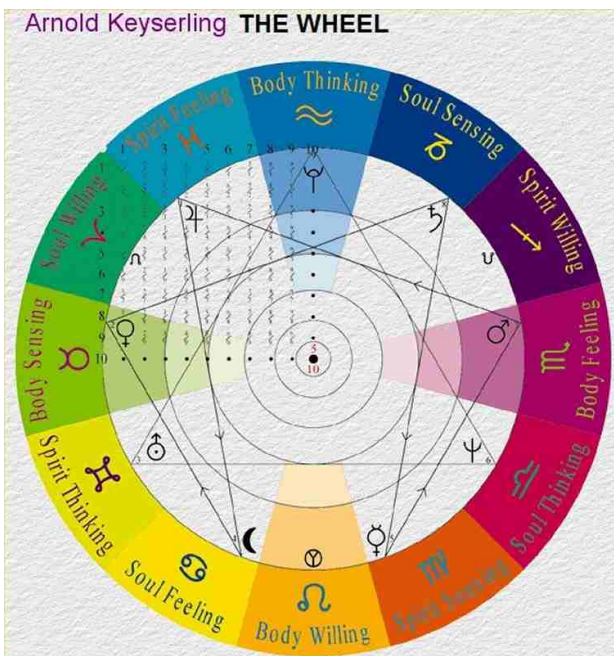
But why are these approaches to type and therapy so different, how could different and sometime radically opposing views develop? I assume that the people who developed such methods focused on a specific connection or self mode, obviously influenced by their own projections and focus and came up with an approach that worked, in that respect. For most people, choosing between the approaches is a matter of chance, they happen to know this or that therapist, read a book or hear about good results.

The multiple self model I use offers another way to distinguish, and maybe help to choose between all the available methods for spiritual development, therapeutic intervention, growth, enlightenment or whatever one calls them.

In very general terms I thus categorize therapy and self growth approaches in three main groups or fields of action. They do overlap, but this helps me to find my way in the jungle of therapy-land.

Surface therapy

The first and most superficial (but in practice the most widely used) category is the one that deals with the difference between the assumed and the shown self. I call this group surface therapy. This is where dealing with



Arnold Keyserling's Wheel combines insights from Jung, the enneagram, astrology and color theory.

daily life situations, work, relationships, looks, age and superficial judgment takes place. Behavior, reaction patterns, triggers, therapy can change these things and lead to better adapted individuals. This is a fruitful field for therapy and there are many approaches here, abrading, polishing the shown self or selves, working on the behavior patterns, reforming routines and patterns, rewiring the neurological pathways (NLP). The result will be a different “shown me”, different self schemas, better understanding of the differences between assumed and shown self, a general increase in awareness of how one behaves.

Don’t take me as ignoring the value of this work, we all need to align us with what the world requires, in order to live with others. Many of these approaches work, sometimes surprisingly well, but are mostly symptomatic. The original intent might not be, but the usual results are.

NLP and ritual

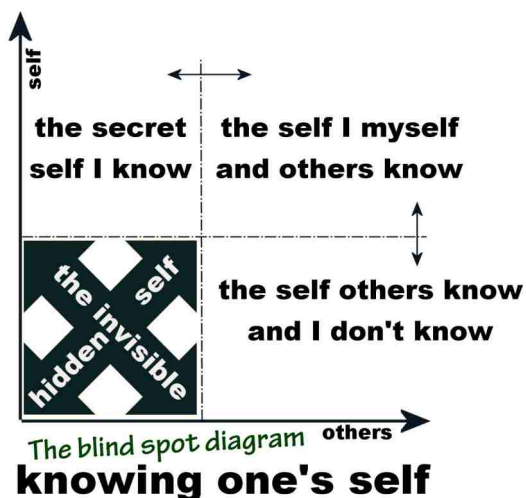
In fact I believe that analyzing rituals in an NLP (neuro linguistic programming) context is very useful. It ignores the magical, but the set and setting of a ritual are full with NLP elements. I look at the ritual matrix of Holy Mass in a appendix VI, but it is equally valid to see such rituals as a series of NLP formats and anchors. Repeating certain movements and chants in a special setting does rewire our brain. Many religious rituals intend to anchor good feelings, about oneself, the community and the deity and use techniques and routines that we now recognize as NLP-type affirmations and anchoring.

To illustrate what therapeutic approaches concerning the difference between shown and assumed self do address there is a more conventional image. It’s the well known diagram of the blind spot in our self knowledge. In a fourfold division on two axes, indicating what we know about ourselves and what others know, there are lines separating the amount of information we and others have or share. It indicates what we hide to our self and to others and shows a bit better the flexibility we have in shifting the lines, opening up or not, but without the notion that the four areas are images of our psyche. This graph is often used to indicate the blind spots in our perception and help people realize that others can see things they themselves are unaware of. It makes clear what the purpose of therapy can be, both in knowing more about one self and allowing others to know more, shifting the lines. The four self image areas in this picture however only describe what happens between assumed self and shown self, in relation to the other and this image is therefore applicable to that and doesn’t cover the relation between inner child/me and assumed self.

The second one, the self awareness approach, deals with the assumed self, the self image. It is the realm of the set, the mindset, while the surface category deals more with the interaction, the world, the setting.

Concerning therapy or work concerning the assumed self or selves, here some deeper probing is necessary. One has not only to uncover more of the unconscious part in that “me”, but to

recognize how this self is related to the inner child, how maybe more masks developed and what their relationship is with traumatic experiences, parental force etc. The classic psycho-analytic approach, not just observing behavior, is what comes into play here. This is the therapy level where the cause of many diseases can be located and maybe addressed, it’s the level of deep psychological work.



Spiritual therapy, access, work

There is a third level where the spiritual aspect is the most important and where maybe the word therapy is no longer appropriate, but inner work, deepening, contemplation are better. This concerns the relation of the assumed self with inner me, the process of getting closer to the inner fire, letting go of the ego attachments. This is more the area of the guru, the shaman, the spiritual teacher; someone who has experience in being in this inner me mode. It has to be noted that the results of increased awareness and spiritual frequency might have little relevance for the shown self. This third is where the magical part of a ritual takes place.

This division in three therapeutic action fields implies, that work on the superficial level may help to improve the dealings with others and can be experienced as very beneficial, but there is the danger that because of the superficial effects the need to look deeper becomes less. More specifically, often diseases, depressions and worries are a signal of deeper problems, by fixing the superficial the possibility (and need) to get to the root of things is lost. This is what happens in allopathic medicine a lot too, we fix the symptoms, not the cause.

In the context of a ritual, all three categories can be present and have effects. One can learn about the way one interacts with others, how the shown self and the assumed self are different and how to get in contact with the inner me and the spiritual core. In this book I concentrate on the inner self contact as this is where the magic kicks in, but this is not to ignore the other realms, the set and setting.

Psychological and social efficacy

A ritual seems to have little direct magical effect on reality, as it addresses the other world and the response will not be a direct physical apparition, but will yield inner changes. Mystical or contemplative states are often experienced, but the magical effect of the ritual remains abstract and mysterious, easily interpreted as merely a symbolic act. The form hides the content, the true workings. They are there, but rarely appear as immediate miracles, magic works in an indirect way, easily mistaken as chance. However, there are the realities of the setting, the fire, the liturgic acts, the people around us, our movements and sounds, and together they are very much real. We feel touched, transported to a different state of being. Some even experience a state of synesthesia, a unified sensory perception, an euphoric feeling. So the psychological and social efficacy is hardly doubted, and for many that is enough.

Going to Church brings a good feeling, connection to other members, isn't that enough? If one sees direct results of certain rituals, like spontaneous healing, people speak of miracles, especially in a religious context. But direct, immediate results are rare; magic doesn't work like that normally, it works by synchronicity, in indirect ways. The efficacy is hiding, things happen in the background, mostly unnoticed, but they do happen, the course of the future is just changed in such a way, that it becomes logical, normal, chance.

Magical results obviously do happen and it works better if you believe it works. After all, our worlds are made by our perception and those are very dependent on what one beliefs. And if it doesn't work, it must be the will of the Gods, or worse, some black foe-magic or intentional mistakes by the priest, one thinks. I happen to believe it works, but it works only if we really reach that state where magic cuts in the rational, the logical, the time-bound.



That is not an easy challenge, for what is that “ritual” state then, can we learn to get there, what help are rituals, what makes a ritual effective? Studying ritual practice, observing how the master of old did it, meditating and concentrating, training the will and mind power (the intention) do help, but it is understanding the true fundamentals of magic, beyond the moves, the words, the gestures and the energies, that progress in this respect will come.

The mindset of a participant, the psychology of the participant or officiator in a ritual is important in three areas.

First there is the effect of the mindset on the world around and vice versa, the people in the ritual. Secondly the mindset has to deal with the magical outcome, the efficacy and thirdly the mind by itself, as it changes during a ritual, and how initial mindset effects the resulting mindset.

Of these three areas the subject of how participants experience the setting, the people and the world around is the least interesting for me, partly because so much has been written about this. Here I can refer to the many ritual theories and the historic interpretation of ritual, as covered in other chapters of this book.

Pilgrimage and quest

The participant can experience a ritual as just an experience but if one opens oneself to the ritual atmosphere is can become a psychological therapy and in some cases instigate life changing insights.

Here probably the best take is to accept that a good ritual is therapeutic and a good therapy is ritualistic. Both require that the participant opens up to an awareness of mask, assumed and shown self and maybe even to what his or her inner child really has to tell. The ways and means to get there are numerous, and it is of course interesting to see how a specific psychotherapeutic method and session has a ritual matrix and vice versa, but I leave this to the reader.

Just realize that good rituals are set up with deep psychological insight. A few examples will make this clear. The Sacrament of Confession of the Catholic Church was, in a time when the authority of Church and priest was less challenged, a great way to administer psychological relief to the faithful. Compare it to any modern psychotherapeutic method and admire how this was a cheap, fast and efficient way to help people to deal with stress, sin, guilt, etc. Of course it was also part of the power-machinations of the church, but it worked pretty well for a long time.

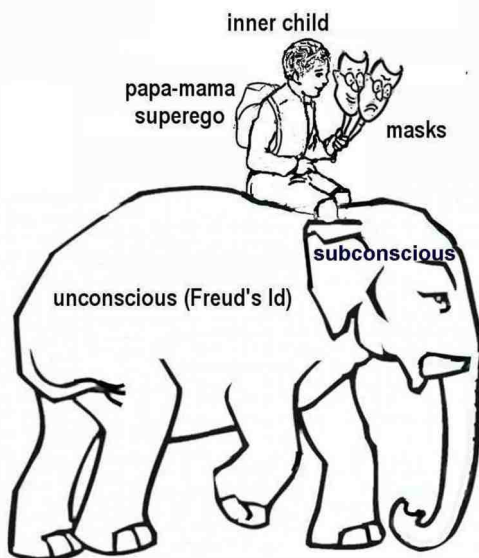
Another example from Church history is the pilgrimage. In the days of the Inquisition actually relatively few people were handed over to the worldly authorities to be burned, there were many other punishments, but most

were ways of penance. One of them was that the sinner or converted heretic has to make a pilgrimage to Rome, Santiago de Compostela etc.

Now these days there are thousands and thousands who also walk the Camino to Santiago and experience a tremendous ego-cleaning and transformation in doing so. In fact such a trip is now often advised by the allopathic medical world for people with deep existential problems. Walking, fasting, a new environment, no need for ego, a pilgrimage is a ritual that takes time, but has all the elements of a good ritual matrix. So what a great invention to deal with the problem makers, self thinkers, would be revolutionaries of the middle ages, just send them on a pilgrimage, a ritual quest! Chances are they won't return and if they do, they probably came to their senses a bit.

Concerning what magically happens for the individual during a ritual, the belief system is a good start.

What you truly believe will manifest, if it aligns with the divine will, is what the sages tell us. I think this is true, but aligning with the vertical axis of the divine I is not easy, and requires a connection with the core self, as discussed in the chapter about the psyche. As long as we let the false self do the bidding (praying) nothing much will result. Concerning the belief system, of course there is an initial state, but part of the art of ritual is to seduce participants to change their belief system during the liturgy. This is not so much a matter of words, speeches, sermons, but of using other, often subconscious matrix elements like movements, postures, concentration moments induced by sounds or smells.



A combination of Freud and J. Haidt's elephant & rider image of the psyche.

14 Free Will: causation, power and ritual

"Let us say then frankly that the education of the Will is the object of our existence." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

What are we without a will, without this mostly illusory notion that we have something to say or to do that makes a difference? Our identity and sense of self hinges on our will, on our ability to be different, to make a difference. I say illusory because both philosophers and neuroscientists agree that most of our 'decisions' are involuntary, automatic responses. We pride ourselves as being in charge, but are we and when and how can we influence this?

Is there any point in trying to influence the future (as we basically do in rituals) if whatever happens is either determined by the past or indeterminated as in the present being the result of random chaos? Questions like this and the eternal (compatibility) conflict between free will and determinism complicate talking about the role of the will in ritual and magic.

Will is a vast subject and can be looked at from many angles. Philosophers like Schopenhauer, fascinated by otherworld phenomena, used the concept of will to denote some overarching principle beyond perception. Others looked at more limited images of what will is. Freud's will to pleasure, Friedrich Nietzsche's "Wille zur Macht" (the will to power) and the will to live in the psychotherapy of Alfred Adler are just a few examples.

Appendix nr. III deals with the various historical views about will and the free will-causation-determinism debate. So there you can find (my interpretation of) what others think about this, the various views and interpretations of will. The will to pleasure, to meaning, the will to duty, the will to act. I will also deal with how will seems to work in our brain, the neurological and materialist interpretations.

Philosophically, there are no easy answers here, it's an age-old question that fills many books. As I try to shed some light on the connection between



"the All is One" (Zosimos of Panopolis).
10-11th Century

will and ritual I will first try to rank and order the various will concepts. I will try to fit them in a model, an image, that helps the categorize the notions of will, a kind of map that involves a classification. This is a simplification and leaves fundamental questions that have to be addressed, notably the issue of causation and free will, also in the context of animal will. Only after that will I deal with the practical views concerning will in ritual magic, with willpower, intention and focus.

Ordering wills

I will place the various ‘wills’ or meanings of the word will in some order, but this again is in the context of a worldview, that I will briefly explain here again.

Let me just state that all ‘normal’ existence is the manifestation of the universal all-consciousness (the metadimensional that one could call God). This manifests in tangible reality but also in the realms we cannot touch, the one in our head and the otherworldly spiritual realm. In this third (extra-dimensional) realm normal causality (space and time) rules don’t apply.

I treat it as a single realm, but it might comprise levels like the Astral, Etheric, Atmic, Buddhic levels as various traditions point at. Here I just address them as one realm. Behind the veil of the tangible lies thus another realm. The universal consciousness, however it may express itself, is thus the origin of all the forms of existence (in the mind, in the physical world, in the extradimensional) and all motion.

Now let’s look at the various meanings and interpretations of the word will. It is one of those terms that come in many flavors and have lost a distinct definition; will is used in philosophy, psychology and sociology in many ways.

There is Human will, Divine Will, willpower, power, transcendental power and magical power, will as an action or just an intention. Will can be seen as a fairly limited and superficial human capacity or as the overpowering divine will that makes everything happen and then much in between. We can see some will in animals so why not in every manifestation? Will and consciousness kind of merge at this point.

The concept of the will is thus quite broad Many philosophers used it, but in different ways and in different context. I don’t wish to comment too much on the different notions about the will, as the debate goes on and on all through history. I do however differentiate the meanings and give them a place in a wider scheme.

I think the various interpretations of will differ in where one places these wills, at what level. I use an Uruboros image, as the will hierarchy bites itself in the tail or rather recreates itself.

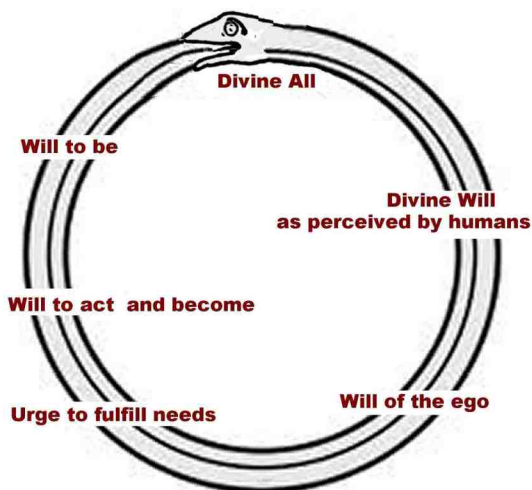
Obviously the divine will is on top, then follow the origins (wills) of being and becoming, then there are the instinctive (animal like) urges we experience as some kind of will. Then we arrive or rather drift into the human will levels. The human wills constitute really a range in itself, from the natural and logical part of human being in the world to the mystical state of being close to the will far above. Maslow has drawn a hierarchy of needs, but this can also be interpreted as a hierarchy of human will. The basic needs are close to the animal urges, we will to eat, breathe, sleep, defend against threats, etc. and even as we have some kind of veto power much of this is involuntary and obviously in our brain these decisions are taken before we realize them.

The higher human will faculties come closer and closer to free will and making a difference. Here self consciousness comes into play, we realize we think, we realize we make decisions, even as this mostly is an illusion. But then the (assumed) self is an illusion as I explain in the chapter about the psyche. I think that free will decisions depend on not having an illusionary self-consciousness but on being truly connected to the inner me, our deep inner self.

Here we encounter a paradox. Will and letting go seem opposed, and yet are both part of doing and achieving real change. To cause and effect we rationally give a temporal sequence, but in the wider model of reality where time is at least more complex than the linear one-directional, they are juxtaposed. At the same level, thus cause \Leftrightarrow effect. In an extreme case, if we do (will) something and make a decision, the effect might be what was to happen anyway in some divine will sense. The effect then called for the cause, that what we thought was an independent decision).

The higher levels of human will are anyway closer to free will (in whatever paradigm) and it is here that they touch the divine will, and that's where we started.

I thus ordered many (though not all) of the will concepts in a structure with the intention



The hierarchy of wills

to separate the meanings and levels of the word by constructing a kind of hierarchy. The graphical expression for this classification model uses the image of the Ouroboros circle, the serpent eating its tail. Just note that part of the serpent (the upper part of the circle) lies in the extradimensional, is unmanifested. There is a will too, for lack of another word called Divine Will. The Ouroboros body starts there, originating in the mouth and then:

- » Following the tail first there is the will to be, to exist in time and this will is in all manifestation, in all matter, it is the will to manifest.
- » Then comes the will of becoming, being in space, having a form. It occupies a territorial form, and thus the fundamental and vital will to defend it, move, act, change. This is the second stage of manifestation. It also can be ascribed to anything, to all elementary particles and the cosmos as a whole. It is the becoming, the “Panta Rhei” of Heraclitus. Every being, no matter how small or great, is an evolving life.
- » Then comes the animated level, with will as an urge, as something based on desires and needs, as we see in animals. We want and thus will to eat, get warm, have sex, follow our instincts, the automatic responses. It’s a stimulus response mechanism and it is only limited by more conscious will-levels. This part of the serpent body is in a way expressed in Maslow’s pyramid of needs and accompanying wills or urges.
- » The upper levels of that urge level of will like the will to meaning or to self-realization are more human, but still automated, subconscious. As we then progress to more self conscious decisions, the will level we encounter in our thinking, the ego-driven will of the assumed self pops up. It’s the will level that we try to overcome in ritual, through meditation, concentration, etc. This is where the step toward the inner me - that allows the magical connection - takes place.
- » The superficial will then develops in the will inside, a deep, inner me will that results from being in touch with our core self. This is close to the divine will but still on a human scale.
- » Then this refers to something much greater, the kind of will that could be indicated as Nature, God or Divine Will, the metadimensional.

There are many more will levels that could be specified, but would obscure the image. As you can see, all these wills or will levels are not in a linear succession, but in a circle.

I placed them in a cycle of will levels where the most high and aware manifests again and comes back in a new cycle, starting again as the most small beginning. It is the fundamental Ouroboros cycle.

The various views of what will means for the different philosophers can also be placed in this graph, while of course the magical/spiritual purpose of a ritual has a place in it too. Letting go of the ego and aspiring to get in touch with the divine will is what a ritual can achieve, apart from the psychological and social aspects.

This image is valid for the will and wills, but has a much wider appeal. This way of looking at will also reflects a similar order in consciousness in the universe and in the development stages of a child.

Causation and free will

Since the days of Aristotle causation and free will (volition) are the big questions, but there is no final verdict (see the appendix III). Can we will something that changes the course of things, can we cause a break in a chain of event or are we will-less victims of the past or fate? Is everything determined, pure chaos and chance or can we influence things. Does ritual, magic or even just making decisions make sense, can we manipulate fate or is it all an illusion and are we just robots acting out predetermined programs, or drifters in a sea of probabilistic variations?

To start with causation, what makes things tick, what makes the world go round? Why is there existence anyway, who or what started it and why and is God still there? Theologically and philosophically these are core questions, we want to know or explain existence and why things are what they are.

The next, more human question is then what makes us do things, take action or refrain from action in our head or in the world. Can we make a difference, decide things? Do we only respond to external stimuli, are there decisions we make or are we living a life determined by what is already planted in our heads, not even with a quantum uncertainty deviation?

To put this in very practical terms: is what I write here original thinking and a result of my own volition, or am I just like the monkey typing away following unconscious orders from my DNA and upbringing?

Volition is time-bound

Will and volition are of course related to ethics and morality, hence the interest of all the philosophers. The ethical question about our influence on reality is of course if we as humans can be held accountable for our actions, what we do or don't do. In extremo, even for what we think or not think. When are we guilty of something? In the Middle Ages heretical thinking would get you burned at the stake. And regrettably, this tends to be the position of the law in matters of security these days. We are now considered guilty even if we have done nothing and before we act, think about airport frisking.

Are we really free to act? If so, under what conditions, in what state of consciousness and what role does the will play? Is that all just self hypnotic rationalization, a great way to fool ourselves, is responsibility, morality etc. nonsense?

My position is that we are both subject to deterministic chains and have free will, as many people feel. I do however place these two in different realms and in different time-frames. It's the extradimensional otherworld where I think free will takes effect.

The will is a virtual thing. Not even the most modern equipment can do more than look at our brain when we 'will' or 'decide' and register the accompanying mechanical, chemical and electrical processes. The underlying will, volition or consciousness remains an enigma. And measuring through divination the interaction with the extradimensional otherworld is as yet beyond what science will accept.

The distinction, or is it separation between the tangible, measurable and the otherworld comes up in many forms; science versus religion, mechanical causality versus agent causality, logic versus intuition, ratio versus synchronicity, the meat computer versus divine grace etc. I will explain in more detail in the chapter about time that the major factor here is the difference in time. The rift can be resolved if we accept two time dimensions, one linear unidirectional and another bi- or rather un-directional, magical time.

In man, the two realms, the seen and the unseen exists side by side. We have a spiritual existence as well as a physical. Going a step further, all manifested reality is made up of those two realms, one in time and rational, the other outside time and irrational, synchronistic, non-causal.

I also believe that we co-create in both modes, we can follow the causality trail and be subject to causality and determinism, and yet we also have free will, to act outside of unidirectional causality. And there is growing support for my position. Physicists now agree on some 11 dimensions and acknowledge the observer (and thus consciousness) as part of reality, at least of perceived reality. This means that there is some kind of yet not understood connectedness that is instantaneous, timeless, nonlocal, spanning all the universe.

Even the Higgs particle doesn't explain all.

In a very general way I argue that the apparent incongruence and compatibility issues between determinism and free will are because we ignore our access to the extra-dimensional realm, the magical time dimension. As I point out in this book, we can only access this realm in a special state of consciousness. Ritual is one of the means to get there, but not the only one.

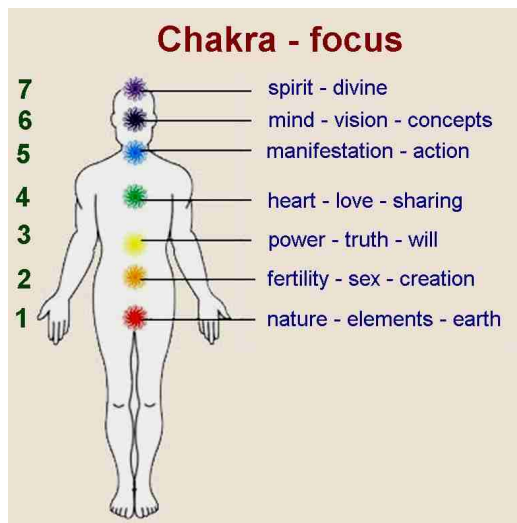
In this whole debate I myself am clearly on the side of the idealists, acknowledging that there are two worlds and that the ratio (*Verstand*) of the one is quite separate of the reasonability (*Vernunft*) of the other. Immanuel Kant really understood the difference and his morality and ethics were based on "*Praktisches Vernunft*", applied intelligence that accepts practical solutions, uncertainties and compromises.

The notion of intelligence in relation to will complicates matters even more. Intelligence is present in all of us but it develops as we mature and can only increase by being used. Using it, we need a will, willpower. It is often said that a developed will is the tool for manifesting intelligence. I think here intelligence and magical power to manifest one's ideas or access higher truths are somewhat mixed up. Is loving a person not more intelligent than understanding them?

Animal will

Will and identity are paired. So an interesting question is whether animals have an identity and thus some kind of will. An animal has urges, instincts, but can it make real decisions, does it have free will? Much research has been done, by psychologists and neuro researchers with complex devices, attached to animals, plants and even mushrooms. There are amazing results and insights in communication patterns and senses, but the question whether animals or at least some animals like whales, dolphins and cuttlefish have self-consciousness or employ symbolic language has not been answered conclusively. We can make them recognize themselves in a mirror and so what, seemingly they are self-aware, but what to do with this? Stop killing animals to eat them, but what if plants then have consciousness?

Religion offers a different perspective here, remember St. Francis preaching to the birds. In the Qur'an animals, as sentient beings, are believed to praise God, even if this praise is not expressed in human language:



"All creatures on earth are sentient beings." "There is not an animal on earth, nor a bird that flies on its wings - but they are communities like you."

"There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end."

These quotes indicate that animals are held to be sentient beings and have some kind of

choice, and they are held responsible for their act in the final confrontation. The prophet Mohammed must have assumed some level of animal volition as he speaks of animals being called to the Lord, a way of saying they are held responsible. He is known to have talked to animals, notably camels.

Most owners of domestic pets and for instance horses feel their animals communicate with

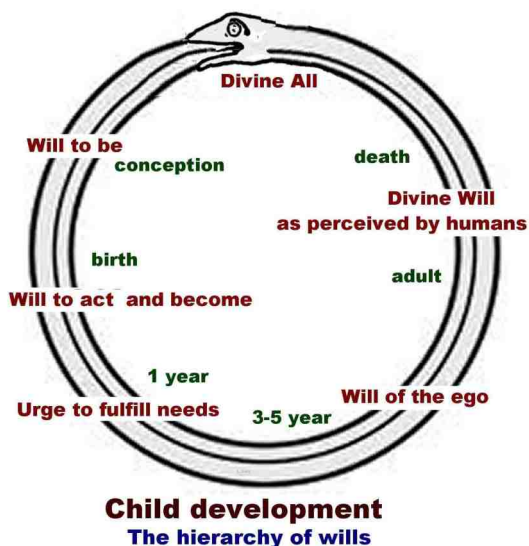
them more intently than could be expected from a 'dumb' animal. They display identity and a kind of limited will so can be held responsible.

In other traditions like Buddhism sentience, having senses which includes a subjective experience of the mind, is ascribed to animals and even to certain kinds of mushrooms. It is now known that plant-plant communication makes use of extensive fungus networks (mycorrhiza) with sense-like functions.

Assuming plants have a will may sound strange but there is enough evidence that plants and trees have complex ways of sensing and even communicating among themselves and with insects, mushrooms, fungi, and they do appear in dreams. Concepts like the world-tree in many cosmologies or the holy trees in many traditions indicate there is something there. In the chapter about dreams I will come back to this, arguing we have to consider that our dream state is something we owe to the plant kingdom. They were here long before humans or animals and had ample time to evolve and develop before some of them decided, or were forced, to take up their roots and move. Animals and we are in essence just plants who did that, our guts are inverted roots that deal with the little earth we carry around in our belly.

Conflicting wills, karma

Assuming there is free will, we still face many issues concerning what will brings us. One of them is that what we will is not clear. Our assumed will faces opposition. Internally our super-ego or subpersonalities, our reason and our urges fight over our decisions and action.



Then there is the higher will, the one we must access in our deep inner me, not always aligned with our superficial will. Even as we know this leads to bad energy or karma and that the universe has no waste basket for evil acts, we still do them.

We can have a private will, but in the world we face the struggle between our personal will and the common will, the private and the social will.

So there are will conflicts on many levels, but they have in common that they eat energy. We spend much of our brain power on deliberations, doubts, inner will conflicts, thinking about what to do next. Our brain is a demanding thing and consumes much of our vital energy. It is amazing that most of the time that energy goes into worrying and thinking about the future, not living in the now. I wonder if this is a unwelcome side-effect of self-consciousness and progress?

Another question is how does will, attention, intention and aspiration work in the context of ritual, do they matter?

The Magical will

Without free will magic is an illusion and ritual an empty theater, so let there be free will. The question is how this works, is there an effect beyond some brain activity, how do aspiration and focus work? Are we directing thought energy, what is the role of attention (now) and intention (toward the future). I think the answers are to be found in the primes (see next chapter), our faculties for dealing with the otherworld. Will is addressing and focussing these faculties. It may be itself a prime faculty, and as such is often seen as the core of the magical act, the essence of ritual efficacy. I consider that as too limited, ignoring other faculties and modes of acting, like love and conviction.

There are schools of thought in magic that believe magic occurs only in accordance with one's will — in other words, intent is everything.

This can go as far as assuming that the physical aspects of ritual magic, spell work, altars, candles, herbs, etc. - are unimportant. They believe the strength of will alone is what matters to bring about results. If one focuses one's will and intent precisely enough, and manipulates the necessary energy, magic will happen.

There is some truth to this, certainly if the magician or priest knows how to get to the point where one is in touch with the will of the deep inner me, close to the divine will. However I fear most of us need the help of tools, props and ritual to get there. Also the focus on strengthening will can easily become an ego-trip and counterproductive. It's not only will, but trust and conviction that makes magic work. Confidence in one's magic or trust the support from otherworldly powers is even more essential than will.

Will has thus featured prominently in many theories about magic. Many active sorcerers and theorists of magic have given the will, the exercising of the will and the relation of the ego (small will) to the divine will a central position. They made the will the instrument of choice of the magician. I will argue for a wider perspective, but accept theirs as a sign of the times. Will and power were very much the hallmarks of the industrial revolution and the Zeitgeist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Is will what matters in practice?

Will and conviction go hand in hand, much magical work goes into manipulationg one's conviction, changing one's belief. The danger is that changing beliefs changes one's identity, might corrupt one's integrity, create karma.

Magic is not for the faint of heart.

There are paradoxes in magical processes. Aside from the philosophical considerations, did you ever notice that when you want something deeply, concentrating on it, putting energy there, willing it, it doesn't work? Then, when you give up, let go of your aspiration, accept that the outcome is not going to be what you expected, detach yourself, then magically things do shift and it works after all. Interesting, when one gives up the will and that's probably the ego-will or mundane will, a new situation arises, so why exercise will-power that only serves the ego?

Let go of the outcome and it will come to you

Most of us know this paradoxical sequence. If we can let go of our attachment to the outcome of something, the future can and often does change dramatically, magically. If you give up, it happens!

For instance, I noted that when I lose something, sharing my loss with others is a sure way not to find it again, while if I keep it to myself the thing might pop up just as if I magically manifested it again.

By talking with others about my loss I create the negative outcome, manipulating in a way the future (or the present). Not loading the future with our projections thus seems to be a factor in the outcome of magical acts, a paradox that again points at the possibility there are two time-dimensions, as will be explained later in this chapter. Keep your magic to the magical realm, don't involve or 'charge' reality. Telling other people intensifies the problems.

Intent

Intention, Intent and Purpose all mean a wish or desire that one means to carry out. Purpose implies having a goal or determination to achieve some-

thing. Determination is the root of Will, it sets the Will on the path to achievement.

Intent is the destination (looking at the result, the future); Will is what propels one to reach that destination. This is why in magic and ritual making the intention clear is deemed so important and people like Crowley made a point of strengthening of the will as the path to intention. There has to be determination if one wants to achieve anything magical. Determination goes hand in hand with identification of and with a goal, a direction or specific purpose. It can come from desire, from urges. However, the word desire comes from the Latin meaning “await what the stars will bring”. On top of that, not all desires are acceptable, there are improper motives.

The clearer and more specific a goal is, and using visualization techniques, lucid dreaming and other focus methods can be used to get there, the better the result. However, the danger is always that the goals stem from the ego-levels and even as the magic works, one gets what one asks for, not what one needs. So there is that paradox again: letting go of the ego, of the carnal mind, the monkey mind of low desires and impulses miraculously brings what the ego wants or wills. One has to have faith in the outcome, believe in the power of the ritual, and yet, paradoxically, leave it all to a higher authority.

Man is man by virtue of willing, not by virtue of knowing and understanding.

R.W. Emerson

Strong willed

In psychology, will and being wilful is a distinct feature of the personality. We easily notice if a person has a strong will, just as we usually have an immediate idea or intuitive perception about their intelligence and many other things. This is partly because a strong or weak will translates into a posture, body dimensions, facial expression.

This by the way is another indication that the will is also beyond the mind, not only a brain function but something that reflects our totality.

There is also will as in self-discipline, training and control of oneself and one's urges, usually for personal improvement. Self-control is the ability of a person to exert his/her will over their body or self.

Here I note that where many traditions impose all kinds of disciplines and practices upon their adherents, I believe discipline is rather the result than the cause of ‘enlightenment’ or achieving higher insights.

Attachment to will

Time chains us to the manifested, an attachment that imprisons us. Escaping that prison is what we try to do in magical practice, like in a ritual. We

have to let go of the fetters of time to get into the magical, ritual state of mind. We have to detach ourselves from the material and from time in such a way that even the outcome of what we are doing doesn't matter anymore. Leave the outcome upto the divine or otherworldly power, asking for what is best for everybody and the whole.

The ways to do this are manifold, but as elsewhere I will use the chakra system to differentiate here between the methods. There are "ritual" paths to move beyond time for every chakra.

The general idea there is to let go of the personal (ego) attachments in this model like intelligence power, will, truth or even love. Cutting loose the personal benefits, and bowing to the Will above, which is essentially the will we can perceive in our inner me or higher self. That is the True Will in the Crowley sense

"Do what Thou Wilt."

"Magick is the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will."

(Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*).

Of course, as this deeper self will align itself with the divine it will provide us with what we need, not what we want.

I feel the personality of Crowley is what shines through here, he was a second and third chakra focused person. Will energy for him is a very logical step in his rising to higher consciousness levels, but for others different energies and processes might work the magic.

The word will sounds nice. It fitted well with the times and the complicated rituals Crowley suggested (and probably practiced) and did resonate with his dominant personal mode, his natural energy focus and his need for power. Failure, he believed, was due to a lack of willpower. So for him and many of his comembers of the Golden Dawn and subsequent OTO folks these methods worked, because they were geared to their weakest (and maybe strongest) point. This however doesn't make his approach universal.

As the other dominant chakra focus in our culture is the heart (4th) chakra, a link is often made to love.

"Love is the law, love under will." (Aleister Crowley, *The Book of the Law - Liber al vel Legis*)

Thelema, will in central position

The magick people like Aleister Crowley (and scores of philosophers and writers before and after him) have enthroned the will, made it the crown of their teaching. Yet, I dare to at least throw some doubt over this notion.

I tend to be critical of the will as the dominant cognitive factor in magic and in general. We are, and here all those studies and experiments of the neuroscientists point in the same direction, very much automatons, programmed robots as George Gurdjieff noted. So training the will, the resolve to achieve something sounds like a great endeavor, an advice that makes sense if one has aspiration.

The problem is that what one wills is mostly a result of programs and memories in our assumed self and in that sense an illusion. Now Crowley and probably most master sorcerers were well aware of that, he knew that aligning oneself with the divine will is what matters and makes the difference. His whole Thelema (the word means “will”) is about the difference between human, mundane “will” and True Will. Realizing or admitting the latter equals self-realization, again a different use of the word self. Now if we take that as letting go of the ego it sounds like good advice, but why call this all the will? In my view this could just as well be called opening up to the primes, or reaching for the ritual state and what they tell us.

The power of magic, I argue, is when we reach a state that allows access (via the prime organs) to the magical time dimension, a state we approach in ritual and in the ritual state of consciousness. It is there that we are aware and free, or in other words, can make a difference.

Will and intentionality go together, but are they properties (functions) of the mind as most philosopher see it? I think will is something that is related both to mind and body, but also to our connection with the extra-dimensional, free will especially.

Will has to do with seeking things, like information. For instance, when looking for something I often notice, that the answer comes to me in strange ways. The guy next to you in a cafe is reading the book you were looking for. So the original intention finds resonance in another dimension and comes back in reality. Jung would call this synchronicity, I would point out that magical or even miraculous is another attribute of true will. Did you notice that holy people do miracles, the bad guys do magic?

The will rules, or not?

The will as the magical ground sounds good, but any causal change actually is a magical act. There is this nagging notion in me, that many of the influential thinkers have enthroned the will because they are projecting their own obsessions.

Looking beyond the will as the central issue is not an easy option, and even rather counterintuitive for me. I am a wilful individual myself. I could describe myself in many ways, but always this focus on action, manifestation and will rings through. I am a manifestor and thus an producer rather than a follower. I would naturally side with the will-focus in magical practice and

theory. Is it just because wilfulness is also my own most prominent mask that I feel justified to criticize?

To summarize; the focus on the will as the central force in consciousness (or magic) by people like Crowley, Assagioli and many others ignores or overlooks that the will is only one of the methods or tools to express oneself, there are others. In the chakra model the will takes its place with truth and power in the third chakra. Obviously a focus there makes things possible. There are however other energy exchange modes like love, sex, expression, visualization, beauty. Only when magic is described as using the will to manipulate time and thus reality, then of course it is the essential component, but this definition is limited.

Defining magic a bit broader, as using *all* resonance possibilities, then the will is only one of the tools on the magical path.

15 Perception faculties; senses and primes

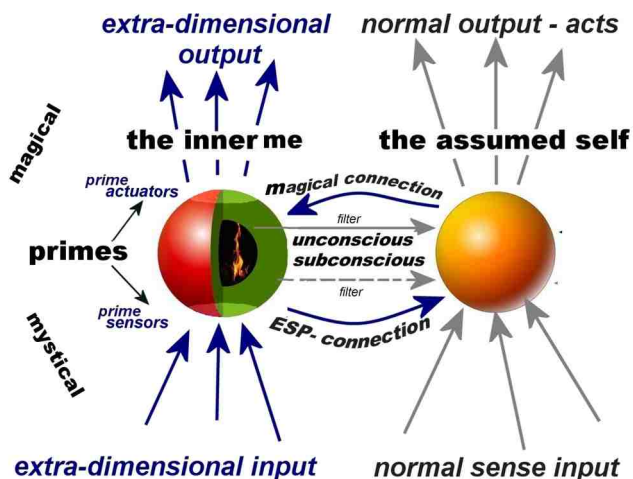
We feel, smell, see, hear and taste the physical world, but there is much more information coming to us. In this chapter I will expand the classical notion of sense-perception with perception ‘organs’ of intangible qualities like beauty, justice, danger and truth. Usually perceptions of this kind are seen as mere ‘feeling’ interpretations of normal senses.

I argue we have special exchange nodes (or transceiver mechanisms) I call primes, but I will not speculate about where they are located in the brains or in the body. I only situate them close to the inner me, as they are usually hidden behind the mask or assumed self. We have and use them, they are far more influential in our decisions and behavior than we think, but are not really recognized as separate ways to deal with extradimensional qualities.

The notion of traditional 5 senses is very old. They are called the “five material faculties” in Buddhism and they appear in the Katha Upanishad (6th century BC) as five horses drawing the “chariot” of the body, guided by the mind as the “chariot driver”. Aristotle named them, influencing the Western culture, although more senses are easily recognized, like sensing the temperature.

The traditional five senses of course have been expanded or differentiated like touch into the proprioceptive sense and mechanoreception senses like balance, but there are now more or less accepted senses including pain (nociception), temperature, time, body state (pressure, need to go to the bathroom), hunger, thirst, itchiness or even the expanded 21 senses that Bruce Drurie described in the New Scientist in 2005. And there are more; in animals there are senses that some of us might also have but never really explore, like electro-reception or a magnetic sense.

There have been a number of attempts to enlarge the number



of ‘normal’ senses into the supersensorial. Rudolf Steiner defined 12 supersenses but apart from him there has been little serious study into the more feeling, intangible, unmeasurable senses. Steiner’s esoteric views on how we function in relation to the supersensory realm are elucidating, even as I feel he has superimposed too much Christianity on it and is not really willing to accept magic. Also it is obvious that his approach and that of anthroposophy in general is one that excludes or ignores the sexual. Apart from that, he came up with a fascinating view that offers a first step of intuitive senses beyond the physical, which he calls the supersensory reality.

Extra sensory perception

Parapsychologists do experiment with ESP (Extra Sensory Perception) but notably science doesn’t really accept that we perceive anything significant beyond the physically measurable.

Yet these contact points with the extradimensional are what controls our thoughts and actions, guide us and help us, steer us away from danger and are what we try to bring into our awareness by means of meditation, yoga, drugs, dream interpretation and of course ritual.

Ritual is the most common means to ‘switch on’ the extra senses and transmitter capabilities, the ‘primes’, to reach the otherworld..

In science and modern life, these contact means with the intangible haven’t been denied as much as ignored or briefly labeled as “sixth sense lore”.

And yet, many wise men and writers point at how important they are, a good quote is from John Lilly’s “The Center of the Cyclone” (1973).

“Presumably there are energies, to which each human is sensitive, that we cannot yet detect by means of our instruments. Built into our brains and our bodies are very sensitive tuneable receivers for energies that we do not yet know about in our science but that each one of us can detect under the proper circumstances and the proper state of mind. We can tune our nervous systems and bodies to receive these energies. We can also tune our brains and bodies to transmit these energies.”

What Lilly does acknowledge here is that we also transmit energies (the magical way to influence reality) but he tried to be ‘scientific’, certainly in this early book. He was a daring explorer of the extradimensional, talked to dolphins and explored his inner self with ketamine experiments in an isolation tank.

The classic senses expanded

The sense of touch is just the tip of a wider set of senses concerning position, movement, balance. The physical awareness of oneself, in relation to the body but also to where it is, in contact with what and how is called the proprioceptive sense. There lies the sense of movement and the relation-

ships that movement brings, where the body is in space (upside down or right side up, works via the vestibular sense in the inner ear), the sense of the body parts in relation to each other and the floor, the wall, the doorway, the other. I think the proprioceptive sense is more important than the other senses, it is more primitive and it turns out that movement, dance, postures and spatial position have more impact than senses that came a bit later on the evolutionary ladder, just as sound is, also according to Marshall McLuhan, more important than sight. It is obvious that the normal senses play a role in ritual and ceremony, as they do in normal life. We see, hear, smell, taste, and experience the ritual; maybe in different states of consciousness, but usually our five senses are functional.

The extradimensional energy however is also all around and dealing with it is part of life, and more so in situations where rationality has not (yet) taken over culture and tradition. The primes offer us more than just the tangible and manifested. Just an example. It feels like we can actually feel (sense) the sanctity and power of objects

When visiting Bali I noticed that some of the most holy objects were old stone statues, often worn to unrecognizable lumps, but venerated still. The younger generation would focus on new statues of the Hindu pantheon, but in a special corner of the temple complex there were always some of those old stones, clothed with clean sarongs, obviously held in high esteem by some of the elders. The energy of these old stones was much, much higher than that of the new statues, but only a few would recognize this, even fewer would actually feel it.

In a ritual context the sense of ‘magic’ or ‘holy’ touch is obviously very important, as can be seen in many cultures and holy places, where touching the holy stone is the most sacred act. Even in the mostly non-ritualistic Islam, the black stone in the Kaaba in Mecca is worn off by the millions touching it.

The power of images and objects in a ritual context relates to the question of art and the ban on “graven images” called aniconism.

Emotions and feelings

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio argues that our body is the theater stage where our emotions as different physical states (being agitated, red, cold, high blood pressure) are sensed or played out. We sense our body first, we notice that this or that emotion happens. Those emotions will thus lead to feelings (in the mind) and this is contrary to the view that everything starts in the mind. Some things do, the mind can pretend it feels. In that view the orchestration (if not manipulation) of the senses in a direct link (body loop) or as-if (imagining you are in that state) is a major component of what we

experience and thus the effect a ritual has upon our feelings and mood. We feel, because we sense or imagine we sense.

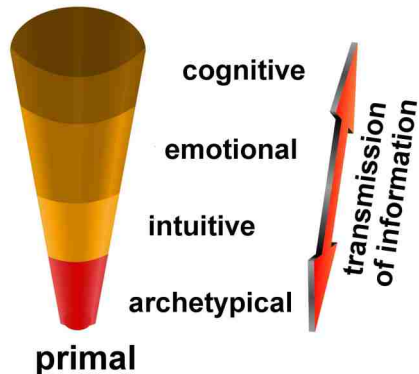
Two way traffic

One of the often overlooked aspects of the traditional senses is that there are sensors and actuators, receivers and senders. The outward (radiating-transmitting) complementary effects of the traditional senses are not generally noticed in describing them but isn't it obvious that we can hear and speak (or make sound in many ways), we can passively taste, smell and touch and also produce taste and move and actively touch. Obviously we need some kind of feedback. If we couldn't speak or make sounds, what purpose would there be in hearing? And the speaking of a deaf person is often distorted because of the lack of feedback.

Seeing looks like one way receiving, but Rupert Sheldrake has designed many experiments that show that when we look at something we actually also transmit (send) some energy and create, by looking, a "field of mind", we send something. I noticed that it is possible to take small clouds out of the sky, that looks impressive magic until you see that kids pick this up very easy. I think that by looking at those clouds one influences the sensitive condensation balance by sending some photo energy.

Sense enhancement

In some people specific senses are more active than others. Some will not only perceive more via their eyes or hands, but also transmit more and more intensely. Some people look at you with piercing eyes; it feels like they see right through you. This capability can be felt as positive or negative. It frightens people. In some cultures they speak of the "evil eye" and so-called "holy people" often have this air of benevolence in their eyes. The same goes for hands. We have healers and sometimes when we shake hands, we feel the energy of the



Between primes and conscious cognition there is a lot of filtering, noise and distortion

other. I noticed there are other senses that in some people are very prominent.

One way of looking at this is that they have kept this sense open to the deeper level. They can, even by being in the ego-personality, allow communication at a deeper level with wide-open senses. This can be a genetic condition or acquired by experience or training.

The extra-dimensional senses

The senses mentioned above are, however, only senses that refer to physically measurable dimensions, even as they are mitigated by our mind, like in the case of pain. The expansion of view into light and color and electromagnetic field and of taste into five different sub-tastes, etc. doesn't really touch upon the extra-dimensional senses or primes I see and which play such a role in the supersensory reality we access or try to access in ritual. Scientist like to point at an organ related to a sense receptor, but there are thing we notice that have no obvious relation to a body part, like social discomfort. And what about common sense, our bull-shit detector; we all have it, but where is the receptor?

There are senses beyond the physical, that is generally accepted. The Tholkappiyam of the Tamils, a very early scripture, talks about the Mind as the sixth sense. When we now refer to the sixth sense, people usually mean some kind of prescience or supersensory perception, the subtle perceptions, psi, esp & inner senses.

Extra-dimensional perception and the primes

What rituals do to us has a lot to do with the normal senses, with emotions, feelings, thoughts and projection, but also with the perception of what I call extra-dimensional information. In the three worlds model the connection between the mind and the spiritual world needs organs to make an exchange possible. We could call this senses for the extra-dimensional. This concept hints at an explanation how we deal with super-sensorial input, and how magic happens.

I use the word extra-dimensional to indicate the non-tangible, other-worldly, spiritual realm and the notion of meta-dimensional to indicate something that covers both the normal space-time (physical reality) dimensions, our inner worlds (Mind) and the extradimensional. The image of three worlds and their relationship is expressed in the triangle image.

This model accepts that there are other dimensions, or better extra-dimensions (or maybe just one dimension) beyond the normal space-time four-dimensional world we experience. This is often described as the spiritual. I assume in this model that there is bidirectional exchange between the worlds.

The model is maybe a simplification, but serves the purpose of explaining in general terms how I see that we (and animals and plants, maybe everything) sense and deal with what happens in those extra dimensions.

The extra-dimensional space is where the intangible and in a way idealistic (in the Platonic sense) qualities of beauty, love, balance, and such reside and here one could divide that realm in an ideal and a spiritual and so complicate the image. Another argument against the model could be that the mind and spiritual realm are the same, that what we experience as spiritual is nothing but what our mind constructs. Also the model works from the dualistic psychological notion that mind and body are separate, but as I tend to believe that mind (as a projection from the spiritual) comes first and incarnates in the body, I see in a way world and body as the materialistic (space-time) corner of triangle.

The writings of Hermes Trismegistos also work from a different image, they indicate that the worlds above and below are like mirrors, “above as below”, the macro and the micro, the deep inner and far outer worlds are each other’s reflections, there is some kind of symmetry between the worlds. This kind of assumes a twofold model of heaven and earth, without the separation between Mind and Spirit I make.

Plato made it clear, we are more than what can be measured, detected or wrung out of super-colliders or cosmic observations, and his concept of world (a dimension) of ideals was a great attempt to deal with the intangible, his cave-image showing us that our reality is but a shadow of what is, the whole. His dualistic vision, accepting a wider reality that encompasses the ideal as the root of isness, is not very far from modern physics if we take consciousness to be part of it, or even the basic component.

It was Karl Popper who expanded the dualist notion of Plato to a three world view, including the inner world of thoughts, and I like that model and use a similar form.

The three world model is a simplification, but things get complicated as it is.

One could add the divine/information/love dimension to get a five dimensional worldview with tangible outer world, intangible outer world, inner world, ideals world, divine world. And I could speculate that the divine dimension is actually the consciousness, information, love, will, dimension that lies at the root of all being.

The extra-dimensional that we access via the inner me and the “I” dimension we connect with in the center of the inner me is anyway a territory of strange and non-causal relations, of synchronicity, miracles and magic, it’s the otherworld, the beyond, paradise (and hell), the stuff religions deal with and parapsychologist try to explain. It is the reality outside Plato’s cave, the

intangible world, but at the same time has this relation with the inner world of mind and imagination.

Senses beyond the tangible: primes

The roots of ritual lie much deeper than some initial myth or cosmological understanding. They are, I believe connected with senses that reach beyond the manifested into the extradimensional, beyond the spacio-temporal manifested reality, into the sacral.

We all experience and feel the intangible, our lives are much more influenced by feelings and emotions related to the intangible aspects than by the hard reality of space-time. I believe we have extra-dimensional senses, that pick up what happens in the other dimensions and in the whole of the ultimate reality. These senses, that are actuators too, I call “primes”. These are hidden deep in our system, have no visible organs (although there are body parts and notably glands that seem to be involved more than others) and don’t yield very clear messages. They are located somewhere, I leave it to the scientists to figure out where, and are more or less subconscious unless we enter or create a state of consciousness (ritual state, inner child state, higher self state) that gives access to them.

I could say they are related to Extra-Sensory-Perception, but that in a way limits them to only sensing, while calling them meta-senses is more apt, but a bit too wide for what I like to expose. They are also effectors or actuators, they effect the outside situation. Sensors and actuators are technical notions, both are transducers, the one is receiving, the other acting. I use the words to indicate that the “primes” receive and send whatever it is that connect to the extra-dimensional space. For instance, when we experience beauty, we receive and when we love something, we send.

These primes are essential for our existence and behavior. Who can deny that we are driven, guided, ruled far more by things beyond the manifested than by the rational, cold logic of the materialist. Our existence is so beyond the scientifically measurable, so much more related to energy, love, hope, consciousness, beauty, truth and other “ideal” categories that are extra-dimensional, that we must have a way to interact with those dimensions. I deliberately leave out time, but I do think that magical time, where free will resides, is part of the extra-dimensional realm and that through the primes we have access to it, can feel or sense the future. Here the notion of consciousness comes into play, time and consciousness are deeply related as I explain elsewhere in this book.

I indicated the two parts of the primes as being part of the inner me, but where exactly they are located I don’t know. Maybe these primes are or-

gans, systems, maybe our DNA. Especially junk-DNA (the large part of DNA that is not directly related to our physical being) maybe plays a part in this as a kind of antenna and even transmitting activator. Maybe these primes (and they are not limited to humans) are a fundamental part of living systems.

Primes are senders and receivers, actuators and sensors and they act in and through the extra-dimensional space, with some effects in our normal space-time reality too. Primes are not specifically human, animals have them too, and I think beyond that plants, crystals and in a way all existence has something that connects them or it to the extra-dimensional space. Theologians might call that space God, spiritual people might call it the Sacral, Mother Nature, Love or the Creation Force, Information, Chi, scientists maybe see it as negentropy, by whatever name it is that, which is beyond the tangible. Rituals in my view originate from these primes, they are a natural reaction to external or internal imbalances, threats, extra-dimensional information and have been part of our being forever, so there is no historic first ritual, but of course every culture has created its own mythical stories and from there directives and rules for rituals. The result, the traditional ritual, is therefore different in the various and cultures, but has retained some basic root characteristics, like the use of fire as a means of communication with the otherworld.

The primes are the medium, the gateway or channel to relate to, sense and influence the wider world of feelings, emotions, and intangibles. They work in the extra-dimensional space directly, and then via other people and indirectly (via what in magic is called the correspondences) reflect back and influence the normal four-dimensional reality. This again has much relation with what happens in rituals, where the magical aspect (affecting the extradimensional and thus the present and the future) is part of the setup and deeper purpose.

Our “primes” are the real interface with energy, time, truth, love, danger, procreation, spirit, the fundamental categories or dimensions that matter beyond matter. Archetypal, bodily, emotional and cognitive filtering and mixing mechanism, both on the in and out influence the real message or actions. Only rarely do we contact those primal capabilities, where true creation and magical power resides and go beyond the prison we created. Personality, body, emotions, beliefs, the world around us all are part of this prison.

The primes give access to the intangible, but the relationship to our other senses and our conscious thinking is not a straight one. We think that the mind (or imagination) is the great tool to change our beliefs and situation, but what reaches our cognitive levels is just a filtered and twisted representation of what our primary sensor/actuators pick up.

The travel of the information or better signals we receive or transmit from there to our normal consciousness and vice versa is complex, often compromised, and goes through layers of archetypical projection, emotions, traumatic repression and are often changed as we color them, partly suppress them, enlarge or exaggerate them. Some people, at some times and under some conditions, are better at (consciously) interpreting them, they are the prophets, the holy ones, the sensitives, and those actively using these prime exchanges as transceivers, radiators or effectors are the sorcerers or healers.

Architecture

The physical world can be used to enhance or invoke the connection with the extradimensional otherworld. We can use the correspondences, the links between the world and they are many. Here I would like to point at how architecture and especially sacred architecture influences us, via the normal senses and the primes. Churches, temples, holy places often use the natural energy (ley lines, energy spots, places with high biodiversity) but then enhance this with specific layouts and forms. Modern architecture may use some of the old insights, it's not unusual these days to use the oriental Feng Shui principles in design. Architects can use age-old principles and ratio's that have found their way in the building codes and trade practices, even if the true meaning got lost. In that sense shrines and holy places are, like rituals in a culture, a kind of memory, containing the secrets and insights of old.

We still awe at places like Chartres cathedral, sense the effect of arches, space and window dimensions, building ratio's, and sometimes an architect can create a similar 'holy' atmosphere in a newer building. Few realize that what we call Gothic churches are a Westernized form of the Arabic style of building the crusaders brought back and thus can be linked to Egyptian and even Sumerian building styles.

Astrology, cosmic ratio's, hidden symbolism, and colors were part of it and imagine how these cathedrals must have looked in their original colorful state, more like a Hindu temple than as the solemn and grey spaces that are left to us. Lucy Wyatt in "Approaching Chaos" (2010) argues that the Knights of Templar (with the support of Bernard of Clairvaux) were very instrumental in bringing secret and sacred knowledge of building to the West.

Animals and ritual

One of the insights I try to convey about ritual is that it is a pre-cognitive phenomenon. It doesn't originate in our prefrontal lobes, in the part that distinguishes us from animals, at least in proportional ratio of brain mass.

Ritual is more ‘primitive’, more related to our primes, part of our being that has roots in our animal or maybe even in our vegetal part. In that sense it is more original, anchored deeper in our being and is essentially a way to remember or connect to those origins. Thinking in the ritual context is an impediment, limiting the effects and indeed the efficacy of ritual.

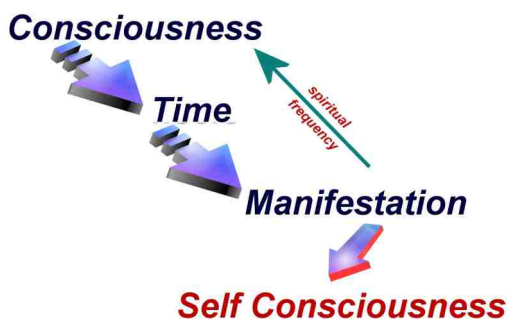
Rituals are often considered specifically human, but there are many animal behavioral patterns, that could qualify as rituals. Animals often do have specific tics that look like compulsive, and resemble the ritualistic compulsive tics that we sometimes have and are very obvious in the pathological behavior of mentally ill. So there is a biological basis, maybe even necessity for repetition and this could indicate that humans and animals share some more senses and notably metasenses than we assume.

They are in closer contact with their ‘primal’ information, their intuition, but also use ritual to evoke this contact and most likely also this other conduit to the deeper senses, dreaming.

In the chapter about psychedelics I will come back to this, as more and more it becomes clear, that we as humans have learned and copied much more from animals than usually is assumed like that the use of inebriating or hallucinogen substances (and medical and other uses of herbs) is basically copied from animals.

Science now accepts that at least the neurological hardware of animals is not fundamentally different from the human (the Birmingham Declaration 2012). Ritual can be seen as a system of symbolic acts that is based upon arbitrary rules, but maybe we can extend that to animals, in analogy with language. If we look at verbal behavior in humans, where language is a system of symbols based upon arbitrary rules, why not accept that animals also use symbolic language. The songs of birds and the sounds of whales do seem to have more beauty, meaning and probably symbolic intent than just exchange of facts.

Owners of dogs, horses and other animals we can befriend at a deep level will agree that communication with animals often happens in a magical and very intuitive way, animals seem to use other senses in a direct and effective way. This I see as their using the prime communication channels. In that sense talking to trees is not so strange, if that communication is interpreted as a primal exchange.



16 Consciousness: the root of all

What is reality anyway?

At Mount Tamalpais near San Francisco one sunny afternoon while looking at the mountain (and being on LSD) I ‘received’ this line of poetry, a personal and timeless revelation about the nature of observation and consciousness:

Between me and the mountain, but God to enjoy

Some trippy truths dissolve in the light of ‘normal’ reason, but this one had a deeper meaning. The triangle of observer, object, and God is a deep Sufi symbolism. There is the joy of creation shared between the three. Then there is the deeper meaning of the archetypical mountain representing mankind, suffering, and the aspiration of the manifested to reach into the heavens. It took me years to embrace this all. It remains a poetic line that immediately reconnects me to that moment and that vision, but also to the happiness and grace it represents.

Whenever I wander in those meaty theories about quantum-physics or get lost in the lengthy treatises of philosophers, scientists and mages, I come down to the same simple image: Me, God, the world.

Who cares about the difference, about the separation, as there is this memory of unity, of enjoyment? I was, and am, absolutely aware of that mountain’s participation in the joy of being. When scientists try to frame or catch that relationship in matrices, wave descriptions, probability theorems, or whatever theory or hypothesis, they only approximate to what is.

This chapter is about consciousness and is maybe the core part of this book, but what a tricky subject it is. There are so many definitions, religious positions, scientific demarcation lines, issues surrounding it like free will, time, the divine. Consciousness is, like love, a very broad and vague subject and I have touched on many aspects already.

Not coincidentally consciousness as a process is on the frontier between science and religion, in my view somewhere between normal space-time and the otherworld. This resonates with my position that ritual is a way to transcend the normal reality and makes looking at consciousness a fundamental necessity in this book.

Where will it lead to? I will develop in this chapter a model where human consciousness is the boundary process that deals with the border between the ‘normal’ dimensions and the unseen, extradimensional world. I must

warn the reader that things like consciousness, time, causation and even will are overlapping, as these are deeply interconnected, so I have to repeat some of the arguments already made in previous chapters.

Even with all modern brain research the phenomenon of consciousness at the various levels remains a largely unexplained enigma. However, in the context of ritual and magic I am still curious to know or

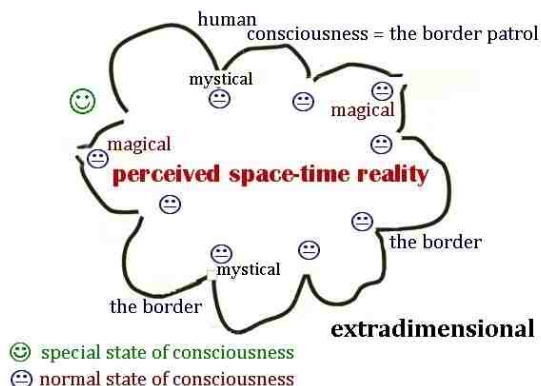
at least frame in some kind of model what happened between me, the mountain and the meta-dimensional that I poetically called God. It could be described as an experience of the three worlds (psyche, world, spiritual) interacting. It was a mutual reflection process, where the three entities mirror each other resulting in bliss and deep awareness. But what are these three entities? The inner me, the I, is not tangible.

The mountain I can see and touch, but the mountain entity is again virtual, and God is present but not touchable. It's all obviously a matter of resonance, being in and out of time. The experience was short but not instantaneous, and it felt very real in space. The trees on the mountain ridge were kind of talking to me, I felt myself sitting there, the sun was there, the mountain breeze, and yet there was this overlay, this superimposed expanded reality.

This consciousness experience, with the help of Albert Hofmann's problem child, had a ritual context. I prepared the trip, looked for a location, noted set and setting, opened up and made contact with the otherworld. Resonance happened and the magical result was expanded consciousness,

Consciousness: the border control between the worlds

extradimensional



Consciousness is a process, an operation on the border between the normal and the extradimensional. It allows looking beyond the tangible. The magical state allows looking (acting) outside, the mystical means letting it in.

with a simple line of poetry as a reminder. Maybe there were other effects, some rewired connections in my brain, experiences like this do change you. In terms of my ritual matrix model, the set, setting and magic aspects were there. The result I brought back was maybe a rationalized interpretation of something preprogrammed in my brains or psyche, but so what? Maybe this had nothing to do with free will or initiative on my part and just had to be so. If that was so, it was a mighty impressive coincidence.

I reached another state, and again the word consciousness comes up. On that mountain I felt I made a connection with the ultimate consciousness of the metadimensional reality known as God. It was limited in the sense that my consciousness of many other things and even much of my body awareness had evaporated, but at the same time another part of my awareness was clearly expanding beyond the normal.

Isness

Expanded consciousness as I experienced it then and at many other occasions for me relates to a state of being, more than just a mind-state. It is being more close to the deep I, the true self, in a more intimate connection to the otherworld. It offered me a different view and experience of the relation between my inner and outer world. William Wordsworth called it 'deeply interfused', being between the world of ideas and the outside reality, between the cold facts and wisdom, between the daily rational reality and the more complete isness, the being and the not being.

I think understanding consciousness, self consciousness and the wider consciousness is essential and crucial in understanding ritual. Ritual is an act and experience at the border between the worlds, and that is exactly where consciousness processes happen. What we call (human) consciousness is concerned with the border between the seen and the unseen and is a process in time, not really a state. It's gatekeeping, the control of the exchange between the worlds, the place or portal where we interact with the extradimensional. It's where the special non rational consciousness 'organs' I called primes come into play. Even as simply equating consciousness with experience is a tempting idea, then experience should include the perception of the otherworldly and intangible. And how about describing consciousness as experiencing just the intangible otherworld, leaving awareness as the interface to the normal reality?

In a diagram that somewhat resembles Schopenhauer's notion of the universe and the human position, I have indicated how one could see human consciousness in relation to the wider dimensional. Humans (the little faces) normally operate in the space-time tangible world, but communicate with what lies beyond (the intangible, the extradimensional, the spiritual,

the platonic world of ideas) via those primes. It is like having little windows looking out of the tangible. One can receive (mystical) or act (magical) and sometimes even venture really outside the normal in what then could be called another state of consciousness. It happens that some people remain in such a state. They are cut off from normal reality and we might then call them saints or lunatics and burn or isolate them.

This picture is just a starting point to deal with the complex subject of consciousness, but illustrates the fact that I see it as a border-process, as what happens at the dividing line between the tangible and intangible.

Ritual is in essence an act of border transgression. It acts upon our personal consciousness (mindset), social consciousness (set) and extradimensional consciousness. I know this is a daring and idealistic statement. Materialistic science tends to see consciousness as some function of neurons and the brain and there are many theories and experiments to that effect, but nobody has identified a thought as such. When I argue that consciousness is the interworld resonance mechanism, the link between the tangible and the intangible, I know the ice is thin.

However, this is all based on the models I have presented so far such as the distinction between self and I, between assumed self and true self, the multiple time divisions and the use of primes to connect beyond the tangible.

I will concentrate here on my notions, in the appendices you will find much more reference material and what other people came up with concerning consciousness.

Hard consciousness

There are ways of looking at consciousness not related to the extradimensional or ritual, but to different modes of thinking and brain activity. Neuro-scientists often refer to patients and cases of people with abnormal cognitive functions in their books and theories about what consciousness, memory and perception could be. These situations, often related to brain damage due to accidents, diseases, operations or birth defects have taught us a lot about the mechanics of the brain and led to interesting models and theories. They are however, mostly concerned with tangible deformities or defects and how these work out in behavior, and these days show up in MRI and PET-scans and neurochemical changes. Interesting work and people like Antonio Damasio have come up with great views about how memory, consciousness and perception are related in our brain, but have not really answered the question about what consciousness is.

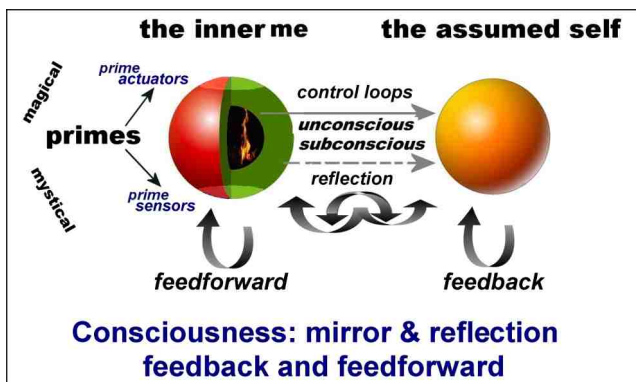
Causation, what has it to do with consciousness

Before I go into what conscious is at various levels, I would like to point at an important aspect of consciousness, that is the relation with wilful, intentional action. For a long time, in Europe at least, the words conscience and consciousness were, in French and Latin, the same and no distinction was made. It concerned a moral issue, had to do with law and ethics, there was not a clear idea of levels in consciousness till late in the 17th century, when Descartes, Spinoza, Arnauld, Leibniz and others started to discuss rationality, first as a moral quality of God and in the context of free will. Slowly a distinction between conscience and consciousness, as a reflective process developed, but still mostly concerned with ethics. The notion of unconscious thinking or levels of conscious thinking like in a child developed and was discussed, but it was not until Freud that this became an accepted idea.

When we consciously try to change things, and we do so in serious rituals, we are or should be aware of the consequences, in other word conscience. Just responding to external signals, pressure or reacting to physical situations is not really wilful, premeditated or intentional. It is when we make decisions about action (or wilful non-action) that the whole mechanism of inner deliberations, cognitive dissonance, inner critic and what not, starts to happen.

Obviously this wilful action carries over in automatic mode of behavior. Conscience becomes like a program, an automatic reference. When we just do things not really hindered by conscious restraints, our unconscious conscience or inner knowing guides us.

It is when there is doubt, when there is inner conflict between our subpersonalities, when maybe one part of us says yes, the other no, then the question of conscience surfaces. It's not the deep ocean of unconscious, intuitive acts and drives that concerns us when thinking about mo-



Consciousness as a combination of feedforward (in the inner self via the primes) and feedback (in the assumed self via the normal senses)

reality, but it's the stormy surface, the crest of waves and undercurrents that create the foam of uncertainty, where conscience starts to matter.

Thus what we consider to be our conscience matters only on the battlefield of the subjective and assumed realities, where we refer to codices, laws and prescribed morality, the divine charter coming from the heavens. This is where the moralists, the ethical philosophers and theologians come in with their explanations, guilt trips and threats about hell, karma and damnation.

The real question about morality goes beyond instances where we deliberate, weigh arguments, decide between alternatives. It is beyond Kant's practical intelligence "Vernunft", I even argue it transcends his categorical imperative, it has roots in the extradimensional. Morality ultimately, beyond rational arguments, is metaphysical. I argue it exist in the extradimensional and we can sense it as a deeper knowing, a true knowing through the primes that guides us in all other situations and actions.

This is where we have to make a connection between the subjective and objective realities, where the real I comes into play. Morality and conscience are not rooted in our mask existence, or in the masks that institutions, churches, academia and psychiatry wear. We only have them there as programs, automatic routines.

I will argue in this chapter, that our human consciousness is the link between the normal and the extradimensional, a jump outside the realm of time. In that sense consciousness is not only linked to memory of the past, but also to a 'memory' (for lack of a better word) of the future, a concept explained in the chapter about time.

Levels

Consciousness has levels, starting with simple awareness, perception and then perception of the perception as in self consciousness and beyond that the higher consciousness. Here already the question is what do I perceive? My wider reality on that mountain or in mystical moments is obviously not the daily reality. I am more and more beginning to realize that the so-called normal is just a subset of the miraculous, the magical.

The isolated, local, unconnected events described in physics textbooks are only particular instances, collapsed probability curves of a much wider reality that includes the extra-dimensional. I even wonder, is self-consciousness such a real step forward in evolution. Have we lost or exchanged it for something else? In my view self consciousness often keeps us away from the connection, the acceptance of this extra-dimensional out there that is the starting point of this book.

These fuller reality events are experienced as far more interconnected, they are not just material results of prior rational causes but are related to truly new acts, thoughts and emotions. They can have a different cause than the

past, they are the result of free will and even are influenced by the future or what we project the future to be. We have to extend the range of causes and logical consequences.

Therefore the notion arises, call it feeling, awareness, personal consciousness or faith that there is direction and meaning, even if we don't rationally perceive it as such. We are not living in a stochastic chaos of quantum chance, humans are not an accidental emergence in a materialistic universe.

It was Western rational Cartesian thinking and the denial of the magical that forced us to abandon this awareness, relegating it to the realm of religion, superstition, and primitive belief. However, a quick scan around us and we see that most human beings do not adhere to the 'modern' standard of rationalism. We are still dreamers, believers, we have ideals, assume free will and volition, all things incompatible with rational (in)determinism.

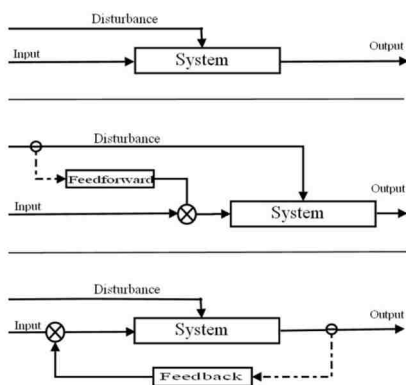
Observe the shamans, the rainmakers, witch doctors, magicians (and stock-brokers). Join the aborigines in their Dreamtime rituals. Who can deny that it's our rationality that is an isolated quirk, a late second millennium aberration? And with what detrimental results; we have ruined our world, our genes, and the fabric of society.

Maybe, and this is a positivist remark, we just need to integrate it better, learn how to deal with what our frontal lobe expansion brings us.

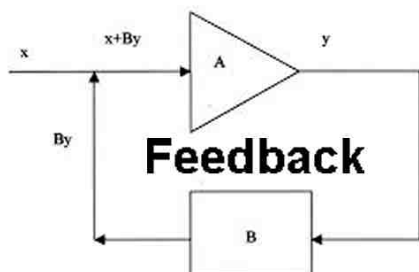
Consciousness interpretations

The word conscious comes in many flavors, and definitions abound. For some it means awareness, as in perceived reality, for others it is another word for the greater all.

The notion of higher levels of consciousness is in itself used in many ways, think about God consciousness, super consciousness in yoga, buddhic consciousness in Theosophy, cosmic consciousness or Christ consciousness. So for some it's a cognitive and human state, for others a basic category of all. It's one of those notions that we use



Different forms of system control



to indicate many different things and only the context helps to guess what is meant.

The word consciousness has to be specified as to what it means in context. In the appendix nr II, I will refer to some of the notions, in this chapter I will limit myself to just making a difference between the wider consciousness

(the all, Universal mind, Brahman, Allah, super consciousness, etc.) and the lower levels of consciousness (of humans, animals, trees and even matter), not unlike the differentiation I make in levels of will (see the will chapter). In our psyche there are also levels of awareness and consciousness, but I will forego identifying them beyond the I-Me model, leaving the fine distinctions between consciousness, spirit and soul to others.

The Christ Consciousness people like Blavatsky or Edgar Cayce refer to, feels like a layer or level and a pointer toward the awareness or knowledge of an 'ultimate reality' which traditional theistic religion has named God.

In the limited cognitive definition it is the quality or state of being aware of an external object or something within oneself. It has also been defined as: subjectivity, awareness, sentience, the ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind.

I will use it in that sense to describe brain processes, how memory works, awareness, etc. but also in much broader way. I relate it not only to the higher consciousness used in religious context, but also to denote the common link in all and between all, and as the overarching principle of manifestation. I thus don't see it as exclusively human. Even self-consciousness, being conscious of being conscious might not be exclusively human. In the chapter about time I will even make time part of the whole consciousness question and argue that time is the vehicle of the overarching consciousness. Bear with me, it's one of the most complex and deep subjects in science and metaphysical philosophy.

Understanding consciousness is the key to the universe, at least for us humans. It's a deep and persistent issue in science. How can we bridge the mind-matter gap?

Consciousness, in the wider sense of underlying all and everything, is what brings awareness and even self-awareness. We are self-conscious and for a long time have assumed that to be a rather human quality. At least some animals seem to share it with us, but where do we draw the line? That consciousness is the root of all manifestation becomes more and more clear in quantum-physical terms, but what do they then mean?

It's easy to equate it with great concepts and name it chi, love, God, self reflected information, the ground of all or nature, but that doesn't bring us much further in understanding it and using this understanding to influence reality as in ritual. I think we have to see what connects consciousness and in the context of ritual, how do we deal with it.

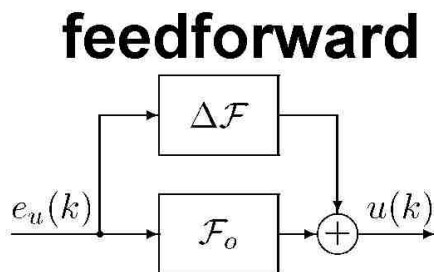
A different approach

There are many theories about consciousness, qualia (phenomenal experience), etc. but none that explain the gap between brain and mind in a conclusive way. David Chalmers called the gap the hard problem of consciousness. The scientific views on this range from ignoring there is such a problem as does Daniel Dennett who believes rather materialistically than we will one day figure it out, to the New Mysterianism of Colin McGinn who proposes that our human mind is just not able to explain consciousness.

Consciousness and information

The mind-body separation or dualism, which Descartes, Leibniz, Schopenhauer, T. Huxley and many others subscribed to amounts to little more than that the experience, the consciousness is different from the brains, the machine or the mill of the brain as Leibniz has tried to visualize it. We now can have, with all kind of techniques, a much closer look at the mill inside our skull, but Leibniz's gap remains.

Thoughts cannot be observed or perceived by examining brain properties, events, and processes. We can see what pain or a specific image effects in the brain, we can cause certain images to appear by stimulation, but the pain as experience is not the brain process. There is no real explanation, but theories abound how



perception, consciousness and memory are related and function in the brain. I will deal with some of the existing views on consciousness in the appendix II.

My view, consciousness is the control link

Consciousness must be a resonance and mirroring process, reflection is a word often used to describe conscious thinking. It is a obviously a capability that developed because it offered some benefits in dealing with complexity and consequences. Here the human self-consciousness is an advanced level of consciousness and more geared to dealing with time, much of our thinking is about the future. It is therefore, I argue, a control mechanism beyond the now. The thoughts, whatever they are, are bouncing and mirrored between layers of sensed, projected and constructed perception (including that what we call memories) on the border between the worlds.

Its physical manifestation as electric pulses and brain processes is just the material print, the activity of the tuner. We are not our brain, our brain is a tool in the process of thinking, just as our body is and according to the idea of embodied cognition, the two are very much related, something Spinoza, far ahead of his times, seemed to have realized.

Consciousness (and in humans the self-consciousness) allows us to function, sense, act, will and survive, keeps the genes in the pool and offers explanations to keep us busy and maybe happy. It could be a totally illusory thing, just as perceived reality might be a construction, but let's assume it makes sense.

Now I argue that consciousness is the gatekeeping mechanism connecting material reality with the extradimensional. It is a mirror (resonance) process, the sense and prime input is stored, compared with other data (memory) as in a mirror, reduced in probably many steps to manageable chunks, filtered and often distorted. At some point of complexity of the process this mirroring leads to self-consciousness, there is realization that we are doing this, that we are thinking.

Consciousness is in this view a combination of the still somewhat material (measurable) senses, memory input and retrieval on the one hand and the immaterial info of the primes on the other, in essence a mirror and resonance process.

To explain this, I limit this image to simple processes, a kind of flatlander view of a multidimensional situation, but first I need to explain a bit about feedback and feedforward control loops.

Control loops regulate many things, in technology and in our body. There is feedback and feedforward. We live in a world where feedback is the predominant control mechanism. Not only the thermostat of the central heating, but most biological functions are feedback loops. We perceive some-

thing, or measure as in technical feedback systems, then compare this to the undisturbed (homeostatic) situation and then adapt the parameters of the system, like changing the settings.

Most systems do this automatically. Biological systems are great in this respect, they function and adapt autonomously. That our body temperature, acidity, blood pressure, and what not, is kept within narrow boundaries is not normally noticed. Only in cases where the disturbance is too heavy for the system we will notice it, we fall ill etc. In society and business too feedback is how we manage things. We measure against the stable state or the aspiration level (target value) and feed this back into the loop. It must be stated that feedback in complex systems very soon outgrows our mathematical capabilities, the cybernetic notion that we can actually control complex systems is an illusion. One of the fathers of cybernetics (with Norbert Wiener) was W. Ross Ashby, he stated:

"The fact is that the concept of "feedback", so simple and natural in certain elementary cases, becomes artificial and of little use when the interconnexions between the parts become more complex. For understanding the general principles of dynamic systems, therefore, the concept of feedback is inadequate in itself. What is important is that complex systems, richly cross- connected internally, have complex behaviours, and that these behaviors can be goal-seeking in complex patterns."

That in order to effectively control a system (biological, government, machines) we must have a model of it that is at least as complex is stated in the Good Regulator theorem (Roger C. Conant and W. Ross Ashby) that is central to cybernetics. It is stated "Every Good Regulator of a system must be a model of that system". Models of weather, economy and nature are thus ineffective by definition. Applying this to ritual, the reality of a ritual is so complex that we cannot expect a manageable steering mechanism of the outcome, hence ritual efficacy is an art form rather than a science.

Feedforward: looking ahead

The other control mechanism is feedforward, and in a simplified model this is when we tweak the system to counteract certain disturbances we see coming, but don't use feedback to control the result. Think about a heating system that by design deals with the average temperature differences in the seasons.

More advanced systems use combinations of feedback and feedforward. An example of feedforward is when we are in a car and see a steep hill in the distance, we then speed up to climb the hill more easily. In a pure feedback situation we would wait till we feel the car slowing down and then hit the accelerator pedal, but this would be less efficient. Now this example al-

ready points to the problem, for by seeing the hill far away, we are in fact measuring the approaching disturbance and using visual feedback.

For really effective feedforward it is nice if we knew the future, so we could anticipate and counteract the disturbance that is coming. We approach this of course by developing models to predict the future, as when we take some preventive medicine if an epidemic is approaching. Again biological systems are great in this respect, we wouldn't be able to walk or climb a staircase if the eye-muscle coordination didn't take care of this, automatically..

The notion of 'embodied cognition' links thoughts to movements and body awareness (perception and motor systems) not as additional, but as essential and indispensable to rational intellectual thought. This move in the Philosophy of Mind field toward a total re-localization of mental processes out of the neural domain support my notion, that ritual is pre-cognitive.

Homeostatis: ritual as a quick fix

Biological systems tend to stabilize themselves, this is called homeostasis. We don't like change, our body and mind resists changes, tries to restore the more or less stable situation we are used to. This is why changing is so hard, why therapy is not always successful, why diets don't help much to lose weight. Larger and non-biological systems, like society, also have a tendency to homeostasis, changes are resisted, the status quo rules.

One way to look at rituals is to see them as shortcuts to changing homeostasis, not only of our own body, but of other biological systems, perceptions, thoughts and even organizations and tangible reality. Rituals are causation mechanisms, they are intended to change the course of things.

Knowing the future

Now brain research and again Benjamin Libet's experiments about volition have indicated that actually much of what we consider a free choice, a wilful action, is already decided in the brain before we make what we think is a conscious decision. Now his and similar experiments are concerned with relatively simple, uncomplicated actions, but indicate that we perceive, in our motor system or primes, the future.

This happens in these experiments at a simple awareness level, I believe that true free will decisions require a different state of consciousness, with more conscious perception of the future and the possibility to choose. Self consciousness is the process that mirrors (in a yet unclear way) the two worlds, in a complex feedforward-feedback process.

Consciousness is a mirror process, self consciousness even more so, the question is how and when in the evolution the jump from sense-consciousness to group-consciousness (as we see in animals and early hominids) to self-consciousness happened and why?

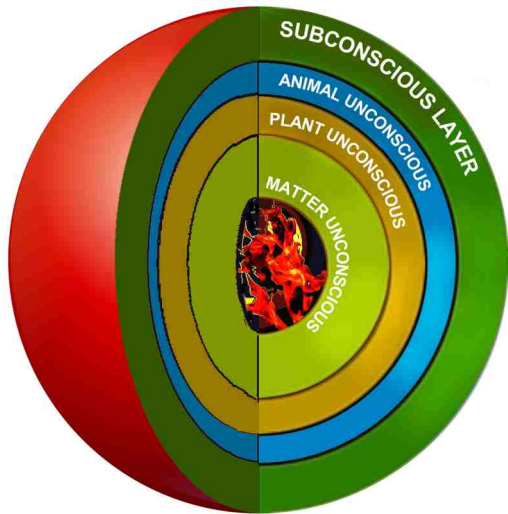
Neuro-psychological experiments have also shown that the brain sometimes shows a reaction before the stimulus that should cause this has been perceived or even happened. This could be explained as a kind of premonition, the unconscious part of the brain knows the future or at least signals not a response but a warning. And our psyche is very much busy with the future most of the time, much thinking goes into planning, worrying, building an image of what could, should or will happen.

I want to point out that our (unconscious) knowing of the future allows effective

feedforward. That realization is the missing component in theories about consciousness. And we all experience this awareness of the future, at least I often do. I will do something a bit unexpected, like in traffic, without a real cause and then realize that this has prevented an accident or something. Again, this might be ex-post rationalization or justification, but it happens often enough to suggest that indeed I or my body self protection system perceive the future. Others could call this their guardian angel or synchronicity. For me it's more evidence for the existence of sense organs, the primes I discussed earlier, that sense the future. In my model this means a connection to the other time dimension in the extra-dimensional realm.

This feeling or knowing the future is also relevant in the magical and ritual context as this allows for prophecy and divination.

So all this leads to arguing that human consciousness is a mixture of feed-back in the sense realm of normal reality and feedforward in the extra-dimensional processes. It is reflected, mirrored and bounced back and forth between the layers and modes of self and I, with self consciousness as a special situation. In a wider sense, consciousness is then how our psyche interacts with the wider reality and acts beyond our manifested existence in normal space-time.



Going deeper toward the dissolution of identity we pass from the human down to the primordial unconscious.

Is consciousness limited to life?

This of course brings up the question whether other life forms, animals and even lifeless matter also interact with that wider consciousness. Even the smallest bacteria and amoebae show surprising initiative and are aware of threats to their existence. Does everything then have a soul of sorts, the vehicle for consciousness we humans seem to possess? Are then all elementary particles of matter mere resonance patterns of consciousness, manifesting in time and spatial energy?

And is cyberspace, displaying so much life-like qualities, conscious and homeostatic, as Jaap van Till argues? It has been speculated by a number of physicists like Jon Wheeler that all matter may have been conceived out of the fabric of space as curvatures of the space-time emptiness. I think even that is filled with, or even is consciousness. This is something I will deal with in the chapter about quantum reality and in the appendix about consciousness theories.

Let me sound a personal note again. Just a quite different notion of consciousness, to show that we can see things differently. From my window in my bedroom I can see some majestic trees and in the morning they are my friends, greeting me, reflecting the green I need to compensate for what the solar spectrum lacks. Trees remind me that we and the animals are just plants that decided to move and thus carry a bit of earth with us in our stomach, a notion cyberphilosopher Jaron Lanier shared with me once.

Looking at the trees, I live in a windy country, I noticed they are far more than just photosynthetic transformation devices, they are also very efficient at transforming wind into fluid pressure. Their leaves are little pumps that make sure the water containing the nutrition they need gets up there. Far in the distance I can also see these huge manmade wind turbines, how clumsy compared to what the trees do so elegantly.

So concerning consciousness, I often feel a connection with the trees, mostly when I allow it, in quiet moments when I open up to nature, in my inner child state. I don't really talk to them, but they make things clear, for example that they need water. I tend to pump too much from my well to provide water to the plants and greens in my garden, so the roots of the trees get dry and so they warn me. Maybe it's just a shade of green that I pick up but the message is quite clear.

For me there is some level of consciousness in trees, actually in all manifested reality and beyond. I actually think that trees communicate much better with nature around them than we think, they are well connected. There I even got the notion that they have a dream state communication mode. I would like to see an experiment where two separated patches of

forest, not too far apart, are fed different amounts of water to see if the trees collectively will call in more rain in the patch that is really short of water. Of course true believers in a pantheistic universe will point at how they talk to their plants and how this helps. Experiments in Findhorn and elsewhere have demonstrated the positive effects of human attention to plants. I would argue for much more connectedness among plants and in fact all matter. Rupert Sheldrake with his morphogenetic resonance field theory has of course made a strong case for some kind of form-information exchange or field. But as it's old folk lore that fruit trees anticipate the next year in the amount of fruit they produce, they must have either prophetic capabilities or feel certain rhythms like El Niño.

For a notion about what is too far out, Eastern sages suggest it helps to look at what it is not. Try to imagine what it is not to be conscious and then of course the notion of unconscious comes to mind. Maybe it's better to talk about the not-selfconscious. The Jains, an Indian religion, don't talk about consciousness but about sentience and recognize different levels, starting with water, the homeopaths must like that. Concerning levels, what if consciousness does not increase with complexity, but decreases, that the smallest particles are more connected to the all than we humans, who think we are at the top of the pyramid. That the trees are maybe less self-conscious, but more aware about what happens to them than we. That particles at the quantum-level are more "entangled" than we?

Entangled means there was a close connection like a spin pairing. Everything originates (science claims) from a single Big Bang moment, where we can assume all and everything was entangled. The idea that everything is still connected in this non-locality perspective could be interpreted that in the extradimensional everything happens instantaneous, outside of time and place.

So if everything, down to the smallest particle or energy-blip, is connected, then our level of self-consciousness is maybe far removed from the not-selfconsciousness of 'lower' manifestation, but that is a matter of perspective. Maybe the lower levels feels more connected, more 'happy', more content with just being. This could imply that self-consciousness and the outgrown frontal lobe gives us something, but at the cost of something else. G. Gurdjieff hinted at that with his "Kundabuffer" organ tale in 'Beelzebub's tales to his grandson'. Maybe we are not progressing, but just transforming from one consciousness state to another, organizing our world in only a seemingly negentropic (negative entropy = more organized) way.

What is not-selfconscious?

Going deeper into the not-selfconsciousness I will try to specify levels in the inner-me, the core. Talking about the psyche and the selves earlier I didn't go in great detail there. The more common notions of shadow, persona and archetypes (Jung) for me offer less of logical framework in this respect. There are however many stories about people moving through levels of consciousness in altered states. They report going through stages, from the human to the primordial essence. The 1980 Ken Russell movie 'Altered States', inspired by the sensory deprivation research of John C. Lilly, illustrates this process vividly.

So I made another graphic model of the core me, representing a different model of the structure of the unconscious. In this I indicate the layers of the unconscious as each covering more primitive but essential not-selfconscious shells. In the middle there is the inner flame, the essential I without any identity.

This might be, for many, a somewhat surprising picture. I admit it's not the only way to indicate areas and layers of the unconscious. It does however correlate with experiences in a deep psychedelic trance or near death experience. People come back to tell about a trip that carried them as if down the rungs of the evolutionary ladder. Descending from human to animal to plant to inanimate matter and then the primordial cosmos. This experience, as expressed in the graphic, carries the message that the deeper we go, and thus surrender more of the ego identity, the more we become the non-self, descending via unconscious levels we share with animals, plants, and even mere matter.

One way to interpret this is to see that the resonance of self-conscious manifestation and thus captivity in time and space disappears. Letting go of manifestation and thus identity means oneness with the all (or nothingness in the material sense). This graphic is in a way counter-intuitive, and requires some contemplation. Of course there are more than four layers, in fact there is an endless multitude of consciousness levels, but the four kingdoms will do to make the point.

The Soul and Consciousness

The soul can be seen as the origin of consciousness, but then what is the soul, do animals have a soul, etc. There are these old questions, like how much does your soul weigh? This is related to the notion that the soul leaves the body as we die. There is no definite evidence of a physical effect, but it has been researched.



*Khnum's potters wheel with the
ka double*

The soul is a somewhat vague concept, it has been used as a synonym for spirit, mind, psyche or self, and the general idea is present in many religious, philosophical, and psychological traditions. One usually sees it as the incorporeal (non tangible) and, in a religious context as the immortal essence.

There is an overlap with consciousness, for which we have found no material ground either, but it lies deeper, it could be seen as our presence in the otherworld, in the extradimensional. Humans are supposed to have a soul, and as we are supposedly very special in the anthropocentric perspective of religions, even an immortal soul.

I agree that whatever the soul is, it is outside of time and space limitations. When religions talk about souls as being capable of union with the divine, I interpret that as humans being able to reach that realm. But even in the traditional religious view animals have a soul or something like it.

Thomas Aquinas attributed “soul” (anima) to all organisms but only human souls are immortal. And what about things without DNA, objects like crystals, rocks, mountains, the earth (Gaia Anima Mundi), the sun, the cosmos, the Higgs boson? Soul and consciousness in the wider sense come close, but in the limited sense of consciousness as related to awareness, perception, self consciousness, they are far apart.

“The brain is a computing machine connected with a spirit. Consciousness is connected with one unity. A machine is composed of parts. The active intellect works on the passive intellect which somehow shadows what the former is doing and helps us as a medium. I don’t think the brain came in the Darwinian manner. In fact, it is disprovable. Simple mechanism can’t yield the brain. I think the basic elements of the universe are simple. Life force is a primitive element of the universe and it obeys certain laws of action. These laws are not simple, and they are not mechanical.”

Kurt Gödel

Soul in Antiquity

The Ancient Greeks used the same word for ‘alive’ as for ‘ensouled’, the soul gave the body life. The soul was considered the incorporeal or spiritual ‘breath’ which animates the living organism. The word pneuma was also

used to indicate the soul. Plato considered the soul the essence of a person, but more as we see personality, guiding how we behave. He considered this essence to be an incorporeal, eternal occupant of our being. The Platonic soul has three parts. There is the logos, or logistikon (mind, nous, or reason), the thymos (emotion or spiritedness) and the eros (appetitive desire). Plato's tripartite theory of soul is set out in 'The Republic' where he argues that these parts correspond to the three classes of a just society.

Aristotle had a more materialistic view and denied the soul had a separate existence from the physical body. He located the soul in the heart and identified three hierarchical levels of the soul in living things: plants, animals, and people.

The 13th century Arab physician Ibn al-Nafis stated that:

"the soul is related primarily neither to the spirit nor to any organ, but rather to the entire matter whose temperament is prepared to receive that soul,"

He defined the soul as nothing other than "what a human indicates by saying 'I'." A statement I rather like. His soul and my extra-dimensional I are similar concepts. Kant identified the soul with the "I" in the strictest sense. Remember my graphic of the separation of me and I as different dimensions, the I thus as outside and perpendicular to tangible daily reality.

Soul is just one of those words of which there are so many different interpretations. James Hillman's archetypal psychology sees 'soul' as a more psychological issue.

Then there is H. Blavatsky's Theosophical notion that the soul, not being immortal, is both active in the field of our psychological activity (thinking, emotions, memory, desires, will, and so on) as well as in so-called paranormal or psychic phenomena such as extrasensory perception and out-of-body experiences. The spirit is then the eternal real self. Mostly these distinctions are a matter of definition.

Consciousness and soul

While the word soul has many meanings anyway, it is generally used to denote the incorporeal and, in many conceptions, immortal essence of a person, living thing, or object. In the Jewish-Christian-Islamic (Abrahamic) religions souls, or at least souls capable of union with the divine are exclusively human. There are incidents like St. Francis preaching to the birds or the Koranic notion that animals have to appear for Allah, but in general humans are considered special. The scholastic theologian Thomas Aquinas attributed "soul" (anima) to all organisms but stated that only human souls are immortal. Other religions like Jainism teach that all biological organisms have souls. The animistic view is that non-biological entities such as

rivers and mountains possess souls, which might include certain places, trees and objects like stones and crystals.

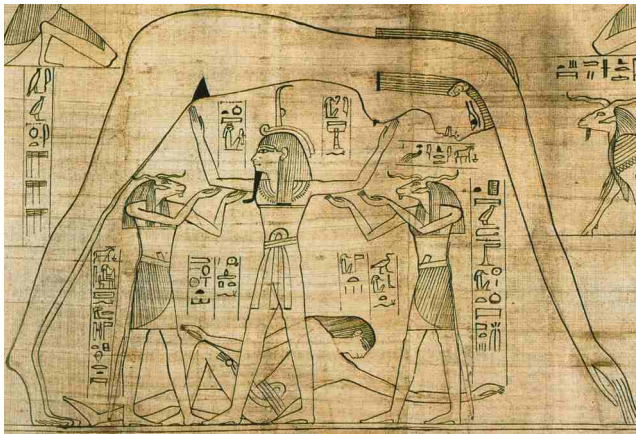
If we equate manifestation to being imbued with a soul, I believe everything manifested in time and thus place has some level of soul. In more scientific terms, if we assume extra dimensions, this soul (the part of everything that exists in those extra dimensions) through consciousness is the link between the normal and the extradimensional. A more palpable image is to speak about everything having roots in the extra-dimensional, like a shadow image of manifestation.

To take the soul concept to its other extreme, Anima mundi and the Hindu Atman or the Buddhist Dharmic Atman are concepts of a “world soul.”

Soul is also a synonym for spirit, mind, psyche or self. It is related to the notion of being “bound” in life, it is released at death, but maybe sticking around afterwards. Think about the practice of ritually binding or restraining the corpse of the deceased in graves by mummifying to prevent his or her return as a ghost.

Egyptian cosmology and magic

Egypt had a fascinating culture and it's one of the ancient cultures where a rich written legacy is available from about 3400 BCE maybe even predating Mesopotamian phonetic symbols. It was partly in hieroglyphs but we can now read most of them and there is the parallel but more phonetic hieratic script used to write on papyrus. It was a culture where the sacred and the profane were hardly separated. Everything was holy and related to



Egyptian notion of the realms. The God Shu holds up the Sky Goddess Nut with the Earth God Geb beneath Nut.

the overarching fertility issue of the Nile and it's flooding.

Fertility was thus the basis of their life and rituals, which gave women a more or less equal status, unusual in most other cultures.

Magic was everywhere, ritual was part of everyday life and philosophy lim-

ited to the practical. Their philosophy and theology was not very critical and accepted overlaps and layering of deities, rituals and cosmological views.

The Egyptians were quite knowledgeable, but in some respects not very developed. Their understanding of the human physiology was a bit odd, as they ascribed far greater importance to the heart than to the brains, they did not preserve the brains in the mummification procedure. This leaves me with the suggestion, that they maybe saw our brains as a mere antenna. This ties in with some more modern views of the mind at large, where memory is not anchored in physiological traces in the brain.

In other directions were very advanced. Their building skills were amazing. There are indications that their large stone constructions were made with a technique to create a concrete very similar to stone. But even more amazing was their accuracy, they were so precise that the pyramids can now be dated because they used stars to align them with true north and the four cardinal directions, and even had certain shafts pointing at specific stars. There is still debate about the exact building date of the Cheops pyramid for example, although 2450 BCE +/- 25 years is generally accepted. This is also roughly the dating of Stonehenge and it is likely that more bronze-age sanctuaries date from this period, indicating there was some communication between the Mesopotamian, Egyptian and other civilisations.

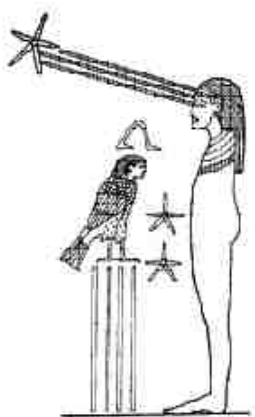
Heka

The Egyptians had a God of medicine and magic called Heka and referred to “magic” as heka, meaning (James P. Allen) “the ability to make things happen by indirect means”. Magic was seen as the cause of many thing,

even as the force used to create the universe. It was employed by the gods to work their will and by humans who knew how, had the special knowledge. These were obviously the priests who had access to sacred texts such as the books of the dead and among other things did divination and performed healing in special places in the temples.

At the level of common people there were more accessible forms of magic, which still exist in all African cultures.

Spells, divination, amulets, snake charming and healing must have been part of normal life too, as can be deduced from the enormous amounts of amulets preserved. Incantations, hymns and ritu-





The weighing of the heart by Anubis

als were seen as magical, temples and shrines as places and ways to prevent or overcome negative events.

Egyptians believed that with heka they could influence the gods and gain protection, healing and transformation. The word entails activation of the ka, an aspect of the soul of both gods and humans. Health and wholeness of being were sacred and associated with Heka, the divine personification of magic. There is no word for religion in the ancient Egyptian language, mundane and religious world views were not distinct. Thus heka was not a secular practice but rather a religious observance.

The basic focus of Egyptian culture was the second chakra, fertility but also lust, pleasure and probably sex. Women were, in their worldview, more or less equal to men. The Egyptians were practical people, literally down to earth, less inclined to speculate about theological or philosophical issues. Rituals, irrigation, agriculture and the afterlife and death were more important.

The body was a magical platform, but differently understood from the way we do in modern medicine. Some techniques like embalming and trepanation were well developed. It turns out that trepanation or making holes in the skull was not uncommon in even stone age cultures, we can only speculate why, some claim expanded consciousness is behind it. Scientifically, the Egyptians were well developed. They probably started out with some inherited techniques and capabilities from Sumeria, or even Atlantis or other earlier civilizations, but were pretty ignorant about the biological causes. They attributed diseases and bad luck to demonic influences or bad thoughts. Their doctors were good healers and some like Imhotep became famous. They had diseases like rheumatism and malaria, but little traces of cancer have been found in the mummies. Upper class people were often overweight and adult life expectancy was about 35 for men and 30 for

women. The mummies of high ranking men and pharaohs show there was circumcision, but it's not clear whether this was a general custom.

The heart (jb or leb) was very special, it was seen as the essence of life, the seat of the mind with its emotions, intelligence, and moral sense, more so than the brains. The heart was believed to be the center of consciousness, even the center of life itself. This metaphysical heart was believed to be formed from one drop of blood from the child's mother's heart, taken at conception. It was the seat of emotion, thought, will and intention. The heart gave human life its direction, contained a record of its moral past, and after death was weighed by Anubis against a feather representing Ma'at. The final judgment however was not influenced by the social position of the deceased.

The actual understanding of the heart's function was limited. They described how from the heart tubular channels (metu) linked all parts of the body together. Like irrigation channels, they delivered not only blood, but also air, tears, saliva, mucus, sperm, nutriment and even bodily waste. The brain was less important. Its only real function was thought to be to pass mucus to the nose, so it was one of the organs that were discarded during mummification. The heart was preserved and even protected by a scarab image, a beetle. Maybe their dismissive treatment of the brain was because they realized that the brains are the seat of self-consciousness and would be an encumbrance to functioning in the otherworld.

One way to look at the Egyptian cosmological view, suggested by Chris Goldfrap, is to see our normal existence as a theater, where the stars play out their battles with us as their proxies. This ties in with Leary's idea of earth being a laboratory of some higher level entities.

The heart is a god, the stomach is its shrine.

The inscription of Nebneteru

Death was a complex affair, the funeral rites were complex, involved embalming and much ritual. The afterlife was what certainly concerned the rulers. They had the means to ensure that their identity parts like the ka were taken care of, that their names were preserved and thus could aspire to become literally stars (akh) in the sky after they died and passed the tests. The Egyptian rulers were resurrectionists believing that when they died they could be reborn as a star (akh) in the 'Kingdom of Osiris.' When Egyptians looked at the sky, they saw it as a real place and the stars as pharaohs and deities. To exist there after the body died required that one had to prepare, but also that earthly existence had to have a counterpart in the otherworld, the heavenly realm.

The Egyptian soul notions

The notions about the otherworld and the soul we find in the Egyptian cosmology have value if only because they have lasted for more than three millennia and demonstrate a refined and complex world view. Even though archaeology and the study of the ancient texts has revealed much about how the ancient Egyptians lived, performed their rituals and buried their dead, there is no clear account of their culture. Their view is complex, but somehow for me resonates better with the common denominator in a wide range of cultures, even better than the view of people like Freud.

The ancient Egyptian view of what made up a human being is complex. Apart from the physical body (khat) there were a number of constituents forming a psyche or a soul, or rather a multifaceted presence in two time dimensions and three worlds. There are the ka (kA, the twin), ren (rn, the name), shut (shadow), the ba (soul), sahu (spirit-body) and akh (star). Other attributes were an individual's khu ("spiritual intelligence") and sekhem ("power"). There are some eight non-material parts or identities named beside the physical body, so it's rather complex.

The ka is like a double, the ren is the name and remains close to the body, but the shut, the ba, sahu and akh were more mobile and independent and could appear and act separately from the body. It is hard to translate these terms, and even harder to equate them with modern psychological or philosophical insights. The Freudian model is sometimes mentioned to denote the akh as the id, the name as the ego and the ka as the super-ego, but this doesn't make much sense.

For if we look at it from the perspective of the three Egyptian worlds, underworld, earth and heavenly world, with the Sun RA (or RE) as the one that circles all (and throws shadows), it makes sense to see the heavenly world as something which for the Egyptian was a real sky-world, above them, but only accessible for mortals (and especially kings) after death.

Gary Gilligan (in "the God King Scenario" with some Velikovsky lore) made the point that the whole notion of Upper and Lower Egypt might not refer to the geographical North/ South division, but to the earthly and the heavenly realms. Lower Egypt or Earth was, in his view, home to humans. An intermediate region was occupied by human 'doubles,' and Upper Egypt or the 'land above' was home to the eternal form of humans, the 'all powerful' stars that were divine. The upper world was reflected in the lower, so part of one's identity or soul was a kind of mirror of the heavens, an astrological image.

We can divide the various beings and soul parts according to the location. Humans in this world (Lower Egypt) and then the deceased (at least those lucky enough to be taken care of) and deities above, plus some messengers

in between. Who didn't make it up there died not only here, but in the underworld. The moral value of everybody's life was weighed against the feather of Ma'at. This underworld or netherworld is also where the Sungod Ra goes at night.

So the different souls or soul parts were different stages, belonging to different realms.

The ka (kA)

Ka seems to be the active part of one's being, the life-force or potency, that what makes us act and manifest. The Egyptians believed that animals, plants, water and even stones had their own ka, indicating some connection with consciousness or sentience. Heka or magic thus applied to everything. The human ka, as its vital essence, was a constant companion of the body in life and death, a kind of spiritual double, manifested from birth on. It was also immortal if taken care of by real or virtual nourishment in the form of offerings after death.

The ka hieroglyph looks like two arms praying, addressing the heavens, maybe honoring the astrological persona.

The ka could be consciousness and the will to manifest, it is with us as a double. So it isn't a tangible part, but existing in the otherworld, beyond time and space. The ka is establishing a connection to the magical (heka). The ka as the nonphysical 'double' emerged the moment a person was born.. In many images the creator-god Khnum was shown modeling the ka on a potter's wheel at the same time as he was molding the body of a human. Ka was there but invisible as long as a person lived, dwelling in the intermediate realm.

Ba

The ba hieroglyph contains a phoenix bird. It has been translated as the noble part of the soul. The ba was depicted watching over the physical body after death, with the job to reunite it with the ka, the deceased's astral 'twin'. I rather see the ba as indicating a process, it feels like the guide or vehicle, the indeed noble and timeless mentor of the ka and the physical body, making sure they reach their destination. The ba providing for the time after physical death (70 days of embalming procedures) an anchor, a conscience in the magical for the more earth-bound ka. It concerned usually a pharaoh or deity, ba was not associated with mere mortals. The ba had an effect on the world, like it carried and protected a reputation, a (moral and powerful) superego part of the psyche. This power also existed in some material things, there it was called bau.

And yet the ba was magical, spells enabled it to assume any shape and it had something to do with creativity and sex, it was often shown with an erect phallus. So the ba was also a (male) sexual being, which needed food and

drink after the body died. The ba moved about, sometimes in the company of the shadow, but did not stray far as in the night it unites with the ka of the body ensuring continued and sublime existence in heaven (the Elysian Fields) in the afterlife.

The akh or star was then the fully resurrected and glorified form of a dead pharaoh in the next (sky) world, enduring and unchanging for all eternity, the 'powerful one.' This star image makes me think of the Jewish star, with the male and female triangle moving into each other to form the star.

Now apart from the stars there must have been some more humanlike identity in the heavens, immortal and similar in form to the mortal body, living as before but in the Elysian fields. This is what could be indicated by the sahu, the spirit-body or the repository of the soul as Wallis Budge, who first translated the Ani Book of the Dead, called it.

The name (rn)

As a part of the soul, a person's ren (rn is 'name', no vowels) was given to him or her at birth. The Egyptians believed that the identity would live for as long as that name was spoken or read, which explains the practice of placing it in numerous writings. I think it's a correspondence, a link between the physical and the spiritual. The name of the ba and the ka is the foundation of a being as an individual existence. Names were vulnerable to magic, but had to be preserved after death, hence the many seals or cartouches encircled with a protective loop of rope with the name of a deceased Pharaoh. In inscriptions of virtual offerings crucial for survival in the hereafter the recipient had to be named. True names were hidden, this is common to many cultures. He-who-must-not-be-named shows up in Harry Potter.

The power or identity of the shadow or of the ka could be transferred to statues or images, the kas were thought to reside in tomb statues. The ba resided in a statue in the likeness of the deceased, just in case the mummy got lost or damaged.

Many statues in Egypt were destroyed or the faces damaged, this has to do with this belief in magical contagion, something that represented, touched or belonged to someone could be used magically for good or bad. A subsequent king or ruler didn't want his predecessors present in any form. Obliterating inscribed names or images was a kind of postmortem punishment or revenge: the person was assigned to oblivion. This was probably the fate post-Amarnan pharaohs had in mind when they erased the name of Akhenaten (Akhnaton). I believe that many of what we call grave robbers were in fact sent by later rulers and were not mere criminals.

The khaibit or shadow (Sw.t or shut).

The shadow is a crucial concept, in a land where the sun is so much present. The line “the night is the shadow of the earth” has multiple meanings, literal and poetic, but also relates to the image of the sun, drawn across the sky in daytime but with a nighttime shadow in the underworld. Images, shadows, they were seen as correspondences, ways to connect to the person, before and after death.

Everything has a shadow, so man must have one too and we see it depicted as a black figure. Shadows were not negative things, under the hot Egyptian sun shadow was protective and came from Ra. It might have been something like a guardian angel, a protector. Unlike the body, it was supposed to have an entirely independent existence and to be able to separate itself from the body; it was free to move wherever it pleased, and shared with the ka and ba the offerings of real and depicted food in the tomb.

The notions of the Egyptians concerning the soul are not clear, but the fact that they did recognize two time dimensions *neneh* and *djet* (see the chapter about time) makes their complex imagery of identities and soul components fascinating. The idea of a *ba* assisting the soul to make the transition comes back in other cultures, like in the *Bardo Thodol* of the Tibetan Buddhists. The importance of rituals assisting in the process of dying and transition is growing as more and more people these days choose conscious deaths (euthanasia).

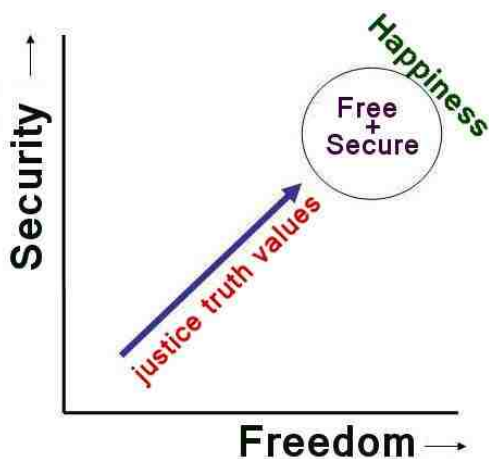
Theurgy: Iamblichus

We owe some understanding of the Egyptian magic to Iamblichus (ca. CE 250-325) who is among the most important of the so-called Neoplatonic philosophers, second only to Plotinus. Under its abbreviated Latin title *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum* (The Egyptian Mysteries), he answers some critical questions of Plotinus' disciple Porphyry.

Now Porphyry regarded the ceremonial rites of Egyptian theurgy with distrust. He favored Mithraism, which prevailed in Asia, while Iamblichus belonged rather to the cult of Serapis, which was the State religion of Egypt. Iamblichus wrote about the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians, also known as the Theurgia, and how this deals with a ‘higher magic’ which operates through the agency of the gods.

Deprivation and the soul

The medieval Arabic philosopher Avicenna in his “Floating Man” thought experiment tried to separate self consciousness from sensations. Imagining oneself suspended in the air, isolated from all sensations, which includes no



sensory contact with even the own body. As one then, apart from any sensation, would still have self-consciousness, the soul therefore had to be a primary given, a substance. People like John Lilly have experimented with such a state, in so called sensory deprivation conditions. He found that in such a situation one could induce mystical experiences, especially with the help of conscious-enhancing substances and get

closer to the soul.

Personality, self-consciousness, identity

Apart from addressing the otherworld, rituals are psychological and social tools and they can help to evaluate who we are, help us grow and bring consciousness and self together. For ultimately our identity and self image dissolve. For true self-consciousness makes one aware of being *not* different from someone else or from anyone or anything else. The all is one experience, good and bad dissolve.

Who am I but my friends in me

Who are they but the Friend in me

Then what about my enemy

Who is he, who is she? In me?

The self in consciousness perspective

The addition of self to self-consciousness, self-awareness, self-worth, self-esteem and self-image opens a can of worms, there are so many theories that offer explanations and models, that it is hard to pinpoint what exactly is self-consciousness. Again I have to limit myself and try to point out how I see self consciousness in a different perspective.

One of the important difference I differ from most current views is that I believe we all have several subjective selves, at least an inner child and one mask, sometimes more. Moreover that what we call consciousness I see as a process involving communication (exchange) with a timeless or magical

time dimension existing in the extradimensional world of ideas, spirits and the unseen. Most theories and models (see appendix II) assume we have only one self and the interplay between the selves is ignored. Furthermore many theories seek to explain our psyche without involving the otherworld (extra dimensions) but look for mechanical and reductionist explanations.

In the model with the three selves I use, the assumed self (I try not to use the word ego) has an identity, a personality with many traits, that one is more or less aware of. This awareness of self, having an image of who we are, is not there from birth but develops slowly in a baby and keeps developing all our life. Our identity develops too, changes with every experience. We learn, store the feedback we receive from our senses in working memory and create a self image in our long term memory banks. We look at ourselves and it is in comparing what we see and what we want to be (or think what we want to be) that we might change our identity, our assumed self or just that part of us that we show others. Others play a role in this too, directly or indirectly, for much of what we display is based on what we think others think about us.

One might get the impression, that the ego doesn't matter much, but in the normal world we cannot live without an assumed self, ego or identity. The idea that that ego is bad and should be eliminated is false. It is the boundary mechanism that makes up the individual consciousness. Without it one would not exist as an individual. We cannot really function in the world in the egoless state we might attain in ritual. Our soul or eternal being has chosen the inner me as a vehicle, but this includes also the ego or ego-masks. We thus can experience individuality with personality, likes and preferences. Integration is what matters, not elimination.

This whole process of working on the personality, becoming aware of what we or the parents or society made us believe is a rather complex process, but a fascinating one. Our self image and how it's received by the world and correlated with our experiences and inner expectations very much influences how we feel.

Our personality and how it's mirrored and reflected upon in the worlds inside and outside makes us happy, unhappy, satisfied, willing to change, etc. Not only the three self images play a role, but for some people there are more assumed selves (masks) and also the filtering of outside impressions to complicate how and what we see as self. Not that we ever will obtain a complete image of who we are, there are pieces of the puzzle too deeply hidden or repressed to bring to the surface, even the most holy and realized individuals I have met still had some quirky traits. But maybe I haven't yet met the Buddha or Christ, and would I be able to recognize him or her anyway, who knows?

Normal = There are many models and techniques to define and work on the complex of selves, and in the context of looking at how rituals and consciousness are related they are probably all of some value. Many psychotherapists, psychologists and neuroscientists have been working on this. I have looked into many models, used many approaches, seen great results of this or that therapy, but alas, only a few miracles and even fewer true enlightened or holy ones. I must confess that neither in myself or in others do I see much beyond the gradual maturing of self image and personality that comes with age and experiences. Even in the midst of the millions at a Kumb Mela in India, where the gurus are lined up and one stumbles into many holy sadhus and babas, all meditating, praying and lost in divine adoration, very few will not stretch out a begging hand to the rich westerner. We can work on ourselves, use the most modern techniques, see ourselves in cameras, use the numerous feedback formats offered in workshops and therapy, but why not use and learn from the age-old techniques that are contained in rituals.

Even though I have a tendency to focus on the magical, I am always amazed at how ingenious many traditional rituals deal with psychological issues. They offer the participants many and often efficient roads to self-realization, think about Confession in the Catholic Church. In a ritual one can concentrate on the otherworld and the magical, but the (mind)-set and the social setting play a role too. Churches are often more social meeting places and self-help centers than devotional sanctuaries. I know a psychiatrist in the USA, who believes that as psychopharmaceuticals (the chemical straightjacket) only deal with symptoms and there is no time and money to do serious therapy, sending patients to local churches is the next best approach. There they find community, attention and practical help (apart from the belief system that bridges the cognitive dissonance) and isn't that what churches offered all through history?

Facing the self, self-worth

Our identity hinges on our self perception and self-consciousness, mirrored, projected and based on introspection. Unlike self-awareness, which in a philosophical context is generally described as being conscious of oneself as an individual, self-consciousness has gotten a negative connotation. It now refers to being self-involved, being excessively conscious of one's appearance or manner, which can be a problem at times. There is either too little or too much, being too proud or too shy, both often resulting from the same lack of self-esteem. In a positive context, self-consciousness may affect the development of identity, for it is during periods of high self-consciousness that people come closest to knowing themselves objectively.

We cannot do without, at least in our modern world and one could wonder how it came about.

Where did self consciousness come from?

We now know that animals have some kind of self-consciousness. Many recognize themselves in a mirror, and they they have intention in the sense that they seek psychedelic experiences (see chapter about psychotropic substances). We don't assume however that they have the human level of self-observation, knowing that they know, and a memory not only of events, but of thoughts.

So when did this capacity emerge in history, when did humans or humanoids begin to think about thinking? It seems logical that when this capacity came about there must have been an associated change in the way life and society was organized. This change probably left traces in archeological sense, but also the communication between people must have changed, language and maybe mating patterns. From the caves to the open field, from small groups to villages, cities; civilisation and pre-civilisation has left traces that we find and interpret, although a consistent picture has not really emerged.

These days we can trace the ways the human genome (DNA) spread over the world. Geneticists like like Bryan Sykes have identified original DNA clusters, how they are distributed in us today, how we descended from ancestors clans, and figured out how modern man came to be. The question is of course, what caused the emergence of the form of self-consciousness that came with what we in our self centered way now call progress as in farming, metalwork, urbanization.

Was it the end of the ice age, somewhere around 12.000 to 15.000 years ago, that this self consciousness emerged? Lucy Wyatt (*Approaching Chaos*, 2009) sees the emergence of a sustainable social archetype as occurring even before that. She call this the way of the civilisers Agriculture, domestication of crops and animals were part of the process as was the emergence of tool and weapon technology.

Obviously there have been moments in the long lifespan of the earth when there were singularities (special moments), change events, disasters etc. that have influenced the development of consciousness, self consciousness and how it is related to evolution.

There are many hypotheses about how self-consciousness came to be, and what effects it had. It wasn't always there, or maybe there was a group-consciousness similar to that in animals.

Psychologist Julian Jaynes suggested that there was a time that self-consciousness hadn't developed. That only some 5000 years ago, in the third

millennium BC this became part of the human toolkit. Ethnobotanist Terence McKenna suggested that it emerged with the use of psychedelic mushrooms, that arrived as spores from outer space. As it now turns out there are many more psychedelic plants and substances, and many animals use them for getting high, his idea seems too speculative. Not impossible, as Fred Hoyle's interstellar bacteria and notion that evolution on earth is influenced by a steady influx of viruses arriving via comets indicates, but improbable.

The story of Eve eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Paradise, upon the suggestion of a serpent resonates with the idea that psychedelic experiences are related to a change in consciousness. It relates that our present state, being self-conscious beings in a state of suffering, came about through eating some kind of fruit.

What made humans so different, special, self conscious? Was it extraterrestrial influence?

The many conspiracy theories point at stories, myths, some imagery, the unexplained emergence of science, writing and technological achievements that popped up without a proper development path, like the hieroglyphs. There is also evidence of some cataclysmic events, like the impact of a large meteor or major volcanic eruptions, of which there are traces in tree rings, ice-layers and deformations in the landscape as on the island Thera (Santorini). Of course the story or myth of a great flood shows up in many cultures.

Water, the extraterrestrial par excellence.

I am not a great believer in most of the explanations, but willingly add another weird insight to the long list. Could it be that the extraterrestrials (or conscience in some form) came with the arrival of water? Water is a miraculous substance, essential to the life that emerged on our planet, and it does come from space, so is an extraterrestrial influence.

Meteors and asteroids did bring water to us from far away and even today cosmic water reaches the earth, largely unnoticed as the ice crystals evaporate when entering the atmosphere, but in substantial amounts. The thing that distinguishes the Earth from other planets in the solar system is the presence of oceans full of water, a liquid that in itself has very specific but unlikely characteristics, essential to the evolution of life. Other planets do have water, but much less. There is water on Mars, there is ice hidden in the polar craters of our Moon, and the Saturn moon Enceladus jets substantial amounts of water into space.

Water molecules are present in the cosmic soup, they have been found in nebulae far out in the galaxy. Research has confirmed that comets do contain water. The 2011 Herschel Space Observatory data show the Hartley 2

comet containing ocean-like water with the right deuterium proportion. So why couldn't water be the extraterrestrial gift to earth, loaded with homeopathic information to start life?

The process

Whatever the cause, there seem to have been axial times, when humanity made some sudden and distinct steps. Axial moments like around 10.000 BCE when agriculture and modified wheat crops emerged, around 3200 BCE when Mesopotamia and Egypt developed symbolic writing (administrative writing, accounts etc. were there before) and immense sacred architecture. Or the time around 500 BCE when Greek and Eastern sages came up with a different worldview.

If we relate technological development along with writing, architecture, religion and philosophy to self consciousness, even in historical times there seem to have been peaks and valleys, high points and disasters, vanishing cultures and incredibly gifted ones.

Stories and myths only reach back for a limited time, remnants of previous civilisations are lost or became part of newer cultures as Graham Hancock has argued. The classic example is the Egyptian Sphinx, part of a pyramid complex erected in the third millennium BCE but probably much older, dating from before times when there was lots of (rain) water around, maybe 10.000 BCE. Archeological dating is limited, carbon dating not as reliable as was assumed, what do we really know about cultures dating back to before the last ice-age?

I think that the evolution of self-consciousness has not been a one way street, that we as humans in our present form may not be the peak, but another deep valley in evolution as we are so clearly working toward ecological disaster. Self consciousness might be the problem, not the solution and maybe the humans and pre-humans that have lived for a couple of million years before us were more happy, more connected to nature and more balanced than we are now.

There seem to have been other epochs, when self consciousness was a high levels, but we have only vague references and little archeological evidence. There are myths like the Maya stories of prior Suns, references to prior root races in ancient literature, inexplicable occurrences of architectural miracles like the pyramids. New findings and DNA research (we come from a limited gene-pool) bring ever more questions, but also indications, that we, at our present level of material and scientific understanding, might not be the summit of evolution.

However, in relation to ritual the emergence or fluctuations in self consciousness is not such a fundamental question, ritual was there before self

consciousness. Even when cultures died, ritual remained and might have served as a reminder of earlier times, acting as a common memory for the tribe or civilization. Only in a later stage of development ritual, myth, religion and art merged in a more conscious context and demarcations blurred. This frees me from commenting on Atlantis, Maya prophecies, root races and whether it was God or a mushroom spirit that downloaded the Ten Commandments to Moses.

Kinds of self-consciousness

Psychologists distinguish between two kinds of self-consciousness, private and public. Private self-consciousness is a tendency to introspect and examine one's inner self and feelings. Public self-consciousness is an awareness of the self as it is viewed by others. In my selves model these are feedback mechanisms related to the assumed and the shown self. The distinction is important as adaptations in the shown or public identity are not necessarily always grounded in fundamental changes. We just adapt more, please, hide and lie. This might not resolve any inner conflict and this superficial mask might lead to problems (psychological and psychosomatic) at a deeper level. We are also never totally aware and therefore never sure about how others see us, projection mechanisms and unconscious tendencies confuse us, self consciousness in this sense can be a distraction rather than an asset.

The limited nature of self-consciousness is what we work with, all our lives. Inner peace often means becoming content with our self image, the differences between the perceived and constructed self image are resolved. Those differences are what makes us look for change, bring insecurity and can lead to excessive self-monitoring and social anxiety.

Private and public self-consciousness are different, can have different levels of integration (inner acceptance) and are not always correlated. I can feel loved by others, but not love myself. I can think I am very smart, but realize others don't see this. Self consciousness develops over time, but in general is relatively stable. It can develop faster in certain situations, where we can dash ahead in understanding the self and thus others. In ritual and therapy this is often the goal. Holding up a mirror by oneself or having others hold up mirrors.

In that sense the essential questions from Byron Katie's "Work" are not much different from what Socrates did, confronting and giving feedback.

The setting plays a role too. Being in a group, in a crowd, being watched by cameras, being in a dark room, sensorily deprived, wearing a mask, the conditions influence our self-consciousness or what we are willing to show about ourselves. Not that we are accurate, we usually have a distorted view

of our abilities, often think we are better than average, but look worse than average. Thus we need others to help us evaluate our opinions about ourselves.

Maybe it's good to mention again one of my basic understandings here:

I am only different as I have not yet learnt to be the same.

To understand what we see as 'that' around us we have to be aware that we create this 'that' to a large extent by projection and by assembling bits and pieces of data in ever new memory pictures.

Self identification and self awareness

Self-awareness is the capacity for introspection and the ability to recognize oneself as an individual separate from the environment and other individuals. This has been noted in animals too. Some animals are self aware, in the sense that they recognize themselves in a mirror, dolphins, apes, cuttlefish, parrots, magpie and elephants have this capacity to be self-aware. The somewhat higher step is becoming aware of this awareness as in self-consciousness or introspection. This is important, as this means a certain moral responsibility can so be attributed to an individual. Self consciousness allows to make a choice, between affirming or denying the will.

Cognitive Dissonance

I deal with a number of theories about consciousness in the appendix, but there is one that I recognize a lot in many situations. I use it not in its original form, but applied within my model of multiple selves or masks. Most theories assume we have only one self (mask), and ignore that we have more. Not only do I see we have more masks or self-modalities, but within such a mask we can shift our focus.

One moment we are into the cerebral but only a second later we can be in a different mode, intrigued by sex, power or action. We thus can hold conflicting cognitions but as we think we are only one 'self' some discomfort might arise: was this me that said that a moment ago?

Leon Festinger's theory of Cognitive Dissonance (1956) describes how we deal with inaccuracy in our opinions and facts. He looked at internal inconsistencies within a single self as an explanation for behavior adaptations and changes in self image. Experiments showed that in many cases it does explain things. In order to protect our consistent self-image and prevent uncomfortable emotions we then have to fix this inaccuracy or dissonance. The theory of cognitive dissonance in social psychology proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance by altering existing

cognitions, adding new ones to create a consistent belief system, or alternatively by reducing the importance of any one of the dissonant elements.

To solve or avoid the dissonance in opinion or expressed facts, and regain mental equilibrium, people will do funny things. They will reinterpret or fix their reality lowering the importance of one of the discordant factors, adding consonant elements, or changing one of the dissonant factors. This can take the form of lying, misperception, rationalization and manipulation of the situation. This tendency can be used to manipulate people, and many experiments have illustrated that one can make people act in ways going against the true inner beliefs (or adapt them a bit) if they are made insecure enough by introducing dissonance. One also stands by a certain choice, once a certain type of car has been purchased, the quality of the car is beyond criticism, the same goes for choosing a school, education or religion.

So Cognitive Dissonance is certainly an interesting way to look at things. In a ritual context dissonance is sometimes part of the setup. Even if logic and rationality plead against accepting a certain belief, being part of the church and thus supposed to follow the tenets of the faith creates dissonance, which is sometimes cleverly used to elicit gifts.

Exploitation of weaknesses caused by inducing cognitive dissonance in the congregation is one of the techniques used by many religions. More positively, the cleaning acts, washing of the hands etc. in rituals are known to counter the feeling of being unclean. Again the Catholic Confession is a great way to release cognitive dissonance resulting from sins committed.

Now what if we took this concept of internal discord and subsequent adaptations a step deeper. For many people there is an internal dialogue, discussions between parts of the self or between selves, which Freud attributed that to the super-ego. In my model of multiple selves I don't need his super-ego, I just see the differences between the masks and the inner me (child) that cause dissonance.

One subpersonality or mask feels this, the other that. The inner child might kick in with again another opinion, sometimes we are stifled and unable to decide things because of all these conflicting views. But then, life goes on, things happen and the internal differences are solved by the same kind of mechanisms as described in the cognitive dissonance model. And if the issues are not solved, and note the internal dissonances might not be conscious anymore, this can lead to somatic disturbances.

As I explain in the appendix XI about the Lucidity approach, inner dissonances and imbalances are the cause of many, if not all diseases, complexes, etc. The ways we try to solve them are amazing. Our system uses whatever function to deal with it, intelligence, sexual orientation, the way we look and of course our behavior.

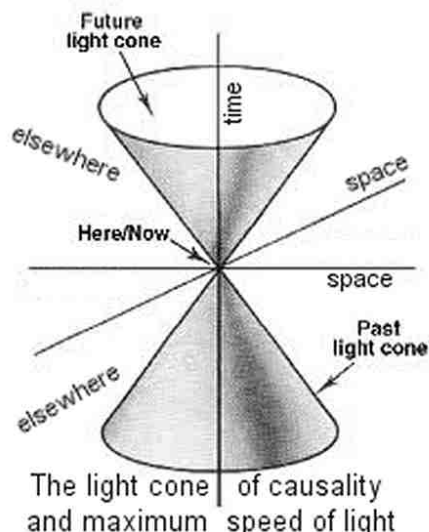
We need ways to resolve the discordia in our system and ritual offers very powerful tools to do this. By becoming aware of the inner workings and notably the differences between assumed self and inner me we can recognize the root of some dissonance, but the step to the magical offers even more. When we hear about miraculous healing, this might mean that an internal dissonance has been resolved, and the body can now give up trying to bridge it. The body is often the place, where the dissonances show up. The inner child uses the body to warn us there is some conflict that needs to be solved. If we don't listen, things get worse.

All in all, Cognitive Dissonance if expanded to include the hidden dissonances between the various selves is a great concept to help understand the working of the psyche at many levels.

Quantum theory and Consciousness

Consciousness has forever been the enigma of philosophy. What is it, where does it come from, is God an overarching consciousness, how are perception, knowledge, awareness, self-consciousness related, where does consciousness reside? The paradigm shift caused by relativity and quantum mechanics has been dramatic, but also sheds new light on consciousness. We will never see the universe again as the simple Newtonian set of hard objects or as the atomic building blocks of Democritus.

Quantum theory showed probability is the root of manifestation, uncertainty about what is or is not has replaced the notion of hard matter. Intention decides what we will observe and believe and thus consciousness is part of the perceived and measured reality. Look for a universe of particles and you will find them, look for a universe of waves and they will appear. Knowing speed, place and mass at the same time is impossible, the universe is at least a biverse and maybe a multiverse.



Where to find it or locate it?

But what about this consciousness as not only the awareness of, but being an essential part of manifestation. What is this elusive thing that is maybe just a projection, could it be a belief that has manifested because we are looking for it, similar to the soul? Is there a material root for it? A cause, not an effect like neurological processes and why not look for it in the depth of matter as we do for gravity in the CERN colliders? Do the neutrino streams establish a consciousness effect? Is life, in the limited DNA or the ultimate star seed sense, just a manifestation of it, colored by whatever cosmological input it receives? Is there a consciousness particle, does it have a spin state, does it come in quantum leaps, is it symmetrical in the C, P, T sense other elemental particles are? It's fascinating to speculate about this. Science fiction writers are good at it, but the creation myths of old are good too.

There are many theories about consciousness, but none has emerged as the winner, as the solution that is accepted and would be the basis of a next paradigm. Science here is not really going for the dark or the magical. It is like only looking where the light is (the MRI-scanner, Large Hadron Collider, Chromatographs), literally ignoring the elsewhere that lies outside the light cone that limits what we can perceive given normal causality.

This light cone image has to do with the (limited) speed of light. In the theory of general relativity, the concept of causality is visualized as follows: an effect must belong to the future light cone of its cause. Something that is far away can only travel with the speed of light to be noticed. But what is then the realm outside that cone? And what about non locality, entangled events connected without any time delay, instantly? And if time is an illusion, as it is just the vehicle of consciousness, and thus doesn't exist per se, where and what is manifestation?

Consciousness creates reality

The idealistic position is that reality is the result of the intangible, ideal realm, but we only know our perceptions, as bishop Berkely stated. So the notion that (the universal) consciousness is the only substance and brings forth reality is not entirely new, I just insert time as the mechanism for manifestation.

People like the physicist Henry Stapp, John Von Neumann and Eugene Wigner pointed in this direction and some interpretations of quantum mechanics support this. The problem is that situating this whole process in the brain doesn't explain how the rest of reality happens.

If consciousness collapses the quantum probability wave, Von Neumann's original idea, whose or what consciousness are we speaking of? It would be

rather anthropocentric if this only applies to human consciousness. The universe was and is there without humans, unless we assume it's all imagination and maya.

Fred Alan Wolf also argued that the source of matter is conscious mind. The conscious mind "invents" a illusory body and starts believing that "it is" the body. He however goes a further step toward accepting the role of time in stating that information must be coming from the future. Wolf points at the fact that an observer in quantum observations can change the past by fixing the outcome of an observation. So the present influences the past.

The notion that the future plays a role in the present, or time is not what we think it is, has serious implications. One of them is that evolution is not only an extension of the past. I have described this as "Evolution is a remembrance of the future", not a very Darwinian approach, more a Sheldrake kind of view.

Paradigm Shift

Are we willing to look beyond, working from the hypothesis that there is an otherworld, other dimensions, a consciousness that surpasses all else? This would require a bridge between worlds that have been kept apart, the hemispheres of science and religion/spirituality.

When Thomas Kuhn talked about paradigm shifts, and he was careful to limit this to the hard sciences and not include the humanities, he believed that enough anomalies in a scientific worldview would eventually topple it and a new and progressed paradigm would emerge! But would he see a grand unification, the closing of the rift between science and religion as a paradigm shift or as a revolution?

For the humanities, there are no clear paradigms, anything goes, different views exist side by side. However I think quantum physics and string theory at least point to an emerging new view; a *Zeitgeist* that accepts all and everything is more than what we can touch, bridging the science/spirituality divide. I believe that seeing magic as a fundamental quality or dimension would provide such a bridge. Maybe looking at my hypothesis that ritual has been the root paradigm long before things like myth and religion came around will be of help here.

D.C. Broad, Huxley

Changing our view on reality this way means a paradigm shift, even greater than the one quantum mechanics caused. The consequences of such a paradigm shift would be enormous. D.C. Broad, the English philosopher, was quite clear about the consequences of accepting the reality of psychic

events. He pointed at backward causation, the future affecting the past (as in divination), mind reading (I call this exchange of thought waves), telekinesis and teleperception as proving these would upset not only science, but society.

D.C. Broad proposed that “the function of the brain and nervous system and sense organs are in the main eliminative and not productive. Each person is at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and of perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe” and Aldous Huxley responded:

“According to such a theory, each one of us is potentially Mind at Large, the idea that we could perceive all input simultaneously. But in so far as we are animals, our business is at all costs to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet.”
(A. Huxley, *Doors of Perception*)

Huxley indicated that the elements of the “Mind at Large” do include the various “other worlds” with which human beings erratically make contact and this includes “the world of Visionary Experience”(Heaven and Hell).

Looking through the veil

What do we see and measure? Why do we know and feel and in a way perceive about beauty, morality and such? It is important to talk about what perception could be, as this is an important part of what ritual is, does, and achieves. I mean not only the classic perception senses, but the extra-dimensional senses that connect us to the larger, maybe whole of meta-dimensional reality.

We perceive through senses, but who are we? What is that I or me that perceives, consciously, unconsciously most of the time, the I that thinks (cognitive) but also intuitively, that is self-conscious at times? It is clear that my perception is unique and therefore limited; nobody sees the world as I do, reality is at best a perceived or assumed reality. Movies like the Matrix and the grand ideas we developed in the heydays of Virtual Reality illustrate that reality is in the eye of the beholder.

Even then, in the New Edge circles of the early nineties, where I was involved with the Mondo2000 crowd of Leary, R.U. Sirius, Barlow, Lanier, Gullichsen, and Lundell, we knew that perception, reality, actuality were mere concepts, that our experiences were what mattered. Virtuality was a great philosophical tool, especially as most of the people involved were also psychonauts; part of their inspiration came from wandering in the psychedelic realities of our own minds.

Conscience and morality

Conscience is like consciousness and ego one of those ambiguous terms. It has some relation with the totality of what we know and have stored as known, the German ‘Gewissen’ but also with the super-ego in Freud’s view, aiming for perfection, the faculty that consciously and unconsciously criticizes and prohibits our drives, fantasies, feelings, and actions, the inner critic.

Our conscience is related to feelings of guilt, in that way punishing misbehavior but also improper thoughts, fantasies and feelings, as such instrumental in the cognitive dissonance mechanism so masterfully employed by churches and the advertizing world.

It is generally described as the complex of ethical and moral principles that controls or inhibits the actions or thoughts of an individual. As such it is thus considered to be a very human inner, intuitive sense of what is right or wrong in one’s conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action. But how then can we explain why dolphins choose to rescue humans or dogs save their masters?

Is conscience not rooted at a deeper level than cognitive rationality? So doesn’t the dictionary or encyclopedia miss the point when it only describes consciousness as an aptitude, faculty, intuition or judgment of the intellect? Even when it defines it as being aware of moral values, this still hinges very much on reason and learned rules. It is supposed to be informed by acculturation and instruction, but then the psychological result is not really rational or cognitive, be it feelings of remorse or rectitude and integrity.

Conscience is universally recognized as the root of morality, but it hovers somewhere between knowing and feeling. It is understood to give, like an inner compass, intuitively authoritative judgment regarding the moral quality of single action, including situations where one could not foresee the results of such action. The question is where it comes from, does it have roots beyond what is programmed, is there a core morality that is universal? Concerning morality, we like to point to the Ten Commandments, but they are a fairly limited guideline, mostly concerned with the relationship with God and only very summarily mentioning inter-human affairs. The seven Jewish Noahide Laws (see chapter on karma) are more concise.

As a code of law the Babylonian Codex of Hammurabi is much more defined and elaborated. As it dates back to about 1772 BC it existed much before Akhenaten (Akhnaton) who lived around 1336 BC or 1334 BC. He is the one with a monotheistic faith that might have influenced Moses, who according to Rabbinical dating lived 1391– 1271 BC.E.

Hammurabi's law is one of the oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world, partial copies exist on a human-sized stone stele and various clay tablets. The Code consists of 282 laws, mostly about civic contracts but also with scaled punishments, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", graded according to social status, whether slave or free man.

Conscience

One can look at the holy books for guidance, but there is always a link to what one feels as right and good, if one is conscious enough..

Consciousness and conscience are related. Religion has tried to guide our conscience with reference to 'God given' commandments and moral rules, while the rationalist approach is to look for a social contract or other causal relation. Kant came up with the categorical imperative as a rational kind of morality.

In my view the primes allow access to a wider reality, where moral questions are dealt with in a wider perspective (beyond time, place and normal causality) and this is then perceived or translated as conscience. The inner light, the natural morality or whatever we call conscience is thus awareness of the wider truth. The subject is dealt with in the chapter about morality and karma.

Other states of consciousness

Waking, sleeping, dreaming are the generally recognized states of consciousness. But then there is lucid dreaming, out-of-body and near-death experience states, meditation, mystical states and samadhi, hypnotic states and psychedelic or shamanic states. I will come back to some of these as they play a role in rituals, but wish to point to the distinction Stan Krippner and others made:

The content of an altered state and that state by itself have to be separated, maybe what we call a shamanic state is nothing but a specific kind of content experienced in a state that is physiologically comparable to dreaming.

There are many more things to be said about consciousness and the various models and theories, also in relation to quantum physics, will and dreaming. Look in the Appendix nr II about Consciousness for what people like Edelman, Penrose, Stapp, Bohm, Herbert, Jaynes, Kurzweil, and Baars think about it.

Consciousness in and beyond time

The subjects of time and consciousness are both great mysteries, but I believe they are very much related. I have dealt with consciousness first, as I

think it is a more fundamental phenomenon, time is the subject of the next chapter.

Consciousness is a fundamental part, and I believe the cause or root of manifestation, it transcends time but hinges on the flow of time. Time has a different role in relativity theory and quantum theory and is not an easy fit in any theory of all. Part of the problem is that to explain certain phenomena time has to flow backwards.

Cosmologists like Bernard Carr speculate about higher-dimensional extensions of general relativity, which unifies matter and mind and involves more than one type of time. Such a psychophysical paradigm might involve the higher dimensions already becoming visible in particle physics, and an interaction of consciousness with the Universe on a hierarchy of levels.

This is not very far removed from my hypothesis of two time dimensions, and a feedforward mechanism to explain consciousness as a process using or should I say generating time in a different way.

17 The magical dance of time, consciousness, entropy

Time is the carrier, the manifestation mechanism of consciousness

Does a stone experience time, or an elemental particle, and what about a plant or an animal? Time is a mortal thing, but what doesn't die? Time is certainly one of the great mysteries.

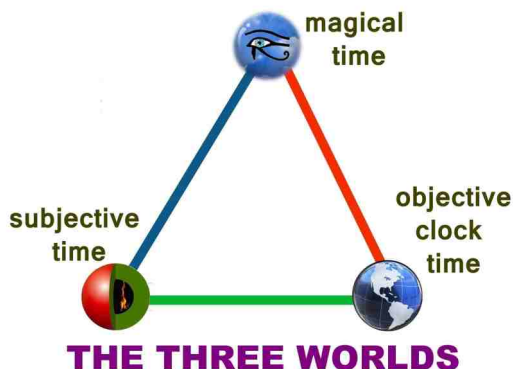
The universe unfolds in time and with time, exploring itself in a plethora of consciousnesses masked as manifestation, and yet connected in the root consciousness of the all. In essence I see time as the vehicle of the ultimate consciousness in the tangible realm.

I have already, in the chapter about the will, explained how I see two time dimensions, but as it is very central to this book, I will address the issue of time more specifically in this chapter. I will also speculate a bit about how we actually deal with time biologically, and how DNA plays a role there.

The three world model (inner, outer and otherworld or set, setting and magical) nicely suggests three ways to look at how we experience and deal with time. There is the personal (mind)-set time, the setting (world) time and the magical time (or out of time). The mindset time is subjective time, then the world (clock) time we share with others is more or less objective clock time, but it's the (ignored) magical time that is most important in the ritual context.

The subjective time has been dealt with by people like Henri Bergson, clock time (and block time) is a thing for the physicists.

It's the other time, the one that could also be called no time, out of time or the time dimension where we are not limited by an arrow and can move more freely, that interests me most. It has received the least attention from the scientists and is mostly ignored, but now resurfaces through the back door of quan-



tum physics. They perceived the need to accept time running backwards to explain certain phenomena.

Time, consciousness, and manifestation are obviously woven together in a strange dance of concepts (maybe merely projections we have about them) where the new physics touches the oldest views of cosmology found in the Eastern religions. But as literature has preceded science, let me point at a Western view of backward time.

Time running backwards

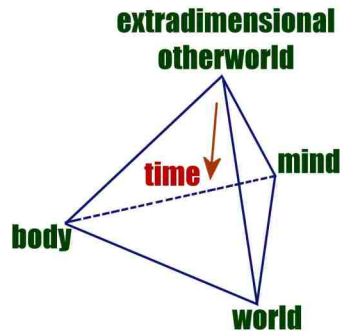
One of the books that impressed me when growing up was “The Once & Future King”, an Arthurian tale by T.H. White (1958) where Merlin the magician lives backwards in time. He knows the future but not the past. The book is about how he makes young Arthur experience the worlds of animals like fish, hawk, ant, goose, and badger, teaching him to become a worthy king. It’s marvelous fantasy but also an introduction in relativity, by honoring different perspectives. The figure of the wizard Merlin (Merlyn) fascinated me, he was the ultimate prophet but didn’t know where he was heading, except by asking others about their past.

I argue it is from the deep level of ultimate consciousness (by any other name) that time as the root of manifestation and tangible reality emerges. Time is the first and necessary step in creation. No time, no mortal existence, and everything dies or changes, we all are nothing but starseed.

One can and does discuss time doesn’t exist at all, but we do live in time, we are born and die. Our will is tied to time. Self-consciousness appears and disappears in waves, in time. What we want to achieve is not and never in the now, it is in the past or in the future, now is just a fleeting moment and yet our experiential prison.

Ritual is time-magic

Manipulate time and you manipulate reality; that is what ritual (if perceived as practical magic and not as mere ceremony) is all about. We want to achieve something in a future now, or maybe repair something from a past now.



Time is not so important in the otherworld, but increasingly so in the tangible realm.

There is this strange paradox and enigma, that in order to do magic we have to enter a timeless state. That this state requires us to relinquish our ego might indicate that ego and time are both illusions, as the sages have been telling us all along.

Nearly all of the magical purposes of a ritual have to do with time, we want to reach beyond the limitations of normal time and normal unidirectional arrowed causality. It's all about time-magic. Divining the future, praying for whatever good to come to us in the future, asking for forgiveness for our past, honoring ancestors, thanking for what good came our way, even the request to be out of time for a while or surrender to the divine, it is all a matter of time.

Even when just praising the deities in bhakti devotion the purpose is to become a better person, but becoming is change, an infinitesimal process in time, it lies in the future. Even healing is a time process, as any change is. Maybe intention and change of will is immediate and out of time, but that is exactly what ritual offers, a way out of time, a way to access the otherworld where time is unbound

Scientists and philosophers, certainly in the West, have limited themselves in dealing with time, mostly looking at objective time, clock time, block time, only some like Bergson looked at subjective time and here and there a maverick like John Bennet postulated more time dimensions. This limitation is obvious, but why? Is the magical time too much for the rational mind, for the causality enslaved who only in church bow to eternal time?

Why not see time as a complex game? Sheldon Renan (Everything Wants To Be Connected) points at this, he talks about "time as an ecosystem". Our lives are governed by time, we live time, think time (mostly about what will or may happen) and obey time. We have imprisoned ourselves in linear and now time. Maybe, as Kant suggested talking about dimensions, because it's an easy way to deal with something too complex to handle for us humans.

Time remains such a wild thing. Time is so illusionary that one can understand that philosophers and sages of old have even doubted that it exists at all.

On the one side time is straightforward, linear, thermodynamically pointing in one direction, this has to do with entropy (see appendix V). On the other side philosophers pondered about our perception of time, about clock time and subjective time and even speculated that time was just another illusion.

Neither side really looked at magic, the manipulation of time by human consciousness. It's maybe wise to change that or at least consider it. Now

that we contemplate things like the big bang, the limits of time, the strange role of complex (imaginary) time in quantum physics and prescience in psychological experiments the concept of time (and multiple time dimensions) deserves a more prominent place.

The convergence of neuroscience and quantum physics allows us to let go of the notion of fixed time, of time as the untouchable Chronos, and learn to play with it. What can we do with the (proven) result of Einstein's relativity, that space-time allows for time to change depending on speed, that gravitation and time are mutually dependent ripples in the space-time continuum?

Time as a mind-thing

People with near death experiences sometimes report that they relived their lives in a very short and condensed way, kind of in a flash. This is subjective time, but in an extreme form.

One way to look at time is to see how it relates to perception and the psyche. The sense of time is related to our perception (and thus seeing) of distances, our reach, body position, feelings of hunger, sleep, etc. A minute, an hour is very much an embodied phenomenon, how far can you walk in an hour. We can count seconds, using the bodily speech mechanism to count time.

Many of us visualize a time line in our mind, but do we understand how and why this happens, no! We are forever trying to understand how seeing and imaging works, how imagination is possible, but alas; even the most modern brain research does little more than indicating where in the brain this happens.

Human consciousness and its relation to time is a challenge science has not yet dealt with. We feel and think; we are even aware of feeling and thinking, we are aware of time and aware of that awareness. This self-consciousness seems to be related to a certain level of complexity of the physical brain, science now supposes, but why are then primates not self conscious, or are they, at a different level?

The relationship of time and consciousness, as in prophecy, prescience or knowing beyond time, obviously has to do with access to some different time-realm, but this isn't more than a fringe subject in science. Even as solid research indicates that there are instances that we know or perceive what's coming, science offers little explanation, mostly trying to explain this away as self delusion or misperception.

This is maybe because magic is left out of the equation, it doesn't fit into the accepted scientific paradigm.

Some daring propositions are needed here. I will not try to better the neuroscientists and cognitive explorers but obviously time, consciousness and perception play a major role in magic and thus in ritual.

Looking at time is quite a complex matter, and not to complicate things unduly, I will look into some of the notions that philosophers, physicists and theologians came up with in an appendix (V). But here I have to develop some logical framework about time and even venture into what quantum physics and string theory has to say.

Is there time? Obviously, at the human level we live by it, and nature seems to follow some rules, seasons, frequencies. At the human level, that what rules, creates or manipulates time must be beyond time, this is an ontological observation. So on our sublunar level, in order to manipulate time (and thus reality) we have to get to a space, a state of consciousness that is beyond time. Self-consciousness is a good candidate.

I see human (self) consciousness as the border process between normal spacetime, inner world and the virtual extradimensional, as explained in the previous chapters. In a way it is beyond time, it is the process of accessing that what is beyond the now, beyond the fetters of the moment.

At the moment we become aware of our awareness the original aware moment has passed already, we then think about what just happened. Thinking itself is rarely about the now, we are mostly concerned with the past or the future. But strangely enough, when we can access the now, time stops to worry us and we can step out of it.

This sounds paradoxical but in dreams, in near death experiences and even in our memory we very often step out of time, out of our now-prison, out of linear time and linear causality.

In our dreams we feel free to go anywhere, back and forward and out of time. So we all experience in some way this ability to jump time, use time in a different way and escape from the fetters of the now. We do so often, even outside dreams.

Obsessed with the future; the inner time machine

It's a human talent to imagine the past and the future, to play with images in our mind. These can be projections or memories, that bag of old we carry with us. Memories are our most precious possession and the source of much internal time travel. Even as most of us realize that our memory of the past is heavily colored and distorted, it's all we have. Neurologist say we



create our past anew every time, combining relevant bits to an image resonating with (some of) the reality out there and our inner needs in there. I even speculate that memories are tuned access to something that is not even contained in our body (brains), our psyche is the tuning mechanism to what is out there in the Akashic cloud of unknowing, becoming known if accessed.

Our future is an obsession for most of us, just think how much time we spend planning for tomorrow, for later, how much of our fears and joys are about things in the future. Our mind is a time machine in itself, jumping out of the now. Luckily we can do that because the automatic pilot keeps running, keeps our body safe while we dream away.

Magic in the sense of playing with time just means going a bit deeper with our deeply hidden out-of-time time-manipulation talent. It just takes a few steps more to start visualizing past, future and present in a different light. In that sense magic and dreaming have much in common, there is a different causality, not irrational, but with a different, extended rationality.

Imagination, visualization, working it out differently or new in our mind is a core process in magic. Even “pop-magic” books and movies like “The Secret” will tell you that this process influences (reframes) reality or at least our perception of reality.

Loosening the fetters of the reality frames pushed upon us by education, society and culture. Freeing our psyche from the ‘constructed’ reality that comes with the masks of the assumed self (ego), where logical, non magical deterministic time is so much on our mind.

In (proper and real) ritual, we have a process to help us to get to a state, where we are beyond time (and ego) or in other words closer to where at least linear time and the causality it entails doesn’t weigh so heavily and we can fix it, escape it, manipulate it or observe it. Now this state is close to self consciousness, but then a special kind, an inner self consciousness beyond the ego.

More time dimensions

Of course the question is, how does this actually work and can we influence, optimize, manipulate the outcome and efficacy of our time magic? Therefore we need to know why can we, in magic and in ritual, access this state, this level of reality and is there proof or at least circumstantial evidence or research that points in this direction?

I think the answer lies in understanding the multi dimensionality of time, there are more kinds of time.

This is easily said, but substantiating this thesis means walking through history, assessing prophecy, synchronicity, the psychological and philosophical notions of time and even touching the quantum physics view of multi-dimensionality.

It's a stretch, even as I will try to do this here lightly, there are so many more books, studies and theories about time.

I just want to open the door for you to the possibility, that there are more time dimensions, and that we can access and manipulate these via an altered (ritual) state of consciousness. So bear with me, the proposition that there is magical time next to linear time is a basis tenet of this book. If you get that one, or at least consider it, you will make a jump in understanding history, the world, and yourself.

A tool to change and yet not to change

Change and time are twins, change happens in time, as an infinitesimal process. If we want to change something, especially if we want to change something in a new, different direction (causation), we need to will this, we have to intend, focus. Ritual is a great tool here (but not the only one), it's mostly practical time magic as I argued before.

That's why rituals very often mark moments of change in life, like when we marry or when the seasons change. They can be the signposts, the anchors for change and yet, as any tool, they can also serve the purpose of not to change.

Rituals are tools, and tools can be used in different ways, ritual can serve change and serve conservation. In many cultures they have both purposes. An initiation ritual serves to change the individual and at the same time, conserves the tradition. Ritual often mostly serves the continuity and stability, but this makes it the stable and secure base for individual change. It can be the security valve, the steam nozzle outlet for cropped-up emotions like in carnival or festivals, allowing individuals to act out suppressed feelings, and yet serve to keep the peace and stability for the whole.

Employing ritual to preserve the status quo was a hallmark of the Confucian tradition in China. Li (see the chapter about Karma and Law) as the code of ritual and social behavior was a great way to keep things as they were.

The same goes for the Australian Aboriginal peoples, where a great deal of time is spend on ritual, mostly to conserve what is, in the people and in nature. Continuity and securing the future is the most important, disturbing the natural flow is considered sin, don't leave a place changed, do not mess with time!

The ambiguity and the potential of ritual concerning change has to do with loss of identity, liminality, the threshold character of ritual, being in between. Things can only change (and willed no change is change too) when in limbo, when instable, and ritual offers this, here Victor Turner was right.

Time is the key to understanding death

Can we do without time? Maybe, if freezing your brains works or Ray Kurzweil is right about putting life in a computer, but I doubt it. Between birth and death there is time, time is change, time and human consciousness bind us to manifestation. "Time is a mortal thing" is something I realized when contemplating death, change and what life means. Everything manifested always will end in some way, and yet the starseed it and we are made of ultimately remains (at least until the next cosmic cycle or big crunch). Time for mortal beings is thus connected to the opposite, to the No Time, to death, to an after-life or other-life out of time.

We wonder about it, this is the age-old question; what is out there beyond time, beyond life, beyond death, beyond this prison of hours, days and years? I wrote this koan like line of poetry years ago, after seeing a disaster site and how the people dealt with it.

Death is when we remember we are not alone

Death is fascinating, is it an opening to another dimension or is it just the hard end?

There are the many stories of those who nearly died and told their reassuring tales. Many of us see this as a confirmation that there is something more and that death has the promise of birth or rebirth, in a metaphorical or real sense.

Often a ritual (and much of psychotherapy is ritual) aims at dying to oneself, at letting go of the old life and starting anew. Death to our identity, getting rid of all the worries, expectations and traumas, we carry with us. In the end, beyond time, they don't matter anyway.

So in a ritual we want, at the magical level, to manipulate time and we do that by escaping the "normal" time identification. We can (or try at least) transcend the fetters of time, forget about the pressing future, the worries of the past, be out of time for a while. We do so by various means but they all come down to entering into a state of consciousness where the normal limitations of time (and space and causality) disappear, we might say we lose the normal time awareness and enter a timeless now.

And, here comes the strange paradox, we do so because we actually want to achieve something in "normal" time and "normal" reality. It sounds illogical, we do want to influence the future (and the past and present) and to do so we need to escape from identifying with them.

This we do in many different ways, but in order to bring some order to all the ritual approaches I will use here, like in the rest of this book, the three world model, using set, setting and magic (correspondences) to structure how we deal with time in a ritual.

The central theme, I will repeat this often, is that time is fundamentally different in the inner, the outer, and the magical-spiritual realm. There are more times, so to say.

Our psychological times: the experience of time

I will start with how we experience time in our inner world, our psyche. In our inner perception time is not fixed, not even continuous. Eastern sages but also Western philosophers have pointed at the subjectivity of time. Some see it as an illusion, part of the maya we need to be able to deal with the complexity of what is, time then is a way to put things in order, make the reality manageable.

In our mind there is no clock, we can not touch time, nor smell, nor taste it, we only live in the illusion of an eternal now and yet are mostly concerned with what will happen later. We do often allow the future to influence our now so severely, by expectation, fear, joy or excitement, that we forget who we are and what is actually happening. Time in our experience, in our memory and imagination, is not a constant, it's a dotted line and has this forward arrow, things done cannot be undone.

We all remember that as children time had a different pace. It was not so much slower: there was a different time perspective. This may be a psychological distortion of the past (the good old days) but doesn't a newborn baby live in the now, in the immediacy of sleep and hunger, not postponing fulfillment, not self-conscious?

Babies have, we can assume, no time sense and no time perspective. Time is something that grows upon us as we mature, just like self consciousness. My linking the two makes some sense.

When we grow older, life seems to accelerate, until we accept it's over and it becomes boringly slow. We have, all through our life, experiences where time seems to go faster or slower; our mind seems to have its own timer.

Our individual relative, subjective time is not linear, not constant, not very logical. It goes slower or faster at times, makes jumps (like in déjà vu, imaginary time travel and OBE), and becomes flexible in our dreams. Sometimes we can have extensive dreams or visions that in clock time were very short and other times waiting feels like an eternity. We also have this asymmetric and warped memory and anticipation of time; the past and the future are not the same.

So there are at the psychological level, at least three different ways to experience time. There is the conscious, intuitive and fluid notion of time (the truly experienced time of Henri Bergson), then there is the synchronization with the more rigid clock time, measured time, and finally there is the time that we tend to ignore or pass in automatic mode, like in sleep.

I propose that there is another kind, an experience of being beyond time, a state of time-consciousness related to magic and ritual. Maybe Bergson would include that state in his inner time notion, but it is an essential part of my ritual efficacy formula.

Time and repetition

Repetition is doing the same thing over and over again. It's obviously related to time and part of ritual behavior. In Rupert Sheldrake's view we reinforce the morphogenetic field of an action by repetition.

I think repetition and rhythm is also a basic neurological mechanism to escape, to let go of our ego and thus boost our other talents. Repetition is obviously a way to deal with stress as we can see in the behavior of psychotic people, it offers a kind of security, probably by releasing neurotransmitters to this effect.

Obsessive neurotic disturbances often have a ritual nature. One repeats a movement or thought pattern, a loop which seems to appease the brain, but can become a prison. I have noticed this effect in psychedelics trips, getting out of such a loop is not easy.

We also program our minds by repetition way; affirming and anchoring what we know or experience first in short, then in working memory, be it in our brains or in a cloudlike extradimensional information field. This is an essential memorizing mechanism; repeat, preferably in an embodied way, and remember. Mnemonic techniques use this principle, attaching new items to old and familiar rhythms and patterns like the rooms in known building.

At a very primitive level, our organism likes repetition: a small child feels safe when lulled to sleep, a rocking chair makes one feel good, shaking is a way to induce trance, we follow rhythm, we follow frequency. Brain machines (the flickering light and sound units) use this entrainment principle.

Repetition is obviously a basic neurological mechanism, but with effects stretching from neuro-pathological to mystical. Ritual and repetition go together, repeating a previous ritual exactly the same way is often a prerequisite for validity, tradition is seen as important and deviation as heretical.

Following the ideas of Sheldrake, this repetition would strengthen the morphogenetic field and thus the influence or efficacy of a ritual. There are

however also schools that suggest that creating new and original rituals gives more efficacy, as the freshness and newness brings alive energy.

Time in the world: objective time

Next to our psychological inner world (subjective) time experience there is the more objective time of the outside world, we could call it clock time or real time, it is the time of the physicist, but also the social time. We create our world around time, calendar, appointments, seasons and frequencies, and even interpret those cycles in a magical perspective.

The way our solar system works and manifests in solstices and eclipses, including astronomical occurrences, comets and the seasonal patterns has always been part of the esoteric and ritual calendar. Astronomers studying the cycles and the movements, astrologers interpreting the celestial bodies, our horoscope culture in the media, and the Mayan prophecy wave, it all has to do with objective time.

Linking the celestial with the mundane; the work of the augur, prophet and astrologer has much to do with real or imagined correlations (in magical terms, the correspondences). Picking the right moment for a plunge into the Ganges as at the Kumb Mela, a good moment to get married or start a war has become a science in itself.

It was taken more seriously in the past but is still very much used, although not so openly by those who want to look rational and sensible.

There is arguable a relationship between the heavenly bodies and our lives, I will come back to how astrology and DNA are related.



*The Aztec time-awareness was complex,
but very accurate*

Elusive nature of time: modern physics kicks in

Time is the elusive thing that we cannot grasp but that marches on, an unending line of present moments, with ourselves at the head of the procession, moving toward our certain and known end: death. Time in our minds is a kind of line or row of now-experiences, nicely put together as a kind of movie; in our minds we interpolate the missing now perceptions, but who knows? We might be jumping parallel universes all the time.

More than Science Fiction literature, modern physics has changed our idea of what time is. The physicists have definitely changed our notion of how the universe works. There are now notions like Relativity theory, Quantum physics, Higgs bosons, M-brane String Theory, mass-energy and CPT super symmetry that define or describe time. They have not, however, really solved the mystery of time. As cosmologist Bernard Carr puts it, physics as a science has progressively removed time.

In the twentieth century we started doubting everything, mostly after Einstein came up with relativity. His spacetime became the intermingled view of mutual exchangeable dimensions; time and space, gravity, energy and matter became complicated formulas and equations. Time has been questioned and redefined and space-time evolved as a reality that allows time dilatation, time affected by gravitation, theoretical time travel, and other strange time effects.

Reality, due to the probabilistic nature of manifestation also was no longer a solid thing, and in this way science was and is moving toward the views held by ancient sages like those in the early Vedic Puranas or the Tantras.

These are holy scriptures from India that described things strikingly similar to what the “new physics” and the expanded astronomy now imply. Even the more Western (and probably Egyptian) understandings from the Hermetists early in the Christian era, lost and then resurfacing in the Renaissance, indicate that they had a better understanding of how the heavens and the earth are related than many “enlightened” scholars of the nineteenth century.

Reality in the new physics feels much more like the old Vedic maya, a dreamlike illusion, and is far less fixed than we thought. What we think is solid matter now turns out (sub-atomically) to be mostly empty space with some resonating energy forms. Time plays some part in the propagation of waves, and might be an extra-dimensional kind of ether. What space then is, where all these strange oscillations happen, remains to be seen, but there is a lot of it. Science has no good explanation for what space is, even in the 11-dimensional model that string theorists now embrace.

The spiritual world, magic is beyond time

In all these time models the spiritual is missing, or is it maybe hidden in those curled up extra dimensions of this 10 or 11 dimensional model? I don't care so much about the exact nature of what is out there, as long as it is there. I argue that there is an extra-dimensional world, from where ultimate consciousness takes care of manifestation of spacetime as we experience it. It is illusionary, in the sense that it is not tangible, it's the otherworld, the spiritual realm.

This is not totally out of touch with what science suspects. Physicist Fred Alan Wolf talks about sub-spacetime as where manifestation originates. There is also Roger Penrose who in *The Emperor's New Mind* (1989) already argued that known laws of physics are inadequate to explain consciousness, in *The Nature of Space and Time* (with Stephen Hawking) and *Shadows of the Mind* (1994) he talks about a third world of idealistic reality. Penrose sees three distinct worlds: the physical world, the mental world (our perception of the physical world), and the somewhat cryptic Platonic world. What is interesting is that he asserts that what we perceive as real is (mostly) a mental construction. This goes also back to Immanuel Kant who pointed out that maybe our view on reality is just the way we constructed it to deal with the higher complexity we can't understand. Reality, including time, might be an illusion, and this points to the idea that some higher level consciousness uses time as a vehicle, a carrier to manifest (things).

Because of quantum theory and probability, the role of consciousness in the whole picture has changed too; we are no longer observers, but participants and co-creators of what we see or experience. What exactly consciousness is, remains a mystery, and what "we" then perceive as self-consciousness depends again on ill-understood perception. The previous chapter about consciousness tried to clarify this a bit.

How do we process both the external world (via senses) and our internal (body and mind) state to arrive at this strange notion that "we are"? It is beyond thinking; it happens, but also flies out of the mind as we switch to automatic, go from experienced to clock time.

I have stated before in this book, that I see two objective time dimensions as an explanation of many things, like free will and magic, but I think it is fair to give some credit to the few who at least looked at this. D.C. Broad hinted at the possibility of another time, he described precognition as the second time to access a possible future.

Two or more time dimensions: J.W. Dunne

We experience time in different ways. The French philosopher Henri Bergson has written extensively about two kinds of time, differentiating between clock time and inner time. He pointed out that only the inner time, the really experienced moments, stay with us; the automatic things we do in clock time are easily forgotten. The old sages of the East knew this well; techniques like meditation and yoga help one to enter the inner time, switch off the clock time orientation. I believe that the ultimate goal of all ritual is the same, to let go of the prison of external time constraints.

The British aeronautical engineer J. W. Dunne in 1927 in “An experiment with time” and “The serial universe” claimed that the dreaming mind can see what lies ahead (precognition) and “fix” things in a second time dimension. He recognized two inner observers, one aware of normal linear clock time, the second one with a wider consciousness of time (in dreams) that could freely move through time past and future.

As Rudy Rucker in “The Fourth Dimension” (1995) explains vividly, there is a paradox here that can only be solved if there is an infinite regress, an infinite number of extra time dimensions. The first observer has to commission the second observer to create a third observer to create a fourth etc. Otherwise the time traveler gets lost.

Dunne himself did talk about subsequent observer levels, surrounding the previous ones. The whole idea is to awaken to the second observer. Dunne’s ideas, very much accepting precognition and the analogy of time as a book we can read, were picked up by people like J. B. Priestly and Aldous Huxley. His ideas were quite popular around the middle of the 20th century, but not much of his ideas has survived except in some work by C.S. Lewis and Tolkien. Also possibly in Charles Williams’ “Many Dimensions” about the Stone of Suleiman, a magical object that allowed among other things miraculous space and time travel.

Dunne came up with quite different and novel ways to look at time, it being not sequential but simultaneous, not progressive but static and that past, present and future are equally present at any moment and equally available to a perceiver (in observer 2 state), but normally (as observer 1) perceived as happening at a fixed rate. Dunne believed that we are existing in two parallel states, and indicated how the second state allowed *deja-vu* and precognition. His work on dreams was quite remarkable in a time that thinking about the consequences of quantum mechanics was just beginning. His ideas were not seen as relevant for the physicists of his time.

I came to a similar notion about two time dimensions, without knowing about his work, by looking at the inner child state (close to the immortal soul or higher self) where magical capabilities like precognition can be accessed, consciously or in the dream state in which also the masks and ego are gone.

Dunne seems to have inspired T. S. Eliot who wrote in “Burnt Norton”:

Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time future

And time future contained in time past

The Wikipedia entry about Dunne is not a priori negative about his ideas. It mentions that the Aboriginal people of Australia, for example, believe that

the Dreamtime exists simultaneously in the present, past and future and that this is the objective truth of time. They see linear time as being a creation of human consciousness and therefore subjective.

The Kabbalah, Taoism and indeed most mystical traditions have always posited that waking consciousness allows awareness of reality and time in only a limited way. It is in the sleeping state that the mind can go free into the multi-dimensional reality of time and space. Similarly, all mystery traditions speak of the immortal and temporal selves which exist simultaneously both within time and space and without.

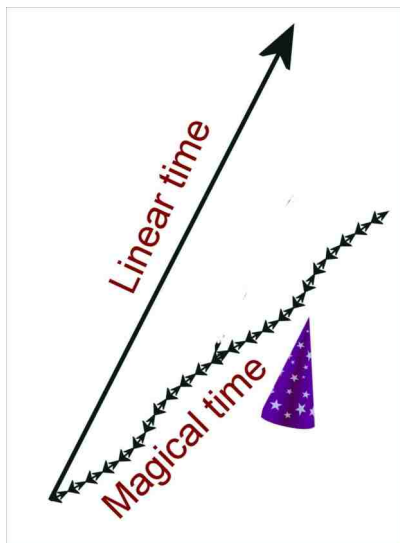
The ancient Egyptians also had two time dimensions, this is explained in appendix V.

Now Dunne claimed he developed his theories based on dream-observations. In an article in the New Scientist in 1983 however it was reported that Dunne had written a book just before his death admitting that he was a medium and a believer in spiritualism. The article reported that Dunne had deliberately chosen to leave this out of his “An Experiment with Time” book as he judged that it would have impacted the reception of his theory.

Apart from his sources, can we translate this idea of two psychological time dimensions into two “real” time dimensions? I argue that we should accept that there are more time dimensions, an idea that immediately solves a lot of philosophical and practical issues. Especially if we assume that the one time is what the physicist have always regarded as time, the straight arrow of causality and logic, and the other time dimension is more free, more dynamic, maybe without an arrow and why not call it magical time.

One is the logical, causal, rational, deterministic time of the clock, and that is necessarily unidirectional, while the other time is the magical, creative, free-will dimension, the Bergson inner time, like the curly eddies in the river bed of beliefs. Both are real, but the free will one is limited by our self imposed worldview.

Then it is only a small step to the idea that we have access to this magical time dimension when we get into that special state of consciousness that we know from the mystics, from our dreams and ritual. I argue that it is in the



transcending ritual state that we access or enter into the magical time, ignoring or escaping normal clock time.

Now where to find some confirmation of this somewhat weird notion? I already mentioned Bergson, another deviant view on time came from John G. Bennet, describing three time dimensions, adding eternity to what I would call clock time and magical time and he again was influenced by P.D. Ouspensky's "A new model of the universe" (1931).

But what do quantum physicists think about this. Well, they already play with complex (imaginary) time equations, expanding the one dimensional time with an imaginary axis. This is for mathematical purposes they claim, but obviously this points at the possibility that this imaginary time could exist. And then, according to some interpretation of the latest string theories and 11-dimensional reality models, the possibility of dual or multiple time dimensions is at least considered.

The eleven dimensions could include more time dimensions, according to physicist Itzhak Bars. He developed something called two-time physics in 2007. Alas, hardly any physicists and very few philosophers have looked at this.

Time is more than an inflexible t

I have a feeling some of the old sages knew about these two time dimensions, these two realms, too. Maybe Plato hinted not only at the structure and task of our psyche in his *Phaedrus*. He paints this charioteer with his two winged horses (one obedient and one wild) but maybe also realized that they refer to the two dimensions of time, as expressed in our thinking and actions. The free will dimension complicates matters, but is essential, as everything would become static and would eventually petrify without this dimension of change, creation, and freedom.

It is in this free dimension, in the wild horse of Plato, that life and progress manifests; it is the life-force itself and we only limit it by sticking to the beliefs that only include (our human) laws of nature. Any true sorcerer or believer (or psychotherapist) will tell you about the miracles that are possible and happen when we let go of our (programmed) beliefs (or create new ones).

When Plato spoke about *Phusis* or *Physis*, now commonly translated as nature, I guess he didn't mean the static image of the measured and determined now, the notion physics now refers to. He saw nature as a process (growth), the natural history of a thing, not only including the past but also the future, a far more dynamic image of the fundamental ways thing are.

Physis has roots in phyein “to bring forth, produce, make to grow”. The Greek Physis was philosophically balanced with Nomos (law and order, convention and rationalism).

Plato’s fascination with prophets and augurs wasn’t superstitious; I feel he realized the bidirectional nature of time. Plato might have understood that time is more complex than just the t in our physics equation, but not many recent philosophers have picked it up.

Consciousness generates time

Now all these philosophical theories about time, like by Bergson, Heidegger, A. North Whitehead, William James, D.C. Broad, some are mentioned in the appendix, for me point in a clear direction.

With the phrase “Time is the vehicle of consciousness” I indicate that time is the transport medium that makes the un-manifested take form and that in turn allows space to resonate, spirit to move, matter to manifest. This notion wasn’t channeled or anything, but came up in a conversation and struck me as something worthwhile.

Time as the conveyor belt, transforming bits of information (or perceived data) into consciousness. Time, of course, (normally) has an arrow, as this is essential in thermodynamics, in thinking about resonances, frequencies, energy, entropy, but could it be at the same time the link to consciousness, thus making creation or materialization (being, and that is a temporal thing for all but the eternal) a consciousness phenomenon? So maybe time is what consciousness makes or generates or creates?

Consciousness goes way beyond our human level. Things like the sun and the galaxies are so enormous and complex, but at the same time the smallest particle must have some level of consciousness; it exists. We make our reality rather anthropocentric by looking, as Roger Penrose does, at what happens in our brain to locate consciousness. The world did exist long before there were philosophers, or was and is creation watched anyway by some higher level being?

Real and virtual time travel

Time travel has been the fascination of many writers, and it is more acceptable to write about it than about prophecy. To travel in the mind (virtually) to other places and places might have been part of the secret tools of the sorcerers and priests of older civilizations.

We can only assume that this was the case, as there are many clues that there was an obsession with transcending time, in life or after death. We can see this in funeral rites, in the gigantic mausoleums, pyramids and burial monu-

ments and in how the diseased were given gifts of all kinds for the afterlife.

In more recent times, traveling in your mind has become more of a public thing, the work of Robert Monroe in out of body experiences (OBE) was instrumental to this. Nowadays pop-psychology is full of regression, past life experiences, imaginary travels, guided meditation and such. It is used for psychotherapy, healing and the secret services of this world experiment with remote viewing (when not tapping your phone and IP-connection).

Science, especially psychology, did take an interest in Near Death Experiences, as this is a state where time and place become fluid.

Neuroscientists look at the brain scans of people in meditation, in coma and with brain damage and try to figure out what this means in terms of consciousness, perception and reality. I think that given the presently wide array of “innerworld” travel techniques it is more than likely that the mages of old used similar techniques.

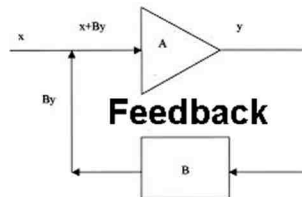
In other words, a prophet or saint might have been someone who by means of intuition or training was able to travel to other places and times in his mind. If one can physically do this, is unclear, I have met people who claimed this like a group from the Italian Damanhur community, and there are many instances in the literature, but not much real evidence. Fred Alan Wolf is one of the scientists speculating about virtual and physical time-travel, see appendix V.

Forward-backwards

Physicists see time as a one-directional dimension, an arrow with one point, related to movement with a maximum in the speed of light. I always suspected that time or at least part of what we call time, in an extra-dimensional framework, is bidirectional and begin to feel this as a fundamental step in understanding magic (and the universe).

The way time (t) pops up in all those formulas and theories, it could also run in both directions, be positive and negative, forward and backward. Most formulas use time (t) squared anyway, the plus or minus would make no difference, in the equations time is what they call symmetrical. It is only the second Law of Thermodynamics that supports the arrow of time (see appendix V and below) but assuming the extradimensional realm is a part of the whole even this is not an obstacle to total symmetry.

Total symmetry of time is a rather startling idea, it would mean that the future



influences the present, quite a step away from the causality paradigms of the materialists. Yet if we take prophecy serious, as I do, this is a foregone conclusion, but what about entropy then, or would negentropy be part of those other dimensions, supplying structure and information into space-time to balance a wider reality?

I suggest the magical time dimension allows stretching or bending of time in both directions, meaning any event is a function of past, present and future and of the world state and consciousness of the inner or outer (observer) resonances. So the outcome of any event/experiment is not only influenced by the observer, the object and what's around, but also dependent on its future tail (see below).

The future then plays a role in the present, but also the present influences the future, and this points to a strange paradox, namely that looking at the future influences the now and thus future. Mirrors within mirrors, but what is resonance, the basic element of reality, other than a reflection, a mirror seeing and manifesting itself.

Now physicist will claim that a notion, whereby time flows in two directions, clashes with the second law of thermodynamics which forbids inverse processes. Most things are irreversible, the entropy (something like the inverse of information) of an isolated physical system cannot decrease; it remains constant, and usually it increases. However, as I said before, suppose we are not limited to four dimensional space-time, maybe what looks like a decrease in information means exchange with other dimensions.

If in practical terms the future influences the outcome of an event, we need an image to describe this. Just as the past is like a tail that influences the present, I call this future influence or value the future tail. In more general terms I postulate that for any observation or event the outcome is a function not only of the observed, the world state and the observer but of time past AND future.

Now if a tail is very heavy, very influential, moving it becomes difficult. So effective (intended) change in the present, as it also has to deal with the future tail, might be difficult. This explains why changing paradigms is such a hard task. It requires much change, so it's future tail is so heavy, that it becomes nearly impossible.

Only occasionally some great mind can cause this, people like Giordano Bruno or Einstein were great magicians in this sense. One description of magic in this perspective might be to see it as the art and science of manipulating the future tail of an event. This could be expanded to include the past. For by influencing or changing the past we can then change the present.

Implication: the present can change the past

I sometimes describe the science/art of magic as the manipulation of that future value function. But then, as the effect of time is bidirectional, why not assume that also the past is changeable, can be influenced from the present.

In that sense, and stepping back a bit, I believe that changing our perception of the past actually changes the past and those changes can be observed in the present. One interesting question is whether a ritual not only changes the future, but also the past. In a psychological sense forgiving, contacting the ancestors etc. does change the perception of the past, but can we change the past in a more real sense? Asking for forgiveness, and atonement is a way of healing the past too. I believe we can also influence the past magically, in Family Constellations (Bert Hellinger) this happens quite often.

Predicting in this perspective a future in this view not only involves knowing the past (the Laplace approach), but also figuring “in” the future, a teleological feedforward approach, far beyond the feedback approach now so prevalent in society and science. But this means a complex iteration, the future influences the present, the present then the future, etc. a dazzling mirror effect.

Understanding feedforward and feedback control mechanisms and effects like resonance and oscillation is, beyond the technical aspects, very complex but important as it relates to the way we think and plan.

Assuming or feeling a future event/situation/condition and then steering toward it is feedforward and is much more effective than the feedback whereby we just measure and adapt like a simple thermostat of the central heating does. Assuming that the day will end (and philosophers like Hume and Berkeley argued against us knowing it for sure) and the night will come is a kind of feedforward. Think of how we program that thermostat for the expected temperature difference.

Feedforward in the big societal picture, as the idea, that humans expect some afterlife (heaven/hell) is a much better ethical condition than the notion, that there is nothing beyond death, and that anything you can get away with is thus morally acceptable. In business and politics these days the latter attitude seems prevalent. Make the next election, the next quarterly report, forget about the long term, “après nous le deluge” (Madame de Pompadour).

The days that the future was part of our then mostly religious paradigm, we were taking the future and afterlife in consideration, there was more feedforward. This yields less immediate control, it’s a long term expecta-

tion and depends on how strong those beliefs were, but see what the feedback of our digital era has brought us? We measure and measure, but have reduced our awareness to those measurements, forgetting the whole picture. Only now that we see that we have ruined the ecosystem we wake up to things, older traditions and civilizations knew this by heart.

You can find more about feedback and control in the chapter about consciousness.

Bayesian probability

We do influence our future much more than seems logical. Mathematical insights in dealing with ‘big data’ and how to make sense out of the enormous amounts of data gathered these days, have show that the models and expectations we apply already influence the outcome, we find what we intend to find, also in scientific research. One of the insight here, that is now more and more used in software in self-driving cars and robots, is Bayesian logic and probability.

The term ‘Bayesian’ refers to the 18th century mathematician and theologian Thomas Bayes, who provided the first mathematical treatment of a non-trivial problem of what is now called Bayesian inference. Pierre-Simon de Laplace pioneered and popularized what is now called Bayesian probability. It’s an influential proposition.

Scientific American referred to it in a simple one-liner: Initial Beliefs + Recent Objective Data = A New and Improved Belief.

According to the subjectivist interpretation of it, probability quantifies a “personal belief”. In testing a hypothesis, before typically done without assigning a probability, the Bayesian approach differs as it assumes an outcome somewhere between 0 and 1, that then serves as the probability basis for analysis. The “subjectivist” statisticians deny the possibility of fully objective analysis, the Laplace approach.

A belief is something taken from the future, in one’s mind one comes up with a proposition about the outcome. In other words, the future (as imagined in the hypothetical outcome) influences the result, one could say the process of creating a hypothesis is already feeling a little bit more of the truth. Not very much different from what I argue, that the future influences the present.

I kind of sense the acceptance of irrationality or a wider reality than just statistical causality there.

Bayesian Quantum Theory (QBism) assumes that the wave function we talk about concerning manifestation is a mental construct, a way the observer fixes the outcome, but has no base in spacetime reality. This might be true, but what if it has a base in the extradimensional?

Free will and the stakes

In the chapter about free will I already addressed the issue of freedom and self determination in this perspective (with two time dimensions). Having a magical time dimension, so contrasting with the determinist materialist view, also addresses the issue of responsibility. As we are able to effect the future in magical time, we are responsible for what we do in that state, but less responsible for what we do automatically in the normal time mode.

Whether this implies that we could only put true sorcerers and highly evolved beings on the stakes and pardon the automatons, is up to the reader.

Knowing what comes, an antenna for the future

In a ritual context time and notably the future is very much of interest, it's all about time magic. We do pray for many things we hope will come to us, asking for a rather magical event to happen. Or we ask to know about what will happen, so we can act in an appropriate way. But we have to believe in this, otherwise the ritual is empty, will social and psychological effects, but no magic.

Believing that we can make contact with the future, by way of ritual, is thus essential for the efficacy of ritual. Now some will claim ritual works anyway, even if you don't believe in it. Maybe, but consider that if anyone present is a believer, it will have an effect. And at what level, in what mask do we claim not to believe, isn't there some residue of childhood trust in magic?

In the context of the senses for the extra dimensions I mentioned that one or more of those senses or meta-dimensional organs (primes) we all possess have to do with perceiving the future. This concerns both the logical deterministic time and the more magical one. I also mentioned that as our senses and primes are bidirectional (sender/receiver) we there have a way of influencing the future. I suppose this doesn't work in the straightforward time-dimension, as this not susceptible to manipulation of the causality.

The idea, that we know (are aware of) the future, has dawned upon me as an explanation of many phenomena, in the magical realm but also in "scientific" physics, the Bayesian approach as an example.

Then I have found many situations, references, examples and research projects where this happens or happened, where we actually perceive or know the future. This is sometimes just milliseconds before something happens, sometimes there is a body reaction faster than neurological transmission can explain, observers react to pictures before they are randomly chosen

from a series. And in history it's hard to ignore how prophets have shaped our world.

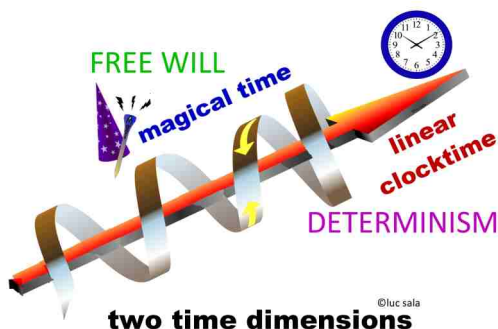
In a wider context, I assume that "any event is a function of not only observer, world state (observed) and past, but also of the future". This goes against our notion of how unidirectional time-space works, but is mathematically in line with the time-symmetrical physical laws, where time is often squared and thus minus or plus makes no difference.

I believe, that our "normal" notion of time is therefore a programmed paradigm, just as we believe that our mind is contained in our brain. As "educated" humans we have developed a strict unidirectional causal (only the past influences the present) notion in our programmed personality layers and mindsets. We do however have access to a bidirectional effect-causality when in deeper layers of the self/inner child etc.

In magical practice, the working postulate is that one can influence the future through thoughts and acts in the present. The Magical (but in fact universal) Laws of Resonance, Attraction, Polarity etc. all basically work outside logical time, although the correspondence qualities used like frequency (sound, color) are of course a very space-time concept and within our normal world.

Many psi-experiments prove we can influence the present via some kind of looping around space-time reality, mostly if we can move into those deep layers of our psyche and existence that are not very ego-driven by means of trance, meditation or ritual concentration.

In mystical and trance states many do experience the future, become prophetic etc. In those states we can also influence the future (and past and present) and shape reality or at least the perception of reality (the dreamed illusion or maya), but isn't that all we have access to anyway. So this brings maybe a new notion about how magic and magical action can be defined, seeing it as the manipulation of reality outside of the normal, arrowed time notion. I like to point again to Carlos Castaneda's distinction between tonal and nagual reality.



Turning to physics and biology for proof of awareness of the future

Knowing (or sensing in whatever way) the future of course touches fundamental issues, like evolution, free will, blasphemy and consciousness itself. Just accepting that the future can be known, which implies that it influences the present, turns the whole of physics upside down. Does a seed know where it is going and does some kind of awareness of its future explain how it will evolve? Is the whole of evolution not a process of “remembering” the future, far more practical than Teilhard de Chardin’s teleological notion of a far away divine goal? And what about DNA, the basis of our biological existence as science now tells us? The funny thing is that scientists discovered there is not enough basic data (information) in DNA to even come close to the variation expressed in real life, so what is DNA really and here epigenetic come into the fray too?

DNA and time

The question is how to explain that the seed becomes a specific plant.

Rupert Sheldrake’s theory of morphogenetic fields and fields of mind offers a limited explanation, species influence each other, the plant follows or mimics the field. This certainly ties in with the notion that everything influences everything, but still doesn’t explain why a species or individual develops over time, beyond some accidental mutations.

Now what if we see DNA also as an antenna of or toward the future? In that sense it is a crucial receptacle and source of guidance for life-forms to know where to go and how to choose from the environmental factors? Is DNA maybe the basic mechanism of the (not yet physically located) supersensorial and meta-dimensional “primes” I believe we use in magic activities?

One of my hypotheses and a daring one I admit is that DNA, the genetic material, is one and maybe the most important of the antenna’s for time (past and future and thus magical interaction) in living beings (on this planet). This means that it is in some way related to my as yet unspecified primes.

Something tells the seed to what plant it will grow into, evolution is remembering the future. I assume DNA has, like everything else, an existence in both time dimensions. It has a determined part and also some mechanism to change and adapt and I hope this can be influenced by our will.

Epigenetics, the science that deals with how an environment influences genetic choices and bifurcations, indicates that in the development of a species and of an individual many “choices” are made, related to the environment. Epigenetics deals with the fact that although our genes are replicated

throughout most of the cells of our body, different genes are expressed in different parts of the body and at different times. Some genes can be silent or inactive or not, they can be switched on or off and express themselves, depending on the environment and the specialization of the cell.

This can carry over to next generations, a way of adapting that is not really Lamarckian inheriting, but does support generational continuity of characteristics, only part of what J. B. Lamarck argued.

This is the easy part of epigenetics, as we learn more about what environmental factors are at play, we can change them, exercise, change diet, change habitat, take medicine or manipulate the gen.

But we don't start exercising or change a diet automatically, we think about it first. We can do this, once we know and once we decide to act. This is what epigenetics means in a practical sense, we can escape the deterministic part by venturing into the free will dimension.

In the chapter about karma more about epigenetics.

The more intriguing question is whether thinking (or other psychic processes) directly can influence our DNA, maybe not changing it, but epigenetically switching on or off certain sequences. There is recently the daring proposition, that neurological processes (thinking) are DNA processes and that the information processing at that level is very fast DNA activation. DNA may be the quantum-link that Penrose and Hameroff were looking for in the brain-cells, in the microtubules of the neurons (see appendix III).

Storage-medium and hypercommunication

DNA is a very interesting material, it offers more than a storage medium for genetic coding. It has been discovered as a very efficient way of storing large amounts of data. It is now considered and experimentally used as a technical back-up medium for digital data. It is, according to many, also what is called a hypercommunication medium and doesn't that mean active outside the limited four-dimensional reality?

Hypercommunication is described as communication via and in morphogenetic fields or as related to the role of the observer in quantum-physics. I believe when seen as meta-dimensional communication it transcend also time, in other worlds allows dealing with past and future and without spatial limitations. It is some kind of wormhole connectivity, the microscopic equivalents of the so-called Einstein-Rosen bridges or in more plain words, tunnel connections between entirely different areas in the universe through which information can be transmitted outside of space and time.

DNA seems to play many roles in the hypercommunication, there are effects like the so-called Phantom DNA effect that seem to point at energy

fields that exist in another dimension but can be traced in normal time-space.

DNA correlations

Many people have seen the somewhat esoteric correlation of DNA with the I-Ching and other divination and time-related tools and artifacts. Jose Argüelles for example noted the correlation of 64 rune symbols to the 64 hexagrams of the I-Ching and to the 64 codons of DNA.

More practical Russian researchers, as mentioned in an article by Grazyna Fosar and Franz Bludorf, see DNA as a biological Internet, especially mentioning the 90% of DNA that used to be called “junk DNA”, not being related to protein building. DNA code follows similar rules as all our human languages in syntax, semantics and grammar. The alkalines of our DNA follow a regular grammar and do have set rules just like our languages. Normal human language thus, according to them, resonates with DNA and can be used to communicate with DNA. So in this perspective languages did not appear coincidentally but are a reflection of our inherent DNA. Not coincidentally, in rituals there is also a kind of grammar and syntax, anthropologists and philologists have discussed this at length and this links to language. Frits Staal remarked that ritual could be seen as proto-language and thus a link with DNA is not surprising. Seemingly DNA has a lot more in store for us!

Esoteric and spiritual teachers have known for ages that our body is programmable by language, words and thoughts, given the right frequency etc.. Here age-old methods come into play, recitation, mantras, hymns, chanting, bhajans, all well known methods for relaxation and deeper levels of consciousness. This points also at why affirmations and hypnosis work, DNA reactions to language are quite normal and natural in this context. To work with DNA at this level requires a state of relaxation and inner peace, the research shows, but that makes sense and has a lot to do with the ritual process.

The Russian biophysicist and molecular biologist Pjotr Gargajev and his team explored the vibrational behavior of the DNA and reported that one can influence the cellular metabolism through suitable modulated radio and light frequencies and repair genetic defects. They claim, in other words, to be able to change DNA structures with relatively simple means like electromagnetic fields.

Gargajev's research group repaired with this method chromosomes damaged by x-rays. They even captured information patterns of a particular DNA and transmitted it onto another, thus reprogramming cells to another genome. This group thus worked on relatively simple devices that can influence the cellular metabolisms and repair genetic defects through suit-

able modulated radio and light frequencies. According to them, our DNA is not only responsible for the construction of our body, but also serves as data storage and in communication.

This approach is quite different from the Western approach of replacing single genes in the DNA-strands. While western researchers cut, mix and match single genes, the Russian group experiments with tools and devices that can influence the whole cellular metabolism, called wave genetics.

The Russian researchers use the example of insect hive communication (when the queen is taken away but alive, the hive lives, when she is dead the workers die) to illustrate the effectiveness of hypercommunication, much in the same way Sheldrake illustrated his view on fields of mind.

The methodology of using symbolic messages for healing reminds me of what Radionics does with frequencies and images. Radionics uses symbolic codes and information for treating diseases.

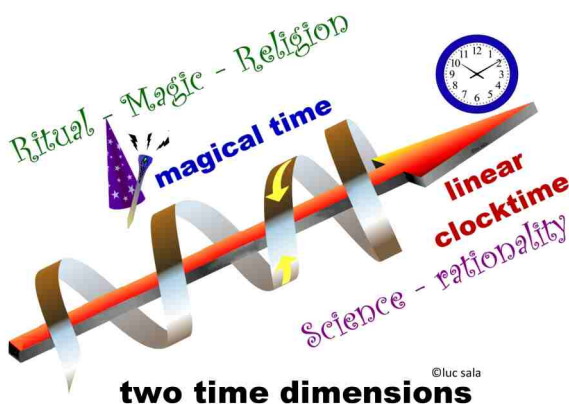
The adaptability of DNA is something Greg Braden also noticed, he reports DNA changes in human DNA without physical means.

DNA repair is a hot topic in fringe-science and new age lore, but could indeed play a role in the way we deal with the extradimensional.

So talking about DNA as an antenna into the future is not such a big leap really. I believe that understanding DNA in this sense is part of the question where the meta-senses, the primes I have been talking about reside in our system.

Evolution as a remembrance of the future

The implication of accepting our “knowledge” of the future explains evolution as “a remembrance of the future”. The seed knows where it’s going, the DNA is conforming to the future it “knows”, perceives, picks up, hence this word “antenna” makes sense.



DNA as a reflection of the stars, astrology

Now apart from all this talk about magical time, there is also astronomical clock time, nature seems to follow certain rules that apply to what we can perceive of the cosmos. Of course we

can doubt the universality of time, if there are multiple parallel universes they may have different reference models of time. And Einstein's relativity allows for different clock speeds depending on speed, even in this universe. Time travel is theoretically possible, if we can condense and extend time in front and behind us.

Non locality, the phenomenon that events seemingly can happen instantaneous (without the limits of speed of light transmission) also nibbles at time, but for most macroscopic events the sun is coming up every day and the clock ticks.

Nature follows the sun, the moon and the planets, and things like solar flares (eruptions of solar energy) affect the earth and our lives, and even as the nearest stars are light years away, we are under their influence.

Using astrology and divination to choose the auspicious moment for certain things is dealt with in a separate chapter but I just want to hint at another DNA relationship that has interesting consequences.

I suppose that if astrology has any value, then cosmic time (the changing constellation of celestial bodies) is a factor in what we are, whether at birth, conception or during our lifetime. And astrology is pretty old, nearly from the first days of writing this ancient art is mentioned, the Chaldeans were known as specialist astrologers.

Now science assumes that DNA plays a major role in what we are and do, it's the genetics (nature) that starts us off in life (nurture does the rest). So combining the two, then time as in celestial patterns and DNA must have some relationship. Astrology, in its various forms (Western, Chinese, I-Ching, Human Design System) has come up with certain correlations between date of birth and celestial patterns and what and how we are, so ultimately astrology is a DNA thing.

This is a fascinating thought, and points at an I-Ching like systematic astrology in relationship with the 64 DNA codons (the combinations of 3 nucleotides (A,T,G, C)) than just being a system that assigns potentials based upon statistical correlations noted over time without an underlying system.

Stonehenge as a DNA-healing sanctuary

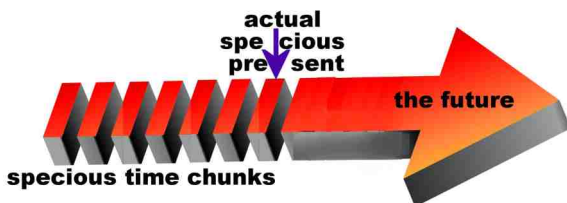
But it also means, that DNA is in a way a mirror of the celestial constellations. This again has interesting consequences. Think about the way ancient places like Stonehenge are laid out, they mirror the heavens for sure, are they not DNA healing places?

There is little doubt that such places, and the pyramids were constructed in roughly the same period as Stonehenge, were intended as a link between the sky and the earth. They were also healing places of some sort, as recent excavations around Stonehenge has indicated. Could it be possible, that

they were constructed in such a way, that DNA healing (in whatever form) could take place there?

Causality

Our notion of causality, even with the criticism of Hume and Berkeley that we can never be sure, is still very unidirectional. Quantum theory has already made some holes in this paradigm, but there is more to come. If we assume, as I do, that we can know the future and that prophets and sensitives do a better job at accessing and transmitting it, and that the future also influences the present, things change dramatically. Good-bye causality as we know it!



Our whole system, our whole society, legal system, healthcare and what not has then to change. Evolution is no longer a chaos thing, it part of a grand cycle. The laws of Nature (as physicists believe they know) have to be rewritten, philosophy reinvented. Or maybe just the old cyclic notion of Vedic thinking re-assessed.

The perception of time, specious present

In physics, the minimal thickness of time is the Planck time, (t_P), the unit of time required for light (a photon) to travel in a vacuum and at light speed, a distance of 1 Planck length and this is roughly 10^{-43} seconds). Anything at this scale or smaller would be quantum-state phenomena. This duration is well beyond the human scale. Humans can perceive time only in rather comparatively large chunks, anything much faster than the 25 frames a second of a video is not perceived as separate, but as a continuum.

Time perception - obviously not one of the normal five senses - is not a direct sense, but must be reconstructed by the brain. The **specious present** is the time duration wherein one's perceptions are considered to be in the present. It feels like a parsing mechanism, the way our perception clock ticks or we make it tick. It can be seen as the minimal unit of internal time duration. It's what the present means for us, as it is not timeless or as small as the Planck time. We humans perceive the present as something like a moment and this has a duration of between some seconds and maybe 12 seconds, the duration William James estimated.

E. Robert Kelly (E.R. Clay) was the first to mention the specious time concept, he referred to specious presented as the recent past, the time between what we feel is the past and the future. He differentiated between the obvious past, the specious present, the real present and the future. It was William James who really put it on the charts. James defined the specious present to be “the prototype of all conceived times... the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible”. D.C. Broad in “Scientific Thought” (1930) considered the Specious Present as the temporal equivalent of a sensory datum.

Now there have been many discussions concerning specious present actual length, measurements and estimates. Specious presents are longer or shorter, depending on the situation, we experience time different under different environmental situations, but also under stress, in peace etc. So there is a correlation between mood and specious present perception, and maybe there are other correlations. I would say specious time can be different for the same or different people, in different situations, it has a color (as in emotional value) to use a general indication.

What I find interesting is that there is very little to be found concerning what else a human experiences in these specious time moments and how we can influence this experience. It seems logical that by meditation, concentration we do, and that in the deepest states of consciousness we become more or less the master of our specious present conception, we get to be out of time. This is the link between specious present and magic (and ritual) that is so interesting and where I think it matters what color (emotional value) we perceive or even give to time.

The manipulation of the specious present, by meditation or conscious effort, seems to be an important factor in magical efficacy. One could say, this was a tentative conclusion of a discussion I had with Bernard Carr, that magic is the manipulation of specious time. It is a sign of changing perspective, that a cosmologist and physicist like him dares to speculate (at a recent conference) that various psychic, spiritual and indeed magical experiences are related to variations in the specious present, an idea which is definitely not accepted by mainstream science

This might imply that moving toward a state of consciousness where time can be manipulated or at least becomes less relevant, is a basic mechanism of true ritual, as I have argued in this book. Magic is essentially time manipulation, and our inner time mechanism like specious present are part of the mechanism.

To explain that we, even in only perceiving specious present intervals, notice change, movement, and succession there are different models of tem-

poral consciousness. It is suggested that consciousness is confined to a momentary interval and that we are not directly aware of change, we just see a cinematic series of static stills. The retentional model there is some memory of the immediate past, while in the extensional Model our episodes of conscious experiencing are themselves temporally extended to incorporate change and persistence. in a quite straightforward way. Successions of individual specious presents combine to form streams of consciousness.

Time horizon

Apart from the specious present length, our perception of time is not a constant, there are moment when we experience something as short or long, that time stretches or shrinks. The perceived time interval between two successive events is referred to as perceived duration, different from measured time. It is not a constant, it is manipulable and distortable under certain circumstances. Animals can have a different time-frame, there are species-specific differences.

In humans the obvious example of a change in time perception is the near death experience. There people report seeing and experiencing their whole life in a flash. This rate of perception of time not only differs in extreme situations, we deal with time in a rather functional way, time perception is linked to survival.

For instance, something coming toward us is perceived in a slower way, allowing more time for appropriate reaction, thing moving away are less relevant or threatening, so our psyche deals with them faster. Sitting in a train this phenomenon can easily be experienced, the image of what we passed, the past moves away faster, at least is perceived as such.

Emotions play a role in time perception, in situations of fear time seems to go slower, people report that in accident situations they experience time very slow. Fun, on the other side, seems to go faster.

Our perception of time is also related to our time horizon, when we get older (or in terminal disease cases) that horizon contracts and older people think they experience time faster. Some research indicates the older mark a certain time segment, say a few seconds, as shorter than young people. Other research indicates that the apparent velocity of time as we age is a cognitive illusion.

Marc Wittmann asked subjects how quickly time seemed to pass during the previous week, month, year and decade, and found there were few differences related to age. Older subjects did more often report that the last decade had passed quickly. This has to do with the telescope of lost time, but also with the demand on our resources. Learning and adapting to change and novelty requires time, less incentives and less demands on resources slows us down and increases our perception of time. The greater the cogni-

tive demands of a task, the longer its perceived duration. Seniors that do little feel time passes (too) quickly.

Important in the context of ritual is that the perception of another persons' emotions can also change one's sense of time. This is explained by the theory of embodied cognition and mirror neurons, an internal process that mimics or simulates another's emotional state. When with someone who moves slowly we tend to follow the example. In a ritual state we may piggy-back the tempo of others, in psychedelic states this is known as hitchhiking.

The burden of time is what we like to escape from. Ultimately the idea of ritual is to reach a state where space and time cease to exist, we enter the extradimensional. In the context of time and space, therefore the old adagium 'Thou art That' could equally well be phrased as 'Thou art Now'. The present moment in the mystical state is endless, the specious time is just the now and yet eternal, everything condensed to being here now, as (Richard Alpert) Ram Dass' book says.

In the appendix about time I mention the Time Perception Theory of Philip Zimbardo, who noted that people have a different time orientation versus past, present and future.

Time and morality

Morality has to do with time, not only because we have to reckon with an afterlife, but because we, even in classical normality, influence the future with actions in the now and are thus held responsible for what we cause. This is true in normal causality, but what if time is not so strict and arrow-like. If the future influences the present, as prophecies undoubtedly do, morality as we know it, the whole notion of legal responsibility, the legal system and punishment for what you do in the present becomes irrelevant. More than that, one could be responsible for changing things in the past, as well.

Ilya Prigogine hinted at this in his notion of local internal time as he saw:

"that his new (local internal) description of time puts in a new perspective the question of the ethical value of science. This question could have no meaning in a world viewed as an automaton. It acquires a meaning in a vision in which time is a construction in which we all participate."

18 Magic or Quantum-Magic: mind over matter

This chapter is nothing but a request to take magic (and ritual) serious. To look seriously into the otherworldly was, for a long time, not done. Certainly magic was not considered the subject of serious study or scientific analysis; it was a fringe science and parapsychology just slipped in under the radar. Theologians can deal with ‘beliefs’, but they are a class and a world apart, religion being merely a social phenomenon since Marx and Nietzsche.

Anthropologist can look at it, if they keep their distance, too close, too much of an “emic” insider involvement is not scientific, except when we classify it as theological.

A practicing spiritualist, magician or mage who writes about magic like Leadbeater, Blavatsky or Crowley is suspicious and must be deluded, and is probably a crook. Understanding, describing, uttering the scraps of insights gathered about magic and effective ritual is easily brushed aside as irrational and irrelevant in our modern world of communication, information, and science. The politically correct attitude is: “We don’t need to delve into the superstitions and ancient lore, modern man can do without!”

However, now that quantum physics has kicked the deterministic rug from under our feet, we can venture a bit outside rational thinking, especially as we dress this exploration up as quantum magic.

I really don’t know if there is this relationship, but chaos theory, relativity, quantum mechanics, non locality, probabilities rather than observable certainties made it fashionable to label all new insights as quantum-.

So why not use this cover to explore what has always been the intriguing part of the whole, the magic? Theology, the original science of the otherworld, has been exchanged for the mask of quantum-understanding, the ‘standard model’ and Higgs’ “God particle”.

What’s in the name anyway, I could easily have named this chapter Information-magic.

What do we know, did we know, or can we know about the link between ordinary reality and the metaphysical world and how they interact and relate? The word “knowing” is not even appropriate; it is closer to feeling and sensing. The shaman or mystic doesn’t retrieve equations or hard facts, but poetic and symbolic insights.

The concept of information as in digital data doesn’t apply here, as this concerns the deeper aspects, the hidden qualities, the knowledge of the heart, the Gnostic wisdom. Maybe we can use the word “isformation” here, trying to understand what really “is” in the meta-dimensional totality.

Let me start a bit critical. What did modern man achieve, apart from a decadent wealth for some, a spoilt ecology, technology that claims connectedness but delivers pulp and instant loneliness, textbook science that has no real answers for natural disaster, man-made war, and economic crises?

What greatness is there in our ability to bomb nations or to create a hype-economy if we can't prevent the poor of this world becoming poorer every day?

Science has limited herself to rational space-time exploration and even the humanities are forever looking for material, rational explanations, trying to translate ideals and intangibles into statistics, brain currents or chemical reactions.

I happen to believe that we cannot ignore the limits of today's science anymore. There is a growing urgency to look further, to ask essential questions about the goal of technology, the real use of information, the relevance of ever faster data-processing and arithmetical progress. Does it make people happier, better, more connected, or are we blindly chasing the spook of progress while in fact regressing into the dark age of abundant data but less and less information about what really matters?

This is not my private concern, most scientists I speak utter a similar complaint and daring folks like Rupert Sheldrake write books about, like his 'The Science Delusion' (2013).

Mind over and in matter

I suspect that the basics of mind/matter interaction are similar to what we call quantum-effects in the 'new physics', but is not only a physical phenomenon. Mind plays a role, consciousness must be part of whatever the explanation is. People like mathematician J. von Neumann and Eugene Wigner made clear that the role of the observer is essential, in fact that without observer, without attention, without consciousness reality is a fiction.

The tangible world needs something to make the probability collapse, without that there is only empty potentia. This is not a new insight, already the old Hindu or Buddhist sages pointed at the idea of Maya-illusion, and even those wandering in the virtual Cyberspace world must feel that not everything is tangible, that reality can be a construction. Picking up your smartphone is using semiconductor quantum effects technology to enter into a virtuality where bits and bytes re-appear as sounds and images.

I use and in a way like the word quantum-magic because the truly magical, the miracles of creation, the singularities of history, the grace we experience in our personal lives, they all seem to follow the same irrational rules we encounter at the quantum level.

Only the quantum approach sheds some light on the strange phenomena where events, things, particles happen or not happen, seemingly at random but obviously depending on intention and consciousness, at whatever level.

Quantum-effects are not limited to the very small, the very fast, the extreme boundary regions, but are everywhere and very similar to the central force in creation. We just have to figure out how it relates to the magical force, the life force, the exhalation of Brahma, the Chi or the Holy Spirit.

Different from Roger Penrose's OrchOR search or Nick Herbert's approach in "Elemental Mind" I am not so much concerned with the exact nature or location of the consciousness process or with the historical debate about mind/matter. Nor do I want to prove by scientific experiments that the Newtonian causality model is inadequate as in Rupert Sheldrake's "Seven Experiments".

Honoring traditions

I simply assume that whatever has survived in folklore, religion, ritual, hymns, tales and fringe literature as magical or ritual practice has some truth or let's say probability in it. Instead of discarding the unbelievable I honor it, seeking the deeper truth behind it.

Obviously the practice of shamans, rainmakers and such has survived the ages, so some validity, some truth can be assumed. And of course trickery, deceit, sleight of hand play a role, maybe just because there is no guaranteed outcome of any healing or magical act. But to deny that miracles or at least singularities occur has more to do with a psychological denial and fear of the unexplainable than sticking to the facts. Quantum effects are real, observation of the anomalies has led to the initial quantum-theories of the physicists and these again to even newer string-theories that seem to explain and even predict the outcome of new experiments, so why not examine the quantum-magical facts of human history should be examined.

We could look for the general principles of exotic jungle healing or the traditional ways of indigenous cultures, but why look so far? We still have many practices and rituals close by that survived the cold winds of rational thinking. Look at the coins in your pocket, listen to the solemn vows in courts, how we dress at graduation events and watch athletes with their mascot's and obsessive quirks.

What is information anyway?

The twentieth century was all about technology and information, but did we ever understand what information was, true information about things and ideas that matter beyond the next dollar, the next moment, the next exit? We are stacking and stockpiling terabytes and petabytes of data,

senselessly moving them around the globe, stored in the cloud, but not really connecting with anything, not feeling our spine resonate with ethereal and eternal truth, not making sense out of the overload of stimuli!

Media proliferate, we have access to everything instantly everywhere, but do we care more, do we feel deeper, do we understand and empathize better? The extension of the senses, McLuhan was right, has indeed become mere massage, killing time and seemingly eliminating the limitations of the time/space dimensions, but numbing us at the same time.

We are less and less part of the creation, but happily consume the virtuality that separates us from the real experience. A virtuality filled with web-contacts, Facebook friends, and social networks that break up when we ask more than the very superficial.

The limits and emerging constraints of communication and information technology are maybe not so obvious; we are blinded by visions of e-commerce, mobile communication, global internet, social networks, and the promise of a new economy without losers. However, we really have to look at the basic question: how does data become information.

How does this flow of facts and figures, images and sounds we are now offered via internet everywhere and always, translate into the things that really matter? This question, I believe, has everything to do with our relation to the metaphysical, the extradimensional otherworld.

Information science needs to wake up and redefine itself. It may be surprised to find itself at the same level and in the same ballpark as witch doctors, shamans, and holy men praying to the Gods.

Real information is much beyond the cognitive processes like filtering, recognition, and association; those are only processes at the receiving end of the stick. The process of informing oneself, of obtaining relevant data, is much more a two-way phenomenon, acting in a field or dimension of relevance. I argue this must have some extra-dimensional link.

We do have the senses to interact with this information dimension, think about synchronicity as the most simple example. These interactions via what I call primes, explained elsewhere in this book, are real but not rational and not explained by our material laws of physics.

Rupert Sheldrake argued and researched that when looking at someone we somehow connect to them in a way different from what classical physics can explain.

I think the same applies to the whole 'information' thing. It has to do with intention, with frame of mind, with access to meta-information. Maybe that what we perceive as information is nothing but some side-effect of the consciousness process, along with time and manifestation. Maybe we manifest

the 'tangible' data, coming to us in the form of books, emails or other media, only after we have made up our minds as what it is we need.

By switching on one's smartphone, pad, PC or television set, tapping our tablets, we can theoretically receive terabytes of information, but we all know that there is a limit to what really reaches us. Our system doesn't accept more input than it can handle and reduce to manageable bits.

We can only guess as what will hit us. And yet, that poem or this piece of music, this glance and that touch sometimes change our life completely. We all know instinctively that lots of data don't serve us, that it's the few that move and resonate within us that matter. We really have no idea how to filter or separate or recognize those few bits that would really byte, even with the best search engines and neural network computers.

The rise of the information age is astonishing. The advances in processing power, storage and communication speeds awesome, but aren't we going over the top, aren't we drowning in the data-sea? Like with all 'advances,' we will undoubtedly discover that we have gone too far.

Once we explored or approached the limits of our physical and sensory input capabilities we will feel saturated and the race for more speed, bandwidth, or quantity becomes irrelevant. Who wants Hifi sound in frequency bands one cannot hear, who wants resolution beyond the perceptible? When will Google Glass and Oculus virtual reality headsets reach the overload threshold, or will we humans adapt to ever more data influx?

I expect we will sober up at some level and start looking for what really matters; I happen to believe that is the magical side of things. We have to stop the overdose of self-constructed reality in the virtual and psychological sense and in the real sense of polluting this world and our lives. Protecting ourselves from the data pollution, the transparency and emptiness of systems that take away work and only deliver meaningless entertainment will be the main concern for decades to come. Willingly, as we sober up, or because neo-luddites force us.

Maybe science will come up with miraculous insights, free energy, even better medicine, but it's more likely that we will turn away from the material and look for what has been there all along, the otherworld, ritual, magic, true meaning.

This requires a better understanding of how data becomes information at the core biological level as well as at the quantum-level where observer and observed are both promoted to co-creators in a game of probabilities and non-locality.

Here DNA, the biological information carrier par excellence, may be the link we are looking for, but no doubt there are quantum processes at work

there. Quantum-state and information are in a way interchangeable, entropy and information are two sides of the same coin.

A bit is only information if it bytes, but how does it byte, when does it byte, and how does it make the quantum jump from noise (undefined probability) to meaning?

Attention, consciousness, will, perception, we know that these play a role, but what role and how, what happens to “reality” when we understand, what happens when we connect, when we unite? I call this resonance, the basic mechanism of all, but is there a practical way to harness this? Of course, rational science has looked into it and we have a far more detailed understanding now of the sense organs, the sinews, synapses, and the structure of the brain. But to what effect, do we understand thinking beyond neurons firing?

There are now theories about neuro-linguistics and symbolic language, but the next so-called semantic search engine on Internet hardly goes beyond rational searches. It is still filtering and not really creating a dynamic path based on previous searches, experience, and emotional state of the seeker.

Our ego-profile in Google’s database may be dynamically fluid, but does it address the inner child state where the true meaning and holy core of our being resides? Doesn’t it limit the chance to find something surprising, something unfamiliar but singularly important, the life-changing bit of real information we need?

Magic is more than quantum-mechanics

Quantum-magic is but a fashionable word to paint or sketch the ‘science’ that by others was called Magick (Crowley), gnosis, alchemy, or witchcraft. It flourished in many forms and among many groups, whether in secret or openly. Maybe not even as a science, since a science deals with rational causality, repeatability and falsification, but an art. Art can do without form or structure, rules or dogmas; art relies on intentionality, connectedness, and inspiration.. Art can point at truth beyond falsification

When the bard Shakespeare wrote “To be or not to be ‘that’ is the question” (no interpunction in those days) maybe he was not referring to death and existence, but rather to the old Hindu “Thou are That”. A hint that got lost in history as the human preoccupation with mortality may have obscured the ambiguous message of the bard. The next lines of William could be interpreted as pointing at what the mind imagines as trouble (the outside world) and whether one chooses to accept or fight this illusion. “Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them?”

Shakespeare, like Plato, Moses and countless others was aware of the otherworld dimension, not separate but interwoven, the heaven among us, the paradise of being whole. So maybe he deliberately left the two interpretations open.

The twentieth century has seen tremendous advancements in science, but has left us with the same perennial questions as to the nature of mind, matter, and God. Is God the collapsing power in the quantum-physical probability game? Are we co-creators in that sense? How does the individual relate to his reality?

This is not merely a philosophical question, as the familiar causality and mechanistic approach seems incapable of coping with the serious problems of the world. The inherent dangers of technology to our ecosystem and mental health, or even to our gene pool and DNA are slowly coming to light- what to do?

The magical alternative needs a new appreciation. We need to come clean about the power of mind (or consciousness) over matter.

I believe that the relationship between mind and matter, between (perceived) reality and consciousness, needs methodical study and research. Research that goes beyond the mechanistic limitations of time and space and accepts that the freedom from those 'normal' constraints does extend into the scale of everyday life and maybe even beyond. I think that a serious and why not academic study of magic (quantum magic, information magic etc.) is essential for the direction of science, society, biosphere and thus of mankind in this third millennium ahead of us.

Quantum mechanics and understanding of entropy, big bang etc. has opened our eyes to the intricacies of creation. Chaos theory gave another link between the world of ideas and perceived reality, virtual reality actualized the 'psychedelic experience' or the "mystical unitive awareness" into the science of perception and visualization; we have grown to appreciate the mathematics of creation, the logic of the mind-computer, but failed to realistically delve into the esoteric.

Quantum-reality or Consciousness-reality

Time, existence, and consciousness are part of the big game, the real challenge. This is where quantum-mechanics and new physics point the way: there are very small and very large scale effects that are not subject to "normal" reality, and consciousness plays a role there. At the quantum level, the observer plays a role. At the Big Bang moment, something must have started "it" or, as some believe, restarted a whole new cycle. Could it be that time is not so much related to space but to consciousness, that conscious-

ness and time conspire to manifest as I have argued in the chapter about consciousness?

That in other and more symbolic words Love (consciousness) uses Time to manifest Truth? Truth and energy/power do have an esoteric resonance and time is seen as illusory, a mortal construct, in some philosophical traditions. There even manifestation is not more than Maya, a dream within a dream.

Do we dream the dream or is it dreamed for us as in the movie ‘The Matrix’? Even Kant mentioned the possibility that our “normal” space-time dimensions are just a construction, a grand illusion we created to deal with the complex wider reality.

Einstein’s relativity theories gave us those strange paradoxes, made time in a way more flexible and indicated that if we could travel at the speed of light, very funny situations are possible, like meeting people in a different time frame.

We can no longer believe that there is one Now, the same for all, and that time is a constant. Relativity destabilized our traditional notions of space and time, but that was only the first step.

Quantum-Physics

The whole world of classical physics and in a way relativity also was turned with the advent of quantum physics, as the dualism of wave and particle emerged (the famous double slit experiments). The universe has only discrete (and elemental) steps in manifestation (a quantum is such a discrete step), and is a probability in need of an observer to become noticed, and thereby the observer becomes creator of what he or it notices.

Schrödinger, Heisenberg, Pauli, Dirac, they turned physics around. The first half of the twentieth century saw enormous advances in our understanding the material world while breaking down the notions of the mostly Western scientist of centuries before.

Not that we really made progress, apart from atomic and nuclear power and semiconducting (a quantum mechanical process) in understanding creation, existence or magic; nobody saw Aleister Crowley as an experimental physicist. It was however noted that the quantum-equations were open to time being bidirectional, they were time-symmetrical. The notion of now, already attacked by Einstein’s relativity, was further eroded. Past and future, at least at the quantum scale, became interchangeable; electrons in positive time were equal to positrons in negative time.

Non-local causality

Other questions came up. Are interrelated time and space necessarily for existence? Is something limited to what is local? Erwin Schrödinger noted, in 1935, that when two quantum systems are brought together and then separated in space, they remained connected in an entanglement, a new and permanent kind of wholeness. He saw this as the main difference between the then new quantum theory and the old classical ways of describing nature.

Then (in 1964) John S. Bell's non-locality theorem kicked in, toppling whatever science thus far believed, making entanglement a reality. Even Einstein found it spooky as it was at least seemingly contradicting his relativity and the 1935 EPR (Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky, and Nathan Rosen) approach.

Bell's Theorem shows the impossibility of a Local Realistic interpretation of quantum mechanics, broadly implicating that information can travel faster than light (instantaneously). This has been proven in experiments with "entangled" systems (the related spin of elemental particles because of previous interaction). This is only at the subatomic (quantum-physical) level, but it does indicate that there exist interactions between events that are too far apart in space and too close together in time for the events to be connected by signals moving at the speed of light. Wow, everything is connected, because all share a common origin (the big bang)!

The discussion here gets to be a bit technical, you can skip it if you like. This connectedness or entanglement is a state whereby two bodies (electron, photons or atoms) have a connection (a past) where they kind of assumed the same quality (polarization, spin) that stays with them; they become twins even as they are separated. Measuring the one yields information (a Qubit or quantum-bit) about the other. Now in the EPR (relativistic) vision this was because the twins had a hidden set of agreements (local hidden variables) how they would react to a measurement.

Experiments have shown that this is not the case, EPR is not true, and non-locality is now used for practical applications like in quantum computing and offers a new and promising way of transporting information via quantum teleportation.

I like my friend Nick Herbert's proof and experiment to explain the Bell theorem and implications of it and how he took the whole thing a step further in Quantum-Tantra and Holistic Physics. He looks at mind as the link or solution, and accepts that mind is everywhere, universal in nature, a fun-

damental quantum effect. If we see mind as consciousness manifested, I think he points in the right direction.

Epi-reality

Here we first have to look at what quantum science brings as a antirealistic paradigm before we can turn to a wider perspective, the epi-realistic one, that accepts the spirit dimension as part of the meta-dimensional whole. My otherworld extradimensional is then, with normal reality, part of the metadimensional.

Quantum reality states are different from local (traditional) realism in the sense that reality statements like: “a tree in the forest is there even if nobody looks “ are challenged. It leads to the bizarre notion that the world is in some sense “not real” except during an act of measurement (or conscious interaction). One can look, as Heisenberg did, to

“the quantum state being potentiality as contrasted with actuality of the “local” relativistic state, seeing the (unmeasured) world as just a potential (a multifold of potentiae) humming along.”

Kind of maya, illusion, thus.

The quantum state does not obey the restrictions and causality of normal space time behavior, it’s more slippery. Only if its (statistically defined) probability collapses it becomes real, actual, manifest, objectively reduced to a beable, an existence. And, even more strange, a beable that cannot be predicted, a chance phenomenon, making the universe and us a chance event, in this view.

An unobserved object is then quantum-wise not a real thing but a probability wave, not an actual happening but a bundle of vibratory possibilities, only when observed those possibilities collapse, the so called quantum jump.

But what is observing, is it different from measuring, who are observers anyway, is there self-observing, do we need recording in some form for observing to leave a mark, a trace? What has awareness, consciousness to do with this, is manifestation, being the result of consciousness or vice versa. The quantum jump moment is the crux of (the) matter. There lies the secret of what Heinz Pagels, called “the cosmic code”: quantum physics as the language of an anti-realistic nature.

To be and not to be, to be or not to be that, those are the questions which quantum physics and quantum philosophy bring to us, and that’s exactly where the spiritual kicks in and o wonder, the sages of old were concerned with.

This all of course has led to many speculations and theories. Philosophers and theologians saw in Bell's theorem proof that everything is related, that the non-local nature of reality points at some underlying union of everything. It questions the whole of traditional causality and correlations, events can happen and be related without "physical" contact.

The quantum theoretical implication, that there is a kind of weird connection possible without direct (material) interaction, just a common historical contact, is quite magical, it indicates that there is an implicate order (David Bohm) that surpasses causality as we think we know.

Attempts to unite quantum and relativity theories have led to new theories to explain reality like string theories and the multidimensional superstring M-(Brane) Theory, and that kind of opens the possibility of more (up to eleven) dimensions, curled up along our space-time. These are space-like but also at least one extra time dimension is possible, according to Itzhak Bars.

String-theory: standard model

The M-Theory states that reality is constructed from one-dimensional energy 'strings' and 'membranes', much smaller than even subatomic particles and that these generate mass, existence, and even time. This is the most recent approximation of a 'theory of everything (but magic)' but relies on the super-symmetry of forces and matter and is limited to what is manifested.

This super-symmetry is what needs to be proven, and there the now well known Higgs boson particle appears. It is a very short manifestation of the Higgs field that would bring mass (gravity) to at least the atomic realm. Its existence now seems plausible seen the results of Hadron-collider experiments. Peter Higgs and Francois Englert have gotten their Nobel-prize in



John Perry Barlow, Tim Leary, myself and Simon Vinkenoog in my garden in Hilversum in 1990, a synchronistic meeting of magical people, for the occasion of the presentation of a book about Virtual Reality

2013, and with the Higgs particle (likely) discovery the ‘standard model’ of how physicists think subatomic reality functions, got a boost.

A feasible solution for quantum gravity would be necessary to cover all four fundamental forces of nature and the Higgs boson provides this (there are in the standard subatomic model fermions that constitute matter and bosons that provide the forces that holds it together). But there are fine details, like the spin of the Higgs particle that has not been measured and the game has not ended, yet. Also the question of the invisible dark matter (4/5 th of all) is a bit nagging.

It’s all still rather unfamiliar and strange. We have to accept that each material particle is described as a distinguishable excitation state of basic energy strings and areas with quantum mechanical aspects. It may be that gravity has to do with leakage between parallel universes, and at least M-theory assumes existence of multidimensional spaces within any single point of space and time.

Now to sum this up, the notion of more dimensions and funny time effects (negative time) at least points at something more than the familiar tangible reality out there! A world curled up alongside normal space-time, the possibility of extra dimensions and wouldn’t that be where the unexplained, the otherworldly resides?

Even as these other dimensions are virtual (unmanifested), just the result of mathematical logic, why not accept an extradimensional realm associated with them?

The question is then if we can have contact with that realm, is there a link between the manifested and the unmanifested (the invisible, non-collapsed) and do we as humans (and animals and maybe all) have a contact possibility. Do we, but also all manifested reality, have a virtual existence in those other dimensions? Think of these as a kind of roots in the otherworld. I think we do, science not yet?

So maybe my notion of the extra-dimensional senses and transmitters, the primes, that underlie my understanding and interpretation of magic and the working of ritual magic, fits in.

As we are limited in our ability to measure them in our ‘normal’ space-time, maybe we can-do so in the middle of the sun, way out in space or at the moment of death? And maybe someone can tell me, if we could go to the center of the earth, what would gravity be there (close to zero?). Would we be able to “measure” all those funny elemental particles in particular conditions or places?

Entropy

Now entropy enters the fray. Quantum physics and string theory allows (or rather requires) time to flow backwards, and that goes against the Thermodynamic Laws and the entropic tendencies of our known universe. According to these laws it will eventually die a thermal death in most scenario's.

There is little doubt that we live in a normally entropic system, where life can be seen as a local anti-entropic organization of energy amidst and at the cost of entropy all around and thus subject to the unidirectional flow of time and entropy.

Information and entropy are counteracting each other, at least if we see information in the context of "a bit is only information if it bytes" but if we dare make the step to quantum-thinking this could be rephrased as "a bit is only information if its probability curve collapses and it manifests".

The riddle is that in our world it seems that we (and life) are building more structure, more information and the anti-entropic (negentropy) is rising. How can this be and still obeying the second Law of Thermodynamics, unless there is some mechanism that keeps an entropic balance. Why not include the extradimensional in the whole picture, then information exchange with the otherworld would balance the negentropy?

Quantum Bayesianism

It gets even more technical! Among the many interpretations and extensions of quantum theory there is one, that comes close to my notion of time dimensions, in the sense that this theory also sees the future (or rather an image of the future) as influencing the present. The probability approach of Thomas Bayes, using the concept of "degree of belief" has been used in practical applications. Inference means drawing conclusions from data, and in the Bayesian approach a hypothetical outcome is used to arrive at earlier states.

It is called the personalist approach, because it accept the role of the subjective analyst in drawing up a hypothetical outcome, not as a yes or no situation, but with a certain probability. In the frequentist approach in statistical analysis one starts from the data and works toward an outcome. All this is fairly fundamental as it concerns the nature of information, how data yields information and how information is contextual, and depends on the way the data are analyzed.

The subjective Bayesian account of quantum probability evolved out of the work of K.R.W. Jones and named the Caves-Fuchs-Schack "QBism" Bayesian approach after Carlton M. Caves, Christopher Fuchs and Rüdiger Schack. This personalist approach resonates with what has been observed

in quantum mechanics, the observer plays a role in the collapse of the wave function.

The observer causes the manifestation (e.g. as wave or particle) of subatomic phenomena. QBism assumes that this probabilistic wave-function only exists in the mind of the observer as a mathematical tool and has no existence in spacetime reality. In other words, the mental state or belief system of the observer effects the outcome but has no ground in tangible reality, a somewhat anti-realistic and intuitionist stance concerning the wave-function. So two observers might have a different outcome of an experiment, their notion of the future (their hypothesis or expectation) plays a role.

For me this points at a situation, where something in the otherworld (a belief system or a hypothesis) influences tangible reality and this is consistent with my three world model. It makes quantum physics a somewhat magical and paradoxical science, where manifestation, time, place (non-locality), speed, entanglement, etc. are no longer very solid concepts.

All these rather theoretical considerations dissolve, if we assume that beyond the spacetime reality there is an extradimensional realm, from where things like belief do effect the tangible.

Magic without tools, like in faith healing?

In practical terms this thinking in possibilities and probabilities comes down to this, what is the relationship between a thought and an event? Between a thought and perceived reality?

That such a relationship exist is quite certain (also in quantum-physical terms) but how does it work, there are obviously mind states, body states and world states that are effective, but how can we find out which ones. Maybe we have to look at what the traditions have found and retained as working, as effective. For a sage in the Himalayas, a Bushman or Papua witch doctor this is probably more tangible than for the 'modern' scientist, so let's take an example from their world, the process of healing.

Healing is often what people seek in going to a sorcerer, quack or ritual, it the most sought out form of practical magic. If a shaman wants to evoke a healing, what helps to achieve the desired effect?

Will manipulation, taking the psychological route, some mumbo jumbo, some interesting looking herbs into a terrible taking concoction help?

Of course, the placebo effect is by now well known and documented. It works, especially if you believe in it and the people around you support that.

However, the real shaman has more to offer than the psychological and the social and a placebo healing, he makes a connection with the magical, the spiritual, in a what seems irrational belief in his powers.

He will probably tell you that his mind state is the most important; that he needs to go into trance. He has to ascend or go down to a state of consciousness, by methods or techniques he has learned in his tradition, that allows contact with the otherworld, where he can seek and maybe find answers to what need to be done in that world or this.

I believe he goes into a ritual state, comparable to what I call the inner child state, but he might feel it as going to his soul, his higher self, to the level where he can feel his ancestral heritage, his true self, and from there seek healing for his patient, tribe or the world.

Neuroscientists will tell you that this relates to specific measurable brain-wave patterns, his mind state (not thought waves I mention elsewhere). His bodily state can also be a factor: his breath patterns, his chanting, the way he dances, etc. Are they what brings along the mind state or vice versa, he or she probably doesn't care, they work together. Mirror neuron mechanisms are not part of shamanic education.

Then there is his or her world state: culture, the timing, the starry influences, the spot he or she is in, the distance to the patient, the tools, the skulls or bones, the herbs, etc.

If all this resonates, the mind state with the body state, we probably get better result, for resonance between the worlds is what matters here. In general terms therefore, the body state and the world state combined and resonating with the mind state do have a positive effect on the probability of healing of changing the possibility of what reality will be.

This is a resonance process, so how can we improve the required resonance. In the old traditions these resonances are often equated to correspondences. He who know those is the better magician. Now by looking into many of these traditions, which obviously over time found out what works or not, one could try to distill see some structure, some rules of thumb for efficacy.

For instance, the deeper the trance, the better the results. But are shamans with more bones or skulls more powerful? Does the distance matter, is there an optimum, with the patient far away is there a notable time delay? Can we learn from their concentration techniques, their symbols, their herbal preparations, magic potions, their ritual preparation in how to reach a mind state / body state that elevates one into that otherworld where healing is not the purpose, but just restoration to balance and normalness. These are the areas for serious research.

Researchers like the parapsychologist Lawrence LeShan have developed insights in the way 'paranormal' healers work and even devised exercises

to train psychic healers. He argued that psychic abilities such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition could be explained using quantum theory, and mysticism were a kind of quantum-state effect but failed to get his ideas accepted by science.

His approach of going for a deep connection and meditative state in healing of course could be described as a ritual approach, letting go of the ego and thus in line with the general notions in this book.

By listening to ‘experts,’ he postulated that a meditative state of oneness, overcoming separation between healer and healee, is at least part of the secret. His approach did result in statistically significant (and therefore miraculous) healings. Not with certainty, but the odds are there. And who are we to guess the face of God anyway? Even if we ask (pray) for healing, there might be higher wisdom in not healing. This again is not Cartesian logic; $1 + 1$ isn’t always 2, but like in the wave superposition mathematics, might be 3, 0 or even -2, depending on phase-shifts.

Two approaches, willing or not willing

True wisdom has two sides, the magical and the mystical, the active and the passive. It is in a Ying-Yang kind of interaction that in the total mystical the seed of the magical is present. So what is magic and when does it become mystical and vice versa.

Now the fully trained meditation adept, magician, prophet or healer will probably tell you he doesn’t actually uses or directs his powers, he will tell you that he becomes more of a mystic and “feels” or “channels” the Divine Will. The ultimate magician is then mystical, and vice versa the mystical or spiritual seeker in the end develops many siddhis or magical powers, like Jesus who was described as going around sprinkling miracles wherever he went.

Ying-Yang is the symbol that illustrates this wonderfully. But it might help to distinguish between the two, the magic (active) and the mystic (passive).

There is the more female receiving, the mystical where one opens oneself to the unity, without any attempt to do or act, just receiving God’s grace. God of course might be anything, the thousand names of the divine principle including the new divinities like science, progress, internet or cyberspace.

The other more male approach, where one tries to act, to change, to influence can be called the magical. Reports and studies about psychic healing reveal that both approaches work, that both the intention to change and the surrender to whatever the universe wants can be effective in healing.

Magic; the easiest and most difficult of sciences

The practical study of magic seems, unlike chemistry or physics, quite an easy one, for there are no academic hurdles. It's what we call open source these days, with the problem that truly advanced teachers are hard to find and only the first steps on the path are more or less public.

Innumerable books, pictures, and even videos are available about other and older cultures. No city is without museums full of artifacts, in fact the subject of most books, stories, plays and songs is the connection with the divine, the magical, the other side. The bible is full of magic, sorcerers, prophets. Artist and scholars alike have given us images and descriptions from that outerworld, underworld, subconscious or superconscious realm. Most have been inspired at the passive level, but some have ventured into the psycho-active, maybe better described as the quantum-active, states, think about Hieronymus Bosch.

Any esoteric bookshop has hundreds or thousands of titles, ranging from sagas and myths originating in the oral tradition to those many books about the relationship between modern physics and the deeper realities. And they all hold part of the truth, the alchemical tablets, the anthropological studies, the books with magical incantations (Grimoires), the religious and the holy books, just as no doubt the harder to read Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Mayan calendar stones, the Sumerian cuneiform clay-tablets as well as Meister Eckhart's poems.

So there is abundant study material and who likes to experiment, look into yoga, tantra, aura-reading, tarot, classes, usually there is something going on around the corner. Further experimentation just requires dedication and discipline, an environment as provided in most religious 'master-classes'. The saying goes that once the student is ready, the master will manifest, the information field will do its work. But usually it takes years or decades to be initiated into the higher ranks of lodges, covens and secret societies dedicated to 'the work'.

The secrecy beyond the attraction

There is the promise of power, of ego-boosting in knowing the 'old' wisdom, so we look for a back door. Those with access to psycho-active substances can preview the show somewhat easier, but without lasting access and with some risk. In a nutshell the somatic and psychological constraints of psychedelics make clear what the limitations and risks of releasing the quantum-magical toolbox to a larger audience are. See the chapter about psychotropic substances.

The word toolbox seems appropriate, as there are so many different approaches, so many schools and teachings, rituals and secret societies. They

all use slightly different methods, so most likely there are many quantum-active tools that work, at least sometimes.

It is astonishing that so little structured work has been done in this direction (or came to the surface). Although many, in fact most religions have mapped the terrain and usually devised rituals and practices to help their devotees and priestly class to perform ritual magic or at least enter into mind-states associated with it, they usually are very secretive about it.

And rightfully so, there are enormous powers at play. Powers of creation, but also of destruction. Out in the open there is no control over who uses what. History is full with stories of the one group of magicians pitted against some other, of various factions war-mongering in the name and under favorable auspices of their Gods or Gods.

Of course there are ways to more directly obtain the esoteric knowledge, receive the initiations into higher levels of wisdom, but usually at a price. Solemn vows, secret orders, even those who have tried to organize and systematize the knowledge like Aleister Crowley, Madame Blavatsky, and Ouspensky have left out important parts of their understanding or hidden and camouflaged it. They wanted to keep away the just curious or ego-power seekers. And although many sacred text of the old do contain direct and effective clues it seems as they have remained obscured and mostly forgotten.

Now and then we recover some of the old insights, like when archeological finds of scrolls or artifacts do focus attention on Gnosticism, Cathars, Sufism or the Egyptian rites, but mostly this is a passing and quickly waning interest.

Normally the esoteric teachings are the hidden part of our culture. In fact, studying these things is not even considered science, and all through the ages those who dared venture into this field risked being burned at the stakes. So they kept their understanding secret, hidden, maybe distributing it only in coded and disguised forms or in limited and exclusive lodges and societies.

Hidden and secret

The usual argument in favor of keeping any insight in all this more or less private and secret is that the 'average' person is unable to understand it all, that exposure to these esoteric matters is dangerous. The information could be used wrongly or, another argument, not limiting it to a few select might dissolve the awareness. These are the classic reasons for keeping things secret and I do agree to some extent.

Gradual initiation in these matters is a time honored method. And maybe this also makes sense, as there is also a black magic route that is related to the human tendency to separate, to shy away from unity, to think in us and

them, in inner and outer, in this and that. Isn't that the basis of the whole sin-thing, of humans falling out of grace? Surely a course and path to proceed cautiously!

This doesn't mean we should not experiment with magic and ritual. There is so much out there, that ignoring the possibilities would also limit us in uncovering positive and useful applications of what seems or is magical. Let me give an example.

Shielding as an example

One of the methods I personally researched, using a special device (a kind of gold crown with real gilding) to shield oneself from the thought waves (the thought-noise that enters our brain and sometimes upsets us or makes us uneasy) has some curious side effects. I found that by 'shutting off' external thought waves I become not only more sensitive to my own thoughts and impulses, but that an increased sensitivity to outside input evolves when not wearing it. In other words, my 'unshielded' sensitivity in fact increases, resulting in stronger, more chaotic dreams etc.

Not good for everyone, I presume. Now distributing such devices at a wider scale could be risky, lessening the thick headedness of some people might result in psychological instability and depression. With proper training and awareness this could be overcome, but historically these things have been misused. More about this in the chapter about ritual tools and gold.

There are times, when the thought waves, astrological influences, electromagnetic pollution, the emergence of certain minerals or substances in our environment or even deliberate pollution by evil-minded individuals or organizations are so disturbing, that shielding makes sense.

Note that this method of thought wave shielding is in fact the opposite of the crew-cut or shaven heads so popular in some organizations, the army, monasteries. Eliminating the shield that hair gives has the effect, especially in group situations that one tends to act upon the group mind-scape and loose the individual ethics.

Radiation-sensitivity

These thought waves are maybe related to quantum effects, again using that somewhat fashionable moniker. Allow me some speculation here about the evolution of life-forms or rather the ups and downs in species and life-forms we can witness in the fossil records. I feel, this is one of those insights that makes my spine resonate, that both the disappearance of the larger dinosaurs and the return of certain mammals like the dolphins and whales to the sea are due to a large-scale thought wave and maybe normal electromagnetic radiation pollution event or period.

Maybe because of celestial disturbances, a meteorite, lessening of the earth's magnetic protection, maybe polar shifts have caused this, there are many theories around, but I feel that the whales made their choice to go back to the water in a deliberate effort to escape from this pollution. Water, especially seawater containing many spore-elements that have shielding effects, is a good insulator.

The other survival strategy, shielding oneself with huge armored plates as the dinosaurs did, turned out to be somewhat successful, but in the end didn't work, only a few species like the crocodiles survived. Some clever biologist might note, that other life-forms like insects did survive without any special shielding, but maybe they were always less susceptible to these disturbances.

This is not my field, but I do believe that very detailed analysis of the shields of dinosaurs, the ones that survived longer or shorter, might reveal some chemical peculiarities. I say chemical, but the science of thought wave shielding has not even started, so maybe there are carbon-related biological mechanisms, devices or organs that are quantum-sensitive, the brain as a 'prime' example.

Given this hypothesis, I again feel that the world is in fact already suffering from severe magical (thought wave) pollution and that further study and research in this direction is essential. This is a personal estimation, and one I am not really finished with.

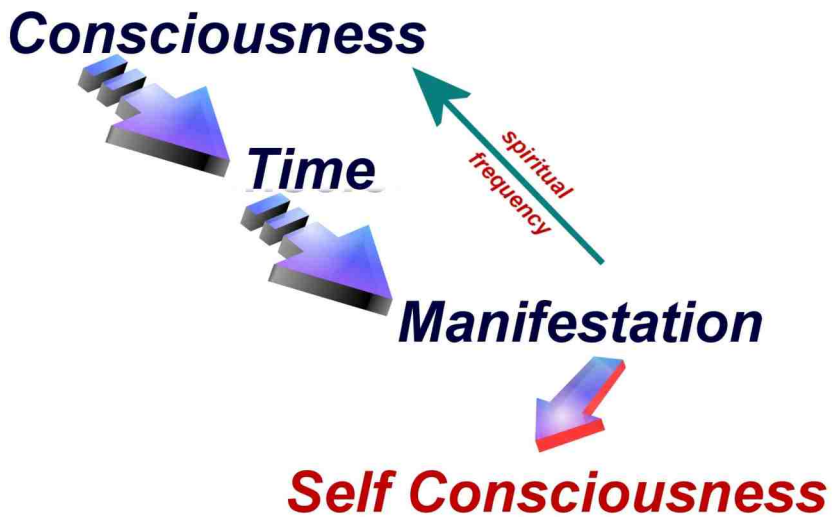
Honor the magical

Linking ritual (and the magical) to modern notions of the quantum-realm serves a purpose; it makes magic less esoteric. Now Lawrence LeShan tried this in the 1970s and came up with interesting results from his experiments, but quantum physics was then less developed, non-locality a very novel idea and M-String unheard of, maybe today the link makes more sense. It might raise the status of magical and para-psychological research and ideas and this I feel is very important.

Even as the whole building of the 'standard model' of space-time particles might still collapse, who knows, quantum physics and string theory has toppled enough certainties and convictions about reality to honor it as a real paradigm shift. The notion of consciousness as the source of manifestation is still uncharted speculation, but I admit the purpose of trying to quantify and qualify the magical is not so much an attempt to master it as it is reclaiming the place and status of the mage, the priest, the shaman and of ritual in our world. Without people and a matrix to help us connect to the otherworld we are sinking in a materialistic and egotistical swamp without morality and with a dead end in sight.

We need rituals and those that understand them, we need sorcerers or maybe just a recognition that they exist and have always existed. The great minds and leaders of the material world are very often those with magical capabilities, even as we deny those. Steve Jobs, Apple's hero and mage was the sorcerer who manipulated the market, his customers and appealed to deep subconscious desires. He was more open about his new-age inspiration and LSD-25 experiences. His magic was understanding the human psyche and translating that in products and services, with an emphasis on form.

Most cultures do have a magical (or religious) face, there usually is a hierophant or high priest and a dominant religion, with some cooperation and coexistence mode with the worldly authorities. In the Twentieth Century we have, in many countries, done away with traditional religion. We are relegating the task to keep us happy and semi-connected to the spin-doctors, the Wall-street guru's, Internet, social media and the occasional pop-saints and spiritual teachers. We have left the magical to Hollywood, the music industry and television. We pay for this isolation, this elimination of true connectedness, but we don't recognize it. But is there a difference between the way Wall Street (with the full support from the greed in all of us) manipulates the markets, governments wage wars and the sacrificial adoration for Gods and Demons with even human sacrifices in our past?



19 Ritual and Magic: laws and rules of magic

I see ritual as a form of practical magic, so the subject of magic figures prominently in this book. In the literature there has been a longtime separation of the field of ritual and religion from that of magic, and this has only changed in recent times. By magic of course I mean real magic, not sleight of hand theatrical stage tricks and illusion.

Talking about magic and taking it seriously is risky. The magical and the magus practicing it have a bad reputation. Magical work is seen as egotistical, self serving, secret, personal, manipulative, lustful, or avaricious. Ritual, on the other hand, especially in a religious context, is seen as open, public, benevolent, and spiritual.

Magic is, as Wikipedia says, “generally seen as any attempt to control the environment or the self by means that are either untested or untestable, such as charms or spells.” Not a very positive view. If the rituals of an established religion were so classified, there would be an uproar. And yet, are they so different? Is Holy Mass not a magical re-enactment of a historic event, aimed at achieving supernatural effects?

Magic, continues Wikipedia, “is the art of producing a desired effect or result through the use of incantation, ceremony, ritual, the casting of spells or various other techniques that presumably assure human control of supernatural agencies or the forces of nature. Magic has been practiced in many cultures, and utilizes ways of understanding, experiencing and influencing the world somewhat akin to those offered by religion, though it is sometimes regarded as more focused on achieving results than religious worship. Magic is often viewed with suspicion by the wider community, and is commonly practiced in isolation and secrecy.”

I believe, along with many others these days, that ritual and magic have a lot in common, and the separation is an artificial one, not a factual one. One can use words like ritual magic to describe certain forms of magic, the more lengthy and complex ones, or words like ceremonial magic, or high magic for the long, elaborate, and complex ceremonies that were developed in western esoteric circles, but are the elaborate rituals in the Vedas and the Vedic tradition then not magical?

There are many explanations of magic: philosophical ones, sociological ones, and psychological ones. Very few scientists take magic seriously. One finds, in science, general media, and politics alike, all kind of reasons why it doesn't work beyond some self-hypnotic illusion or at best psycho-social influences.

The words magic or magical are not usually seen as a reference to something that connects with the divine; there is the connotation of the devil at work. But if we replace “divine” with the more general term “meta-dimensional,” it already sounds better.

When one talks about magic, very often an immediate reaction is to ask whether this is white or black magic. No use telling them that like with any tool the intention is what matters. Those with some oriental inclination will maybe ask if it is left or right hand tantra; the word is tainted. Those who do believe in (and practice) magic or claim to do so even try to soften the blow and state that it’s all about personal growth, maybe with a bit of healing thrown in.

The laws of magic

There are laws of nature within the physical realm, but obviously there are larger laws applying to the extra-dimensional or the meta-dimensional whole. Alas, the Laws of Everything don’t usually cope with magic, apart from esoteric interpretations of some symbols like E8 (an interrelated 248-dimensional symmetrical object), and some scientific superstructures that try to unite superstring, quantum, and relativity. The worlds of the seen, including the very small and very large, and the unseen (the spiritual) don’t seem to match; they remain divided, at least in the eyes of the rationalist.

Some, like Rupert Sheldrake do see a connection of everything to everything, finding some support from the quantum physicists. His universal law, the “Law of One” is more of a philosophical nature than scientific, even though he found innovative and convincing ways to prove his views. Of course his view isn’t new; many religions and mystics adhere to the “all is one” under different monikers like “Tao” or the universal interdependence of the Korean Buddhist Hua-yen teaching. Sheldrake is more of our times, including Cyberspace and Internet connectivity in his work, doing research into telepathic phenomena there.

Many rules but one resonance

So are there rules that have some relevance in explaining magic and can be used in a ritual context? In fact there are many; esoteric literature is full of them. Like the very simple “If it works, it resonates, resonance is the basic law of all” that I injected into the 2004 Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard, which Oberon Zell compiled with help of other members of the Grey Council.

I used this law of resonance as a way to condense the many magical laws of Isaac Bonewits and express my belief that physics is just a subset of magic.

Thus, a universal magical law should also cover physical processes and tangible reality, which are based on resonance anyway.

Old traditions and cultures had practices, laws, writings and theories about what is now often called Pagan magic, but was part of each and every culture. It was often a practice and profession so closely related to the cosmology and religious core of the culture that the priest was the magus, was a healer, was a shaman. His or her art was given by the heavens (or demons and devils), often transferred down the generations and mostly kept secret and exclusive, befitting a powerful heritage.

The magi of Persia, with Zoroaster as their inspiration, worshipped fire and kept it perpetually burning. They were true masters of the art, had a great reputation, were high ranking and influential with the kings. The Egyptians were mentioned as the teachers of the Persians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, and said to have roots in Atlantis. The Magi or Magii of Babylon were famed for their astron-

omy; they knew the stars and planets well, and show up in The New Testament as the magi (the three kings) that came to honour and adore Jesus in Bethlehem.

The Egyptians were the most famous magicians.

They called magic “heka” and saw it as a natural force present throughout the uni-

verse, with a deity Heka. The priests were also the magicians. Techniques the priests used included acting out a myth with the patient by reciting speeches and spells, using substances such as honey or dung to lure out or repel possessing demons, using wax puppets (dolls), and inscribing protective and healing spells on drinking bowls and amulets.

Many rituals included the incantation of spells. Spells consisted of both spoken words and subsequent actions. Words and names had to be pronounced correctly. Egyptian hieroglyphs were a magical script, next to the hieratic, more common script. Egyptian understanding of magic is undoubtedly represented on the walls of their temples, crypts and insides of their pyramids, but much is lost, even as we have and still find more scrolls and tablets.

Some of those techniques survived, even under the generally anti-magic Islam, by using Koran texts to cover the use of old ways. The Marabouts of North-West Africa still practice some of these old techniques.



It's a pity that great libraries of antiquity, like the one in Alexandria, were destroyed and probably took a lot of knowledge about the workings of magic and alchemy with them. Julius Caesar accidentally burned parts of that world famous library, later it was damaged under Aurelian in 270 – 275 CE, again in 391 CE in an antipagan Christian movement. The Muslims in 642 CE finished it off.

Burning magical texts was not uncommon; St Paul, when at Ephesus, called for the burning of books of magic and curious secrets, to a value of 50,000 pieces of silver.

Plato and other philosophers of antiquity have tried to make sense out of magic and the irrational. Some, like Pythagoras, were magicians themselves and came up with great understandings of mathematical magic, but it feels as though most of them were caught in the (now considered artificial) separation of magic and religion.

In the Middle Ages there was magic, but it was considered an evil art, close to heresy and witchcraft. Most tracts, books, and grimoires (magical recipe books) were kept secret, got lost over time, or surfaced as the inspiration of secret societies, lodges, as true historical artifacts, or invented quasi-copies.

In more recent times, Sir James Frazer was one of the first to talk about the laws of magic, the sympathetic and the contagious principles. He proposed that magic developed into religion, and distinguished between 2 types of magic.

Imitative (or homeopathic) magic is based on the Law of Sympathy, one imitates the desired effect to make it happen. The other type, contagious magic, is based on the Law of Similarity, particularly on physical contact. This is like when one obtains some object (e.g. clothing) and does something to it in the belief that this action will affect the person with whom the object was once in contact, as we know from Voodoo practice..

Hermetic Magic

Another fairly simple Law of Magic is “above as below,” the Hermetic notion of a what can be seen as a Law of Correspondence, based primarily upon the writings of Hermes Trismegistos. Supposedly he was not an Egyptian mage, but someone from the 2nd century CE who was familiar with the older tradition.

The exact text on the Hermetic Emerald Tablet says “That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above, corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing”. This is a powerful principle and law for connecting the different worlds, like looking at the microcosm as oneself, and the macrocosm as the universe



*Where the Ten Commandment of Moses magical laws or
just practical ones?*

that mirrors that and vice versa; within each lies the other, and through understanding the one you can understand the other. The Seven Hermetic Principles (the Kybalion) are as follows:

The Principle of Mentalism. The truth that “THE ALL IS MIND”; the universe is mental, spirit before matter.

2. The Principle of Correspondence. “As above, so below; as below, so above.” The truth that there is always a correspondence between the laws and phenomena of the various planes of being and life.
3. The Principle of Vibration. “Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates.” The differences between different manifestations of matter, energy, mind, and even spirit, result largely from varying rates of vibration.
4. The Principle of Polarity. “Everything is Dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled.”
5. The Principle of Rhythm. “Everything flows, out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum-swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates.”
6. The Principle of Cause and Effect. “Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is but a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law.” This resembles the notion of Karma.
7. The Principle of Gender. “Gender is in everything; everything has its Masculine and Feminine Principles; Gender manifests on all planes.”

And here we have a first set of descriptions of how magic works. I find this remarkably in line with the old Vedic notions and even modern physics. It honors both the worldview of Heraclitus (becoming, moving, unlawful, *panta rhei*) and that of Parmenides and Plato (being, unchangeable, time-

less, uniform laws, reality as we perceive it is illusion, ideals), but leans more to the resonance principle. The understandings were profound; the Hermeticists were the original alchemists, astrologers, and psychologists. Most of all however, they pointed to the possibility of changing and transforming mental states, forms, and conditions, what can be called Mental Transmutation or Mental Alchem(istr)y, the mind in control of itself. Now this sounds very Eastern, and no doubt the understanding of the Aryan, Vedic, and Zoroastrian sages was part of their inherited toolbox, too.

They had access to magical and thus practical psychology. Little is known about their meditation or trance techniques, but what we know of the Greek and other mysteries and mystery schools indicates they had access to all the tools we have rediscovered in the twentieth century with psychedelics, transpersonal psychotherapeutic techniques, role-playing (the Greek theater worked with masks/persona), systemic constellations (Hellinger), and such. Maybe there are even techniques we have not yet rediscovered.

Their set of principles was the view of people more or less familiar with the older traditions: Egyptian, Chaldean, Jewish, Essene, Greek, including the neoplatonists and Pythagoras. But they were under attack from Christianity, so their knowledge only surfaced again more than a millennium later, in the Renaissance, when Italian princes like Cosimo de Medici took an interest in supporting research into old texts and wisdom. Translators and writers as Marsilio Ficino and Pico Della Mirandola revived Hermeticism.

Hermetic occult orders were founded in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, when there was renewed interest in Western Europe, and a revival occurred in the nineteenth century with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Aurum Solis, also Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. Writers like Kenneth M. Mackenzie, Eliphas Lévi, Frederick Hockley, William Butler Yeats and Arthur Machen, came out with books about magic.

Eliphas Lévi

The magical scholar Eliphas Lévi (*Laws and Ritual of High Magic*, 1854) described three fundamental laws:

- . 1: the law of the human will (physical willpower)
- . 2: The law of astral light and the intermediary ethereal principle
- . 3: The law of connectedness, linking inside and outside, the material and the ideal, assuming there is no difference between the microcosmos and the macrocosmos.

Another law has been added:

- . 4: the law of imagination or visualization

Calling upon powers within and outside with *Invocatio*, calling down or *Evocatio*, calling up.

Crowley

Aleister Crowley, one of the most famous magicians of recent times, wrote extensively about Magic, Will, and the Law in among others *The Book of The Law*. His famous “Do what Thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” is a supreme moral law, and means that people should learn to live in tune with their “True Will.” It frees the aspiring magician from outside moral restraints, following internal morality alone. This refers to the “divine” will, the true will of the inner and higher self, not a license to ignore ethics. It is clear that Crowley is aware of the distinction between our ‘normal’ self, the assumed self image (also called mask, personality or ego) and what is called the deeper self, higher self, the hidden core inside, behind the masks. In that higher self one is closer to the extradimensional and the divine consciousness.

Looking at another definition, by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero in *The Essential Golden Dawn : An Introduction to High Magic*, this becomes clear:

“Magic is the art and science of causing change to occur in conformity with will. This change can occur

- 1) in the outer, manifest world;*
- 2) in the magician’s consciousness; and*
- 3) most often in both, for changing one often changes the other.*

Magical change occurs in a way that is not currently understood by modern science because it works through the Unmanifest - through subtle manipulations of the invisible spiritual realms. However, the workings of magic are subject to natural law. The effects of magic are sometimes clearly visible in the physical world, and other times they are only apparent on a personal, spiritual level. The workings of magic are not limited by the constraints of time and space.”

In this quote we already see that they do mention specific change in the extra-dimensional spiritual realm, but the resulting effect is in the manifest world.

Isaac Bonewits

There are of course writers who do take magic seriously. Isaac Bonewits was one of them, and his hypothetical *Laws of Magic* (in *Real Magic* from 1971, but expanded later) were a great consolidation of many belief sys-

tems concerning magic and offer a cohesive framework for study of magic. His Laws of Magic are:

. **The LAW OF KNOWLEDGE**

This is probably the most widely used law, and probably encompasses all the others in some way. The basis of this law is that understanding brings control. The more that is known about a subject, the easier it is to exercise control over it. Knowledge is power.

. **The LAW OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

An obvious derivative of the LAW OF KNOWLEDGE, this law carries additional connotations. A mage who does not have knowledge of himself does not have knowledge (and therefore control) of his own magic. This law is one of the reasons “evil” mages are very rare—a dedication to “evil for evil’s sake” is usually due to a lack of introspection and awareness of oneself. It is difficult to do harm to others when you understand fully what that kind of harm it would do to you; Know thyself.

. **The LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT**

A simple scientific understanding - if exactly the same actions are done under exactly the same conditions, they will be associated with exactly the same results. Magicians have at least as much belief in cause and effect as modern physicists do, they just realize that a good ritual, like a good theatrical performance or a good bread recipe, isn’t always predictable. In truth, a spell involves so many variables, that controlling or even understanding them all is impossible. The key to magical success is learning which variables are the most important, and how to keep them constant. Control over the variables is icing on the cake.

. **The LAW OF SYNCHRONICITY**

Two or more events happening at the same time are likely to have more in common than the merely temporal. Very few events ever happen in isolation from other events. There is no such thing as a mere coincidence.

. **The LAW OF ASSOCIATION**

If any two patterns have elements in common, the patterns interact “through” those common elements, and control of one pattern facilitates control of the other(s) depending (among other factors) upon the number of common elements involved.

. **The LAW OF SIMILARITY**

Having an accurate physical or mental representation of something facilitates control over it. This one is fairly obvious in its applicability - having a model, picture, or other representation of your target (like a voodoo doll) gives you power to affect the target. Look-alikes are alike.

. The LAW OF CONTAGION

Objects or beings in physical contact with each other continue to interact after separation. Everyone you have ever touched has a magical link with you, though it is probably pretty weak unless the contact was intense and/or prolonged or repeated frequently. Magical power is contagious. Naturally, having a part of someone's body (nails, hair, spit, etc.) gives the best contagion link. Once together, always together; the part of the thing is the whole of the thing.

. The LAW OF NAMES

Knowing the complete and true name of an object, being, or process gives one complete control over it. This works because a name is a definition (yes, even "Harold", "Marie", "Kunte", and "Jasmine" were definitions at one time) as well as a contagion link, and an association. If you call something the same name over and over, that name becomes associated with the thing.

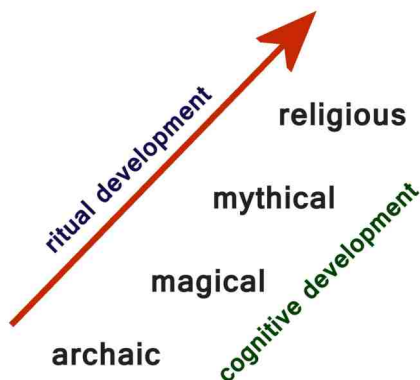
This also works because knowing the complete and true name of something or someone means that you have achieved a complete understanding of its or their nature. This is why, in most pre-industrial cultures, people are given "secret names", as well as "public names", and why the sharing of a secret name is such an act of trust - because the secret name is considered to be very close to, if not identical with, the person's true name.

. The LAW OF WORDS OF POWER

There exist certain words that are able to alter the internal and external realities of those uttering them, and the power may rest in the very sounds of the words as much as their meanings. Many of such words are names, though the meanings may have been lost or forgotten. Very many magical tools require words to be inscribed upon them and/or said over them during their construction and/or use.

. The LAW OF PERSONIFICATION

Any phenomenon may be considered to be alive and to have a personality—that is, to "be" an entity or being. Anything can be a person. Most weather mages personify the winds and the clouds, for example, and thus find focusing their magic on the atmosphere much easier to do.



. **The LAW OF INVOCATION**

It is possible to establish internal communication with entities from either inside or outside oneself, such entities seeming to be inside of oneself during the communication process.

. **The LAW OF EVOCATION**

It is possible to establish external communication with entities from either inside or outside oneself, such entities seeming to be outside oneself during the communication process.

. **The LAW OF IDENTIFICATION**

It is possible through maximum association between elements of oneself and those of another being to actually become that being, to the point of sharing its knowledge and wielding its power. This is the law that controls most lengthy or permanent possession phenomena.

. **The LAW OF PERSONAL UNIVERSES**

Every sentient being lives in and quite possibly creates a unique universe which can never be 100% identical to that lived in by another. So called “reality” is in fact a matter of consensus opinions. This law is nowhere near as obvious as the other laws in its applications, but if you can figure some of it out, you can use it.

. **The LAW OF INFINITE UNIVERSES**

The total number of universes into which all possible combinations of existing phenomena could be organized is infinite. Anything is possible, though some things are more probable than others. You might consider this to refer to the “alternate probability worlds” of science fiction, but it also has a much wider application.

. **The LAW OF PRAGMATISM**

If a pattern of belief or behavior enables a being to survive and to accomplish chosen goals, then that belief or behavior is “true” or “real” or “sensible”. If it works, it’s true. Another rather obscure law, but it does have some very useful applications.

. **The LAW OF TRUE FALSEHOODS**

It is possible for a concept or act to violate the truth patterns of a given personal universe and still be “true”, provided that it “works” in a specific situation. If it’s a paradox, it’s still probably true. This law is basically useless, except to justify use of the above three laws without screwing things up in your version of the real world.

. The LAW OF SYNTHESIS

The synthesis of two or more “opposing” patterns of data will produce a new pattern that will be truer than either of the first two were. That is, it will be applicable to more levels of reality, and this new pattern may not be a compromise, but may be something new indeed.

. The LAW OF POLARITY

Any pattern of data can be split into (at least) two “opposing” characteristics, and each will contain the essence of the other within itself.

. The LAW OF OPPOSITES

A sub-law of POLARITY. The “opposite” of a pattern contains information about that pattern, by providing information on what the pattern is not. Thus, control over a pattern’s opposite (or close to its opposite) facilitates control over the pattern itself. (Note that this is the Bonewits extension of POLARITY and SIMILARITY)

. The LAW OF DYNAMIC BALANCE

To survive, let alone to become powerful, one must keep every aspect of one’s universe in a state of dynamic balance with every other aspect. Extremism is dangerous, as the extreme being becomes so associated with the extreme aspect, that they lose the ability to avoid that aspect at all. This is another reason “evil” mages are rare, as continuous association with pain or death will cause a mage pain or death, ending the mage’s ability to continue actively with “evil”. This is also why “good” mages, especially healers, tend to live a long time.

. The LAW OF PERVERSITY

Sometimes known as Murphy’s Law. If anything can go wrong, it will, and in the most annoying manner possible. Magical associations sometimes operate in the reverse of what was desired, and meaningful coincidences are just as likely to be unpleasant as pleasant. Even if nothing can go wrong, some element of the universe may change so that things will go wrong anyway. Whether we like it or not, the gods (or fates, or what have you) do have a sense of humor.

Emotionally healthy mages have less problems with this law than others do, as the mage’s own subconscious mind is probably a major perpetrator of this law.

. The LAW OF UNITY

Every phenomena in existence is linked directly or indirectly to every other one, past, present, or future. Perceived separations between phenomena are based on incomplete sensing and/or understanding.

The above excerpted from Authentic Thaumaturgy by P.E.I Bonewits

A stated before, over and beyond the various laws of magic, Bonewits and others give, I tend to think that resonance is the ultimate and overriding magical (and physical) principle and the principal law of the universe. **“If it resonates, it works, it exists.”**

Another set of magical laws, more or less compiled from various sources is this:

- The Law of Correspondence: Things look like what they are, and are connected through resonance of timing, form, name, color, sound: This is a fundamental tenet of magic, that there is a similarity of any kind that can be used. Astrological magic and homeopathy use it in identifying useful herbs and remedies for example.
- The Law of Sympathy: Like attracts like or the image is the thing: Where a contagion isn't possible then an image or other witness of the target may be used instead. The better the image, the better the link - and even better if the target has personally endorsed the image. Signed photos are really good for this.
- The Law of participation: the assumption that a thing can participate in or be part of two or more things at once was identified by Lucien Levy-Bruhl as the principle underlying his concept of prelogical thought.
- The Law of Consent: No injury is done to the willing or this works a lot easier with your co-operation: Magic is said to have difficulty affecting those who do not believe in it, or knowingly resist or defend against it. It is far easier to operate a working upon someone who consents to be targeted than someone who doesn't.
- Equivalent Exchange: Everything has a price, make a fair deal: Magic conserves a given level of value and a given effect must be paid for with something of at least equal worth. Many jokes about magic are about how precisely it works, one might get what one wishes, exactly.
- Threefold Reciprocity (a.k.a. “The Law of Triples”): Whatever you do by magic, for good or ill will be repaid to you threefold: The universe is somehow “karmic” and rewards or punishes the use of magic. However, just an equal action-reaction mechanism would not give a triple response.
- Reversal: Whatever magic does, magic can undo: anything created by magic can be dispelled or otherwise undone by magic.
- Distortion: Magic changes nothing ... permanently: the controversial idea that magic works by bending the universe out of shape but does not

actually change it - sooner or later the world will snap back into its original shape, something like parallel universe shifting.

Law of Attraction

In recent times, notably through the 2006 movie “The Secret,” the notion that there are magical laws has entered the public mind, many people now are familiar with the “Law of Attraction” as it was explained and demonstrated in that movie, as well as subsequent books and similar videos. The use of this law and the visualization and reframing techniques in the movie are limited and tend to make people try to get what they want rather than what they need.

The advocated magical approach is therefore in a way dangerous, and a layman’s kind of primitive and materially oriented self-serving magic. It does contain some important truths. It uses (but not references) some of the more sensible notions of Ron Hubbard and Scientology such as clearing and reframing one’s view of personal reality, and has summarized in a single phrase many of the older Laws of Magic.

Law of Limitation

According to Colin Law the principle of limitation is a key to understanding the structure of magical ritual and a key to successful practice. In a ritual we enter into a state of expanded consciousness and can channel the energies involved, but we have to be careful to limit and focus them to minimize side-effects.

Science Fiction

Literature, especially fantasy and science fiction, often shows insight into what magic is or can do, as the writers are less constrained by reality and develop models that have some relevance for science. Their imagination often precedes what is then realized technically. Jules Verne’s space travel and Bill Gibson’s Cyberspace are examples.

It’s interesting to note that the Laws of Magic as used by writers of science fiction give a much better understanding of what magic can or cannot do than what scientists have come up with. The set of rules called the Laws of Magic governing the use of magic by wizards in the fictional world of wizard Harry Dresden, a character Jim Butcher created in “the Dresden Files,” makes clear what ethical limits there are to magical acts, but also make clear that those limits are artificial. The three Laws of Robotics of Isaac Asimov are another example; in a way they also define the workspace of a magician. That Magic can have negative consequences, especially for the aspiring magician, is illustrated in the not very serious but nevertheless insightful

Harry Potter books. The first law of Magic in Harry Potter (ascribed to Adalbert Waffling):

“Tamper with the deepest mysteries – the source of life, the essence of self – only if prepared for consequences of the most extreme and dangerous kind”

Esoteric magic: Blavatsky and Bailey

There have been all through the ages groups, lodges, societies, and brotherhoods that laid claim to esoteric knowledge, handed down in the lineage or through books only to be understood by the adepts, often those who could afford the cost of the training and tutorship. The secrecy of the teachings most of the time concerned understanding and techniques related to the psyche. They were seen as paths to ascend to higher spiritual awareness usually helped by some functional understanding of magic. Knowledge turns into wisdom only when “consumed” and internalized, and although there are many ways to achieve this, some kind of experiential anchoring does help. How this is done, what rituals are on the path, is therefore kept secret; only the initiated know (and claim to understand). Otherwise the element of surprise and experiential learning and ownership would be lost. This “secret” part comes up in many rituals in many cultures, and is often is connected to the loss of identity or a change in status as in initiations. It is understandable that Victor Turner saw this as part of the “liminality” he recognized as a fundamental constituent of ritual. I see liminality more as only one of the ways to achieve the ritual state.

The secrecy of the “traditions” could only be partial, otherwise no new members could be found and there would be the risk that the “sacred” knowledge or wisdom would get lost. So there are usually poems, verses, songs, books, paintings, symbols, etc. that contain part of the secret, but often in a form that is hard to understand or has been deliberately coded or encrypted, often the words “sealed” and “key” are used in this context. The initiated could decipher the messages, and the idea was that the true seeker would pick up the cues and find his or her way to the right literature, people, or groups to move on to higher levels.

There is a wealth of secret or semi-secret and occult material. Every tradition, school, cult, and church has not only the original works, but often endless interpretations, studies, new revelations, and interpretations. Sometimes over time the original message gets corrupted or inverted. Certainly before the days of science as we know it, all the literature, art, and poetry was within the confines of the religion of the group. To come up with divergent opinions or interpretations was a dangerous game, could be seen as heretical, and would be suppressed, often by very nasty means as the Catholic Church did with the Inquisition. To try to change things was not an easy

task; changing a belief system is quite arduous. Sometimes it was done gradually - in the Vedic Puranas the concept of the prime mover or One Life essence slowly drifted toward a more God-like image.

There have been historic figures like Giordano Bruno or Shankarya, an 8th century reformer of the Vedic tradition, who toppled the cosmogony of their times, but usually divergent views were kept within closed communities. And even then there were layers, inner circles, like the esoteric school in Theosophy (and an even more secret Egyptian section) with more secrets, more initiations, more “grades” and more “us and them” thinking.

The esoteric (hidden) groups were tight lipped. The general public was left oblivious to the actions and even existence of the lodges like the Golden Dawn. Only slowly did details of their teachings and rites come out, first by Aleister Crowley, in 1905, and later by Israel Regardie in 1940. Many of the secrets of groups with hidden knowledge these days have found their way onto the internet, like the material of Scientology and Freemasonry. Many however shy away from publicity, deny details from their past, and are not very open about the organization, like the Theosophists these days.

Alice Baily in “A treatise on Cosmic Fire” and “A treatise on White Magic” goes deep into the rules and limits of what an aspiring “adept” is supposed to do and not do.

There is quite a bit of magical understanding to be distilled from the otherwise not very readable books of Madame Helena Blavatsky (TS). Her writing is dense, full of detail, symbolic language, and imprecise references, based on inspiration and authority from an enlightened but anonymous “Tibetan.” They do contain “Instructions for would-be magicians,” and as such need to be mentioned in this chapter of Laws and Rules, but they are hard to interpret. The “Fifteen Rules for Magic”, intended as guidelines for aspiring pupils are in Mrs. Bailey’s somewhat verbose and excessive warning style.

“The Brothers of the Sun, through the force of solar fire, fanned to a flame in the blazing vault of the second Heaven, put out the lower lunar fires, and render naught the lower ‘fire by friction’.”

Or

“The Brother of the Moon ignores the sun and solar heat; borrows his fire from all that triply is, and pursues his cycle. The fires of hell await, and lunar fire dies out. Then neither sun nor moon avails him, only the highest heaven awaits the spark electric, seeking vibration synchronous from that which lies beneath. And yet it cometh not.”

Theosophy is a tradition that, at least in writing, is open to any search for the truth, offers a lot of insight in the magical realm, drawing upon Eastern tra-

ditions and in the “Esoteric School” helps members not only to know and learn about themselves and consciousness, but also to actually live it, enjoining a regime (a vegetarian diet and proper life) that supports this.

It is an approach to understanding the universe and cosmogony that doesn't start with a religious God image. It begins with just a general principle of consciousness, the eternal parent âkâûa, the all that is and is not, the ONE LIFE immutable and unconscious in its eternity, much like the unmanifest Para Brahman in the earliest Vedic Puranas.

This also means pure spirit as a Being or an Existence is not accepted, substance in whatever form is what matters, the idea of ultimate reality as eternal substance, with its unceasing motion (spirit) which is its life.

Here Blavatsky's Theosophy is clearly different from the Hermetic beliefs, but also from standard Advaita Vedânta, where primary substance (pradhâna) was demoted to the status of illusion (mâyâ).

The original inspiration Blavatsky took for her book “The Secret Doctrine” were the Stanzas of Dzyan, claimed to be from very old Tibetan origin. There is some link with an old Taoist book called Yin Fu King. Her claims were disputed by W.E. Coleman, who pointed to several contemporary publications as sources.

Whatever the source, the material is intriguing and covers a wide array of subjects. It is distinctly Vedic in signature, there are great similarities with the cosmogony (development saga of the cosmos) of the Rig-Veda and the older Puranas (believed older than the Vedas). There are other ‘channeled’ books similar in content to Blavatsky's work, like Eckankar and ‘Great White Brotherhood’ authors like Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov, Guy Ballard and Benjamin Creme.

One of the differences between Blavatsky and Bailey is how they see sex. Although Mme. Blavatsky early on was involved in some experiments in sex magick of the Crowley variety, in her theosophical writings she forcibly warns against the terrible dangers of sex in a magical context, maybe because she had some bad experience.

Alice Bailey is more permissive, and indicated that the energy of the three lower chakras could be “promoted” or transmuted to the higher chakras.

“To perfect control along any particular line through a temporary abstention is not to be denied, but that . . . will be succeeded by stages when - the control having been gained - the man demonstrates perfectly through the medium of the physical body, the attributes of divinity, and every center will be normally and wisely used, and thus race purposes furthered.”

20 Correspondences, links, symmetries

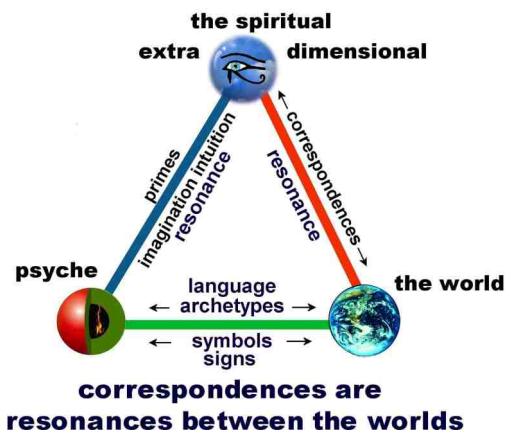
In the context of this book the word correspondence will usually refer to the symbolic and esoteric kind. The word correspondence is a bit out of fashion, in our html and cyberspace era we use words like links, connections, resonances. Links on a webpage (we owe this to Ted Nelson's hypertext idea) connect to subjects, files, content, and there is usually a logical and rational relationship. These could be indicated as real correspondences, apart from mathematical and symbolic correspondences.

In the tradition of the study of magic and ritual a symbolic correspondence is an indication for a relationship that (in the view of science) is not rational, not causal, not logical and is mostly hidden from the lay people. It is however considered effective, holy, sacred for the practitioner, priest or shaman, and essential in their dealing with the otherworld.

Correspondences are access points or rather carriers for otherworld information exchange!

The concept of symbolic correspondences has deep roots and is a central notion in magic and rituals, they are the connection between the tangible, the material world and the spiritual. Although the consciousness of the participants is the main platform in practical magic, correspondences are very important tools. A correspondence (identification) can be defined as a symbolic, semantic, or associative relation or link between two or more substances, energies, words, objects, or ideas that affect each other and can be used to manipulate them in the ritual context.

The basic ingredients of a ritual are: prayer, offerings, chanting, recitation, role-playing, specifics hymns, myths, silent praying, oblations, libations, charms, consecration, formalized spells and visualizations, breath, movements, smoking, sex, eating and drinking, posture, manipulation, orientation, colors, forms, symbols, etc. In fact nearly everything can be part of a ritual.



All the elements of a ritual have their function, sometimes very practical, sometimes symbolic, oftentimes both. One can classify them according to the three worlds and the scheme I have drawn; this means their relation to (mind)set, setting, and magical correspondences.

The notion of correspondences is obviously of crucial importance, in the picture they are the link between the tangible world and the extradimensional. In the three worlds model I use, I reserve the notion of magical correspondences for links between the tangible outside material world with the extradimensional spiritual otherworld. They are a-causal, scientifically irrational, but real in the sense that they work, as I argue throughout this book.

The correspondences are thus symbolic connections between “worlds”, the links between sets of symbols, ideas, gestures, sounds and words, celestial bodies, but in fact between whole categories of tangible and intangible items. Size, name, appearance, frequency, time location, ownership, numerical code, there are many such links. Similarities, relationships, connections in form, color, name, numbers, frequency, physical proximity between forces or ideas in the material realm and those in the ideal or nonmaterial and symbolical realms, it’s a wide concept.

The general idea is that what happens to one of them happens to the other, there is a correspondence as to the effect of a manipulation, blessing, dedication or any other ritual operation. The correspondences are based on similarities, sometimes very obvious ones, like the color red for blood, love, Mars, fire, and red gemstones. Other correspondence are more symbolic like the sets of correspondences based on the numerical 1,2,3 etc.

There is hardly a subject in magic and ritual that has such deep roots as the notion of correspondences. Knowing the correspondences, in ancient times a secret kind of knowledge, stood for knowing the relationship between the worlds, between heaven and earth, between the otherworld and the tangible. It is usually used to denote symbolic relations, but as this also refers to relationships between our thoughts and the tangible world.

Personal or universal

In the literature correspondences are often seen as kind of general, a specific correspondence is universal, always valid and the same. Red will always be linked to Mars and action, gold to the Sun, etc. I think this is true for a large part of the correspondences, but mostly because these are common denominators, many individuals recognize or experience them and so they become universal.

A correspondence may feel, for the rational mind, just as a mental construct, an illusion. For those differently connected to the universe it often is a very clear connection, an essential truth that can be felt and experienced.

Many people feel their spine or hair reacting to essential truths and this is how ‘sensitives’ all through the ages have found out about correspondences as the superstructure, the invisible frame of existence.

In the three world model the material world, the right hand center, is not only the external material world, it also involves the body. It is through the body (the senses) and the mind (the primes) that individuals connect to the otherworld and can experience (mostly in a special state of consciousness) the power or value of correspondences. In this sense, depending on the individual set of senses and primes, each individual can have a different impression of what a correspondence means or achieves. This is also why there are specific personal correspondences, often astrology is used, with specific gems, colors, sounds, mantras etc.

I use the word correspondence as indicating the relations between the extradimensional and the tangible material. Symbols, archetypes and signs are in my view more rational links and representations of ideas and memes between the mind and the material world.

The whole concept is more than symbolic, there are other words like reflections, mirrors and symmetries that come into play here. Correspondences are the science of old, they contain knowledge and understanding of how the worlds are related, in fact they contain a whole cosmic worldview that science now sees as irrational, but amazingly is very much in line with quantum physics and the non-locality and deep connection of all and everything. They were and are a model for understanding the world, including the extradimensional.

Modern mathematics also uses the concept of correspondences. One of the most complicated mathematical constructions, the largest sporadic simple group in the representation theory is called the “Monster”. People like Richard Borcherds connected this to superstring theory and it is possible that the Monster is, in some way, part of the structure of the universe.

Resonance is the umbrella

Although the ‘law of similarity’ seems the most logical way to correlate things, in fact there are correspondences using the whole gamut of magical laws. Equating corresponding with resonating is a probably the best way to identify correspondences. A correspondence is always a relationship, connecting realms.

Time and place offer logical resonances, the phases of the moon are easy but knowing the equinoxes is important for agriculture and the prediction of eclipses is already considered magical knowledge. The places where important battles, miracles or revelations happened are worthwhile en reli-

Emanuel Swedenborg

The Swedish scientist Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 - 1772) was also a philosopher, theologian and Christian mystic. He only got interested in the esoteric later in life, after he had some mystical dreams and visions in his fifties. *Arcana Cœlestia* is his main book, it was at first published anonymously in 1749. His book on the afterlife, *Heaven and Hell* is from 1758. He developed a theory about correspondences, derived from Plotinus and applied his insights concerning numerology and letter symbolism to the interpretation of Bible.

His notion of correspondences is very much related to his theological theories. He first wrote about it in 1744, in the first volume of his *Regnum Animale*. According to Swedenborg,:

“Correspondence” is a basic relationship found between two levels of existence. Swedenborg claimed that the Word (Bible) was written by God entirely according to correspondences so that within its natural laws and histories every detail describes the spiritual realities relating to God and man, these being the true subject of the Word.

The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world — not just the natural world in general, but actually in details. So anything in the natural world that occurs from the spiritual world is called a correspondent. It is vital to understand that the natural world emerges and endures from the spiritual world, just like an effect from the cause that produces it.

The heavenly arcana contained in the Holy Scripture or Word of the Lord unfolded, beginning with the book of Genesis together with wonderful things seen in the World of Spirits and in the heaven of angels

The whole and every part, even to the most minute of the natural world, corresponds to spiritual things, and is significative of them

The science of correspondences was the chief science among the ancients, especially among the people of the East, and in Egypt more than in other countries, also among the Gentiles, as in Greece and other places

Between the things which are in the internal and those which are in the external man there is a correspondence, consequently they appear in each under a different form, so that they can only be discerned by the science of correspondences.

(Ref. Swedenborg Foundation)



gions like The Catholic Church and Islam are noted for constructing places of worship on the location of earlier Pagan sites or Hindu temples. The dispute around the Ayodhya Babri mosq in India, once a Hindu shrine, still lingers on.

Synchronicity, the coincidental conjecture of events C.G. Jung championed, is time resonance and thus a correspondence phenomenon, he saw synchronicity as the theory of correspondences in practice. The ancient Greek conception of 'the sympathy of all things' is not far removed from later theory of correspondences, just like the alchemical *unus mundus* (one world) and the Hermetic relationship between microcosm and macrocosm points at a-causal connections between events.

The symbolist theory of correspondences between the material and the spiritual worlds can be found already in Plato's philosophy of Ideas, but Paleolithic statuettes indicate it's much older.

It has also been called the theory of signatures or the theory of universal analogy. The Hermetic phrase 'as above, below' indicates that the seen and the unseen world are mirrors, reflecting each other and linked by correspondences.

The Egyptian "Emerald Tablet" of Hermes Trismegistos is the oldest representation of a correspondence codex and has influenced Florentian philosophers like Marsilio Ficino, many Renaissance alchemists, and had a significant influence on Isaac Newton who acknowledged it as a tool to "do the miracles of one only thing".

Daoism Five Element (wuxing) cosmology is, according to Lee Irwin, very similar to the correspondence approach. Joseph Needham (History of Scientific Thought, 1956) noted in Chinese thinking a propensity to organize natural, political/social, and cosmological information in highly ordered systems of correspondences he termed "correlative thinking".

Hyper-Links

Metaphysical, mathematical and numerological links with some power over reality have been found or constructed, often beyond the comprehension of those working with them and sometimes the correspondences just survive in certain rituals without an apparent rationale. Not only the "Monster", but numerology, I-Ching, magical quadrants and the tarot possess properties unexplainable in rational terms. Such divinatory systems are considered very powerful tools in finding and analyzing correspondences, they offer a bypass to the hidden structure of the cosmos.

Shamans, sorcerers, soothsayers, priests and such are usually aware about the general concept of correspondences, they honor their tradition and therefore often stick to it rigorously, as they are not sure about the exact effects.

Depending on one's belief system one can ascribe certain magical powers to objects like wands, knives and cups, but the general theory of magic indicates, that such powers would be related to the correspondences inherent in the materials, design, production and ultimately the use of such tools.

Notably the manipulation of the outside world from within the ritual world via the correspondences hinges on the use of these links and thus correspondences are associated with the result of a ritual or treatment; they are the magical cause/effect mechanisms.

Correspondences - as the basic principle of magic and ritual - date back to the earliest human activities. Wherever our ancestors were involved in ritual or spiritual activities we find totems, holy objects, simulacrum and fac-similes. Little statuettes representing animals, deities, age old rock drawings using symbols we can recognize today as representing the sun, water, stars and planets, correspondences are of all times and all cultures.

Even the oldest myths, stories and scriptures like the Vedas and the Avesta are full of correspondences, using sometimes very obvious ones like the color red for fire, sometimes we have lost the meaning or underlying significance of the correspondences hinted at.

The correspondences are numerous and classification is cumbersome, many so called grimoires or sorcery books deal exclusively with correspondences, but often hiding direct references, the knowledge was secret and had to be coded or hidden in obscure references.

However, over time the magical literature has yielded enough structures and matrices classifying the relationships between numbers, stones, metals, colors, the planets, animals and such. There are extensive lists tying specific numbers or zodiac signs to certain minerals and crystals, flowers, herbs, trees and animals.

In medicine in the doctrine of signatures, similarity as the outside manifestation of hidden relationships and function we know from Paracelsus, the therapeutical powers of plants were suggested. by the similarity of configuration, the outside or form of the affected human part.

The similarity idea that form and function are related is also fundamental to homeopathy. Working with 'witnesses' in homeopathic Radionics is another example of this principle.

There are many lists of correspondences and they are often used in rituals. The spirits/Gods related to the quarters are linked to certain stones, but also names, incantations, herbs, animals, colors, body parts, numbers, symbols, etc. are correspondences in all kinds of combinations. These symbolic and energetic links (and there are many at different levels) establish a certain order in the seen and unseen universe; they are the framework of the magi-

cal worldlier. Many are highly symbolic, but the true meaning often remains hidden to the uninitiated. Some links are more effective or more ‘resonating’ than others, but there are always the higher resonances that also influence the outcome of magical acts like rituals.

Usually correspondences are given as related to the numerals and are arranged in layers. There are the binaries or dualities, like in feminine/masculine, earth/heaven, yin/yang, moon/sun; not only are they powerful in themselves, but often there is a spirit or deity pair representing these dualities, like Cerridwen/Cernunnos or Isis/Osiris. Other numerals have their own correspondences. Three, for example, corresponds to the Hindu Gods Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer); the Christian Trinity; and the alchemical Salt, Sulfur, Mercury.

Such links or correspondences are ‘hidden,’ not usually detected through normal cognition, but found or realized by way of special knowledge, methods and training. Here a central phrase is “ya evam veda” from the Vedic Brahmanas, meaning that the magical power resides by ‘the one who knows thus,’ referring to the higher knowledge and way of knowing these hidden links. Whether knowledge of the correspondences gives the magical power or those with the power will gain the understanding and knowledge of the correspondences is an interesting issue. Obviously they go hand in hand, but will, for instance, initiation bring increased understanding, or is learning and study the way to achieve the higher wisdom?

Correspondences are the links that make things happen across the worlds and dimensions; they identify what resonates. The concept of resonance is very useful here, as it has a physical meaning (in wave theory and also in quantum and particle physics), but also applies to non-tangible connections.

Correspondences and symbolic or real links are everywhere. A definition according to Pierre Riffard (in *Dictionnaire de l’ésotérisme* 1983) reads:

The doctrine of analogy and correspondence, present in all esoteric schools of thinking, upholds that the Whole is One and that its different levels (realms, worlds) are equivalent systems, whose parts are in strict correspondence. So much so that a part in a realm symbolically reflects and interacts with the corresponding part in another realm.

The notion of correspondences can be found in many disciplines and in art. Charles Baudelaire (*Correspondances*, 1857) pointed at synesthesia as an artistic way to experience and represent (correspondence) truth. The term

synaesthesia is normally used to indicate a condition of fusion of the senses in which the stimulation of one sensory modality gives rise to an experience in another modality; sounds become visions. In this way correspondences between certain colors, sounds, and tastes can be experienced and affirmed.

Akel Ismail Kahera (Gardens of the Righteous: sacred space in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Cross Currents, September 2002) wrote:

Finally, we may also speak of sacred geometry as having an inner reality transcendent of outer form, which has remained throughout history the basis for sacred structures. A theory of correspondences underlies sacred geometry, proportions, harmonic relationships, beauty and order, forms of crystal, and natural objects. All are part of a universal continuum and a structure of created existence.

Correlations, reflection, similarity of patterns, metaphor and analogy play a role in correspondences, but also isomorphism, homology (analogy between human beliefs, practices or artifacts). We need to connect the worlds, in non rational terms, we need a window on the structure of the cosmos. Kathleen Forsythe (Cathedrals of the Mind, 1986) argued that:

"Analogy and its poetic expression, metaphor, may be the "meta-forms" necessary to understanding those aspects of our mind that make connections, often in non-verbal and implicit fashion, that allow us to understand the world in a whole way."

This holistic approach we see in neo-Paganism and Wicca where the "magical art of correspondences" is believed to be the basis of magic itself.

Esoteric insights

The knowledge of correspondences is considered esoteric, it is veiled, needs deciphering and is usually exclusive to a certain class of people. Antoine Faivre (Body, Mind & Spirit, 1994) sees correspondence as one of four fundamental elements, necessary for consideration by scholars as esoteric.

He distinguished between correspondences in nature, like between the seven metals and the seven planets and correspondences between nature (the cosmos) or even history, and revealed texts. This is limited in the sense, that things like movements, mudras, mantras, yantras, sounds, art works, clothing, bodily remains and much more have correspondence qualities, but of course are not always esoteric. Relics of saints for instance have been displayed openly and singing hymns is often a public event.

Words and texts are important, much practical magic uses specific incantations, spells etc. often in long forgotten languages and with magical words.

The linguistic approach centers on the structure and meaning of texts, the relationships between words and interpreting them, even assigning numbers to letters like in the Kabbalah. People like Emanuel Swedenborg have used such correspondences to find new meaning in old scriptures.

Modern computer analysis of texts has yielded interesting correspondences. In Michael Drosnin's book "The Bible Code" he talks about secret messages encoded within the Hebrew text of the Torah.

Semiotics

Words, language, mantras, songs are all part of the ritual matrix, but their meaning is both linguistic and non-linguistic. Sometimes the meaning is very individual, sometimes it addresses the group, sometimes requiring a response, action, amen, sometimes not.

The study of semiotics is concerned with non-linguistic signs and signing, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication.

The tree branches of semiotic are: Semantics, the relation between signs and the things to which they refer; their meaning, Syntactics, the relations among signs in formal structures and Pragmatics, the relation between signs and sign-using agents.

Correspondences are relational, and here the concept of indexicality is important. It means a certain behavior or utterance can be traced to whom, where, when, it can be identified beyond interpretation and this far broader than language can do; a pointing finger works indexically for interpretation.

Pragmatism starts with the idea that belief is that on which one is prepared to act. The pragmatic maxim of the "father of pragmatism", the American semiotist, philosopher and mathematician Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) reads:

"Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings you conceive the objects of your conception to have. Then, your conception of those effects is the whole of your conception of the object."

Peirce had an inquisitive mind and his motto: "Do not block the way of inquiry" is something modern science should take at heart. He was a pragmatist in the sense that he denied introspection, knowledge comes from known external facts and also denied the power of intuition (cognition without logical determination by previous cognition). All mental action has the form of inference and there is no power of thinking without signs.

He defined semiosis as:

“action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs”.

Inquiry has three semiotics levels: conditions for meaningfulness (grammar), conditions for true representation (validity) and conditions for determining interpretations (inquiry of interactions). He stated that inquiry should start with an active, abductive genesis of theory, with no prior assurance of truth, followed by deductive application of the contingent theory so as to clarify its practical implications and then inductive testing and evaluation of the provisional theory's utility for the anticipation of future experience, in both senses: prediction and control.

This is different from the normal approach in science, where data acquisition comes first and theory later. However, recent insights into Bayes' Theorem and Bayesian quantum probability seem to support Peirce and his approach as a fruitful way to deal with problems.

Pierce was ahead of his times in many ways. His objective idealism, that “matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws” resonates with ideas like Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields. He saw three evolution modes, absolute chance (sporting-tychasm), mechanical necessity (anancasm), and creative love (agapasm) and accepted the Lamarckian idea of genetic adaptation and the teleological idea of evolution tending toward an end or goal, something that now more and more is discussed (also in the context of epigenetics) next to Darwin's survival of the fittests and random mutation.

Relationship is what defines everything

Whether we see the idea of correspondences as an outdated concept or honor them as effective ways to access the otherworld, it is clear that thinking about relationships (in our mind, in the world, in data mining, in language, signs or in making sense of the cosmos) cannot be ignored, as we and everything manifested cannot be without separation and relation.

“Magic is resonance” is, in my view, the basic law of all magic (and of all reality, one might say) and the links or correspondences are resonating through all dimensions, time, and space, including the world of ideas and the world of spirit. There exist inner resonances (between mind and extradimensional) and resonances between the tangible material world including our body and the extra-dimensional otherworld.

21 Sacraments and mysteries

The high points in ritual are the moments where a special connection is made or happens with the otherworld, when the sacred is present in a special form. In our Western need to categorize and abstract what for most is just an essential and normal part of life, we call these forms or events sacraments and in some traditions like the Catholic Church and Hinduism they have been canonized, given special status.

Nodes of cultural intelligence

Within my view of rituals as distributed cultural intelligence (I use cultural intelligence as a social, not personal capability here) sacraments are important nodes. The transfer of custom, law and social hierarchy by way of rituals comes natural, sustainable and with an unconscious imprint. Rituals, as they involve physical (embodied cognitive) acts and don't even require that the congregation or religious community thinks alike, are more important as a psychological and social phenomenon than the cognitive aspects of religion.

"Members of a congregation may assume that they hold common religious beliefs, but it is religious ritual that creates and sustains continued fellowship,"

says Daniel B. Lee, based on his study of Mennonite rituals.

I agree, rituals address a deeper, preconscious level and provide social cohesion beyond the cognitive. A sacrament is then like a focal point, an occasion where the culture (religion) manifests very strongly. It's a relatively independently operating, embedded piece of the cultural matrix. A priest can hear Confession basically any time, any place, and yet it's part of the whole structure of the Church, a clear contact point, a node of the then religious intelligence network. Rituals are, in many social structures, the most powerful bonding and cohesion mechanism.

Sacraments have, as all rituals, multiple goals, they aim at the individual mind (experience, growth, awareness), the social context (initiation, change of status, rites of passage, communion) and the magical.

The magical has always been the tricky part, protestant Christianity did it's best to eradicate it, from their liturgy, from their interpretation of the Bible, from their belief system. This denial of the magical, exchanging the mythical and the direct contact with the otherworld for concentration on the logos, the essence, the Book is not unique to Luther, Calvinism and our Western scientific stance, it is obvious in Sunni Islam, original Buddhism and

Catharism, usually as a reaction or reformation following excessive magical practices and abuse by the priesthood.

As a result, there are no formal sacraments in Islam except some borrowing from Judaism (circumcision) and ritual is limited to prayer, Ramadan (fasting month) and Hadj (Mecca pilgrimage), very practical and hardly magical. Buddhism doesn't have 'official' sacraments, but obviously the human need to celebrate is hard to eradicate. Even distinct anti-magical religions have their formal celebrations.

The two great Muslim festivals are both at the end of a pillar-event. The 'Eid-UI-Adha' or Festival of Sacrifice, commemorating Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac (or Ismael) and thus obeying the Lord is at the end of the Hadj. The 'Idul-Fitr' Festival of Breaking the Fast is at the end of Ramadan.

So the notion of sacraments is not universal, but special events, celebrations, moments to turn to the extra-dimensional because of birth, death, marriage, equinoxes, and such are happening in all cultures. For me, sacraments are those moments and experiences where something touches me, where I am catapulted into a state of bliss, some experience that stays with me, that I can recall and will catapult me back in that special state.

Sacral, holy and transforming

The personal experience of a sacrament is important, but sacraments play an also a major role in bringing the faithful together, to foster community. This social aspect of sacraments is widely recognized, they are a binding force in religion. St. Augustine (Contra Faust xix):

"It is impossible to keep men together in one religious denomination, whether true or false, except they be united by means of visible signs or sacraments."

Sacraments are part of many religious rituals, well known in the Christian faith, but present in many other traditions, in a somewhat broader perspective. The word sacrament has different meanings, at the one hand it is a gift, a grace bestowed, used to signify a sacred thing which lies concealed (secret), but on the other hand also the obligation which arises from an oath, pledging to the performance of some service. In profane terms the oath by which soldiers promise military service and allegiance to the State has been called a military sacrament.

A general description of a sacrament could be to see it as a special bridge between the seen and unseen, a moment of exchange between the worlds.

The elements of special exchange modes are sometimes called sacraments in a more narrow sense, the psychedelic brews ingested in some Native

American rituals (peyote) and the ayahuasca of the Santo Daime Church are indicated as the sacrament. These substances are often referred to as teacher plants, as at least in the Western incarnation of the ayahuasca cult the emphasis is on the individual and the magical is only recognized in the form of healing, the sorcery part ignored.

There is a broad tendency to ignore the magical, and to concentrate on what effects there are for the individual or the group. Sacraments are thus, in theological perspective, not acts of sorcery or magical transference, but among the means of attaining righteousness and salvation. St. Augustine gave a definition.

“A Sacrament, is a sign of a sacred thing; or, as it has been expressed in other words of the same import: A Sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted for our justification.”

Note how careful this leaves out the seeking of a magical effect, even the word sacrifice is not there, but then Augustine came from Manichean background, where probably sorcery and magic was much more part of the practice and had to distance himself from that heathen practice. Grace is one of those concepts and words that kind of hide the magical exchange, for it clearly indicates an act or influence from the otherworld that has an effect in either the mind or the visible reality, be it a healing, a miracle or enlightenment.

Thomas Aquinas, a Church father and Scholastic (Schoolman) 850 years later did see the sacrifice part and said:

“The visible sacrifice is the sacrament. This is the sacred sign of the invisible sacrifice. A thing is called a sacrament, either by having a certain hidden sanctity, and in this sense a sacrament is a sacred secret; or from having some relationship to this sanctity. A sacrament is a sign. Moreover, it is a sacred sign.”

A sacrament is usually an act (a promise, a dedication, a blessing or anointing), accompanied by words to express the dedication and intent and it involves a moment of grace, as the power of the sacrament, which is considered holy, sanctified (and thus magical) is bestowed upon the receiver. In receiving the sacrament one combines, as in most rituals, some physical act with a thought, an intention, in fact bridging the inner world of thought with the outer world of manifestation.

Often the elements (fire, water, air, earth) are part of the ritual, in symbolic or actual form. The intrinsic power of a sacrament to convey grace and transform is seen as analogous to the power of fire to burn, so fire figures in many sacramental rites.

The secret side of sacraments; the mysteries

Mystery and sacrament are both concepts encountered in the bible, indicating a holy thing that lies concealed and hidden. Sacraments are mystical and sacred signs or symbols, which at once communicate grace, declare it, and, as it were, place it before the eyes. The hidden part of a sacrament, already pointed at by Tomas Aquinas, is important, in a way a sacrament is hidden from sight, a secret act and this element of secrecy we can see in many cultures. In the Holy of Holy of the Jewish temple no one was allowed except the High Priest at a special occasion.



Secrecy makes sense, as then initiation is not an empty change of status but a real adventure, an unexpected shock treatment intended to induce a ritual state (with the accompanying lack of identity and loss of status Victor Turner called liminality), induce some transformation and anchor the whole experience in the initiated.

This practice of keeping things secret obviously is an effective strategy, we encounter it in so many forms, from the Freemasons to the Fraternity hazing at universities, there are levels of initiation and access to the sacred knowledge and texts, secret signs to recognize a fellow initiate, secrecy and holiness go hand in hand. It is explained as a necessary part of gradual understanding of difficult and esoteric concepts, but also serves as an us-them mechanism, playing into the need for a superiority environment for those of us with some inferiority complex, and who is beyond that. Secrecy and power structures go hand in hand, he who knows more has more power (ya evam veda is the Vedic phrase) but also those who are initiated are supposed to receive the accompanying insights from their masters or the deities.

The need for secrecy, having hidden understanding, secret scriptures, levels of initiation is often attacked, just because they easily lead to abuse in many forms, but should be recognized as an universal right.

The Greek made use of the word mystery, basically a similar concept as sacrament, and events like the Eleusinian mysteries were seen as secret, once in a lifetime sacraments and initiations. The Greek word mysterion, comes from myein “to close, shut”. The mystes, the initiated or those preparing to be initiated were sworn not to disclose the secrets of the rites and this seemingly worked pretty well, we still don’t know exactly what happened. Some kind of theatrical mythical plays, the use of some mind-alter-

ing substance, the exact details remained secret. The mysteries were distinguished from public rites that were open to all.

Taboo

A taboo is a strict prohibition of an act based on the belief that such behavior is either too sacred or too accursed for ordinary individuals to undertake, under threat of supernatural punishment or exclusion from society. As such prohibitions are present in virtually all societies and often related to the totemic focus this was seen in the nineteenth century as an essential part of religious practice. Sigmund Freud, in line with his now antiquated Oedipus theory saw incest and patricide as universal taboos and the basis of civilization, but it turned out that there are no universal taboos. Taboos often have a very practical root, marriage restrictions serve to prevent incest and breeding, food taboos often make sense given the local conditions, and as they are related to the sacred and secret, they prevent unauthorized access to places, knowledge and rituals. Many taboos are basically moral rules, not killing group members, cannibalism. In modern times, many taboos were challenged and especially breaking taboos has been fashionable in literature and art, but new taboos emerge under the disguise of politically correctness. As many taboos might have a magical correspondence beyond the practical or rational I tend not to discard them too easily, there might be some truth to them.

Proof of initiation

Often a sacrament has a physical enduring proof, like the sacred thread for Hindus, but often tattoos or other marks like circumcision signify the link with the sacrament and the faith. They are proof and a reminder of the holy covenant. The physical tests of endurance or pain involved in many rituals are amazing, in many cultures there are vision quests, ascetic practices, self mutilation and other customs that nearly seem inhuman and yet stood the test of time. In societies, where there is a totem identification with an animal or plant, the markings are a way to identify their members and their status. Circumcision, I will come to that later, is an obvious way to mark one's alliance to a tribe, a people or faith.

A less visible, but important effect of sacraments, especially of the rites of passage is the character, the seal and the mark which they impress on the soul, to use the words of the Church. This is a distinctive impression stamped on the psyche which perpetually inheres and cannot be blotted out. Some would call that effective brain-



washing, but it shows that the Church was well aware of the psychological principles involved, long before we had psychologists. Confession for instance was a rather effective kind of administering psychotherapeutic help to ordinary people, in a ritualized form.

All the Catholic sacraments transcend time: they remind one of something past, in the life of Christ; they indicate and point out something present; they foretell something future like promising eternal life and heavenly bliss, which are the goal of sanctification.

There are seven sacrament, in the Catholic church: baptism, confirmation, (holy) communion/eucharist, confession, marriage, holy orders (priesthood), last rites (anointing of the sick). Receiving a sacrament in the Catholic Church is an opportunity to receive the gift of God's grace. Confirmation, baptism and holy orders are the Catholic sacraments of initiation, like rites of passage. The coming of age of young adolescents is not honored in the Church, but shows up in most cultures, for both men and women there are rituals marking the change of status from child to man, woman, and full member of the tribe..

Most Protestant churches recognize only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper. Sometimes sacraments are indicated as ordinances. Luther and the reformation, in the quest against anything magical or ritual, limited the number of sacraments and considered things like marriage a worldly affair.

Baptism

Baptism is the sacrament that brings one into the fold, becoming a member of the Church. It is the most common sacrament and it has a deep meaning as one surrenders to a new life. In baptizing small children there are adults who pledge and perform the intentional part, the baby is the one who receives the grace associated with the baptism. The sacrament does not come from the water but from the act of pouring the water, in the form of a washing. The Sacrament of Baptism by water reflects the believer's sincere repentance, his turning away from sin and giving his life to God. It is the public profession of faith that one now belongs to Jesus. The believer receives his new heart and spirit in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This happens at the moment when the priest baptizes the new convert by saying the baptismal words and sprinkling the water. At this moment, a supernatural event takes place within the person, the old heart and human spirit being replaced by the new creation. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit has descended on the Christian to dwell within his physical body, coexisting with the new heart and spirit. Finally, through the Baptism by Fire, the new Christian accepts the purification of the Holy Spirit.

This process of being purified provides the new creation with the necessary additional strength to gain control of the physical body. There are some questions as what the fire baptism of John the Baptist involved, beyond what the Church tells us. John preached that the Baptism of Jesus would be a baptism of water, the Holy Spirit and fire. [Matth. 3:11].

The Catholic Church believes that a real change occurs at baptism - it is more than just symbolism - it is at baptism that Catholics believe that the stain of original sin is actually removed from the individual. Other Christian denominations attach less sacramental value to baptism.

Confirmation is a Catholic sacrament of initiation with fire as its symbol. It establishes young adults as full-fledged members of the faith, renewing what was promised at baptism by parents and godparents. During the Confirmation ritual, the focus is on the Holy Spirit, who confirmed the apostles on Pentecost, indicated by a flame or fire over their heads, and gave them insights, wisdom and the courage to practice their faith.

In Buddhism, there are no formal sacraments but there are rites like the Kalachakra, that are initiations to a higher level of spiritual awareness and are embedded in complex rituals, sometimes with larger groups of participants. Buddhism started out as a non magical and non religious movement and is not formally a religion, but has assimilated many things from previous local religions like the Tibetan Bon.

In Buddhism, certain things are considered secular and thus not sacramental, like a marriage. In many respects, the Buddhist initiations and sacramental events are similar or related to the Hindu Samskaras, it depends on which type of Buddhism and the location.

Vajrayana, the Diamond Vehicle way, also known as Tantrism, is an esoteric tradition and has a strong emphasis on sacramental action with initiation ceremonies involving a mandala, a mystic circle or symbolic map of the spiritual universe. They also use mudras, ritual gestures, and sound combination called mantras, sacred syllables, which are chanted (also silently) and used as a focus for meditation.

The giving of a mantra, also in Hinduism, can also be seen as a sacrament, especially if it is given in a special ritual and specifically adapted for the individual receiver. A mantra is a sound, syllable, word or sentence that creates spiritual transformation. Man+ Tra= Mind (Manaha)+ Root(Tra) i.e. Mantra relates to mind and soul. The ritual stages in conferring and energizing a mantra show how it is placed effectively into the memory. It is to be uttered from mouth to ear only. Then it is repeatedly chanted to anchor it, in the heart and mind, but in the end the so obtained sacrosanct mantra re-

mains inside, thus secret. Some of these stages are both psychological, others clearly magical using symbolical correspondences.

Hindu Sacraments

In all cultures life-stage rituals (sacraments) often have an element of initiation or rite of passage, like the sixteen main Sacraments (Samskaras) in Hinduism. The Samskaras accompany a person all the way through life and range from conception to funeral ceremonies. They mark the crossover points of one's stages in life, including the time in the mother's womb. In this rather long sequence of ritual acts the notion of how the soul develops shines through.

These Samskaras comprise usually some kind of sacrifice accompanied with cleansing, feasts, presents, decoration and music and bestow a higher level of sanctity, but also cultural, material and social gain for the person involved.

They have a dual objective, to invoke the goodwill of the Gods and to keep away evil spirits or powers. Samskaras include the funeral ceremonies and thereafter, in order to obtain smooth passage of the soul to another world. As rites of passage, the Samskaras mark important transitions and as such are moulders of character, intended to help in secular and spiritual matters.

Max Muller, one of the first to bring Vedic understanding to the West, said about these ceremonies that they show "the deep-rooted tendency in the heart of man to bring the chief events of human life into contact with a higher power, and to give to our joys and sufferings a deeper significance and a religious sanctification."

There are many other Hindu rituals, yajna or yagya (there are 400 different ones) are partly obligatory like the Agnihotra ritual and the Aupasana to be performed twice daily, at dawn and at dusk. The Aupasana Agni, lit at the time of the yajna conducted at the grooms wedding, is divided into two in a ritual called Agnyadhana. One part is called the Grhyagni and the other the Srautagni. These two fires have to be preserved throughout an individual's life. The son's fire is lit from the father's fire at the time of his wedding. Fire is nearly always part of a Hindu ritual (see appendix), Agni is the great connection with the deities.

Sacraments as God-given

Usually sacraments are supposedly God-given, by some revelation a specific act or incidence was seen as having special meaning. Moses is of course the great example of how God interacted with humans and gave

them laws, but the Qur'an (Koran) is also a book of divine rules and laws revealed to the prophet Mohammed.

Religion, not as the theological concept, but as the performative experience consists of rituals, myths and routines that convey moral concepts, often in a symbolical form and supported by also performative art, be it iconic or aniconic. The laws and rules might be written down, but are conveyed in many forms, usually by oral means. The moral code and the way to make this known is supposed to come from the otherworld, divinely inspired and revealed somewhere to someone. Whether this is true or just what emerged from the mist of a veiled past doesn't matter now. Maybe some rules or customs that were once perceived through intuition (using the primes I mention in the chapter about senses) as truths lost their original meaning but came to be so much part of a venerable tradition that they became divine rules or even sacraments.

The sacred was not so much different from the profane, as we now experience and even made into a cornerstone of modern politics, I believe one didn't perceive such a difference, church and state were the same, the king was the high priest, the shaman would become war chief in dire times. The sacraments were logical parts of life, spaced along one's life span and the seasons. And as there are very holy things, there are also unholy things, acts and taboos.

The sacred naturally has an opposite, the unsacred, the taboo. In many cultures the taboo is a relative thing. In some instances going against the taboo is part of the sacrament, limited to certain ranks or castes, certain situations, a secret held by the initiated.

In fact the most taboo acts do show up in the inner circle, where sinning suddenly is given the odium of divinely inspired superior morality or a special way to attain a higher state. The original Vajrayana or Tantric practices like the nighttime sacramental Ganacakra ritual are often mentioned. There sex was one of the antinomian elements, and together with possession, dancing and singing, and magical procedures like drinking from human skulls was used as a means to enter a non-ordinary state of consciousness.

Taboos were often functional. Clean and unclean, halal and kosher do make sense, especially in the times when hygienic situations concerning certain animals were less than optimal. Certainly animals or fish that were scavengers (eating dead remnants of maybe ill specimens) were considered less desirable. However the meaning of many sacramental acts or substances and taboos related to them may have been lost. Sometimes they are mentioned in scriptures and we can only guess about their original purpose or meaning, like the sacred soma brew in Vedic ritual, circumcision, the use of incense or lustral (holy) water.

Funeral rites

The Catholic sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is not a funeral rite, but usually is administered toward the very end of one's life. To inter a body is not a sacrament, the soul is already supposed to have left, but usually there is an appropriate ritual. In other cultures the crossing to the afterlife is seen as a complex endeavor, a trip one needs to prepare for and where much ritual is needed to help the deceased on his or her way to the final destination. The Tibetan Book of the Dead is well known in this respect, it assumes that the soul can be reached by the prayers and advice of the mourners.

Although anthropologists see all kind of burial activity as a sign of religious awareness, assuming this means some notion of an afterlife, I doubt this is true. For instance sky burial (leaving the body for the vultures) leaves no traced but is done by rather religious people like in Tibet and what about cremation, climate and hygienic considerations demand different rites. On the other hand, elephants have some kind of burial ritual and are known to mourn their dead (and even the humans that were close to them), so burial and ritual can be associated, but seeing it as a proof of religion might be too much, I think only clear signs like grave goods or inscriptions would point there.

Mourning the dead is very common, although there are cultures where the old or severely handicapped are send away to die or actually killed. The rituals associated with death are many, often the rank of the deceased plays a role. I have witnessed funeral rites in Bali that involved a lot of people, a lot of complicated constructions, piles, wooden bulls, an enormous procession, food for the guests and were so expensive that corpses were kept for years to be cremated together. The funeral rites for a Hindu involve the burning of the body, again Agni plays a major role in the procedure, this is also seen as the last sacrament for this person. Cremation is considered obligatory for all except sanyassins, Hijra (South Asia), and children under five. Cremation is typically performed by wrapping the corpse in cloth and burning it on a pyre.

Oblations are offered in the blazing fire with some mantras. Cremation is done with one of the fires preserved during a person's lifetime. The fires associated with deceased individuals are extinguished. *Úrâddha* is the ritual of treating people to a meal in return for prayers to 'God' to give peace to the soul of the deceased.

Many sacraments and religious roles are denied to women. This and also things like circumcision will be dealt with in the chapter about gender and sex.

22 Sacrifice : gift or trade

Ritual gives structure and meaning to life and has value, so why not pay

Let me again begin with a story about gifting, it illustrates also how history often is a subjective construction, written by the winners.

The American Thanksgiving Day celebration with its traditional food is a moment when families come together before the winter season to bless the harvest and thank God for the preceding year. Such a fall harvest event is quite common in many religious and cultural traditions. In Canada and the USA this tradition of eating together, with turkey and corn bread, is often related to the story that the early immigrants were welcomed by the natives with free food that they left for the Pilgrim Fathers.

This is historically incorrect. There was a Reformation tradition of Thanksgiving services but the actual celebration refers to an event in the year 1637. Massachusetts Colony Governor John Winthrop proclaimed such a “Thanksgiving” to celebrate the safe return from Mystic, Connecticut, of a band of heavily armed colonial volunteers that massacred 700 Pequot Indians. The notion of communal feasting between Indians and immigrants is therefore a complete invention, a cleverly created slice of cultural propaganda, in a long line of inspired nationalistic and commercialized myths like Coca-Cola’s Father Christmas.

The story of natives, leaving food for the arriving colonists is a strange mixture of half understood indigenous trading practices and naivete, idealizing the Noble Savage. How nice, these natives welcoming the strangers by leaving out food and gifts for them. What a sign of true nobility and solidarity, a true signal of welcome and a reason to thank God! This is to misunderstand that in indigenous cultures trading is often done in an anonymous and neutral setting, because the trading partners don’t want to face each other directly.

Trading in such a situation is done by placing the goods of one party in a dedicated place (the marketplace) and



then leaving them there for the other party to bring their end of the bargain, placing them beside the goods of the other party in a proportion that they find agreeable. Then the other party can come and adjust their part, usually subtracting some goods or accepting the deal and take the goods.

This process does not involve direct contact, is thus relatively safe and brings a fair deal if both parties stick to the procedure. However, the whole routine can be misinterpreted if a party arrives that has no idea this is a trading and exchange and just see the goods as a gift. Now this is how, maybe based on some true experiences and memories, the Thanksgiving Day myth took shape.

Costly display

In societies there is a somewhat paradoxical relationship between the religion and the way people express their religious adherence in what is sometimes called “costly display” (Joseph Henrich).

Sacrifices in whatever form are usually displays in social terms, apart from being private acts, they have a set and setting dimension.

Religious rituals such as human sacrifice, male circumcision, fasting, abstinence or other deprivations, and devoting time to pilgrimage or praying are costly and why do them, as it takes energy, time etc. away from more rational tasks. The heavier (costly) the commitment or sacrifice, the more it unites the people, the more it has a signaling function. Especially when it separates from competing groups or religions it becomes an identifier, a way to be different and thus more united in the in-group.

The Sabbath, honoring the seventh day by not working, made the Jewish people different and they made the Sabbath laws very severe, disobedience punishable even by death.

Spending more time, goods, money or energy on displays like monuments, elaborate rituals, vision quests and bodily sacrifice like fasting fosters commitment, makes the adherents less vulnerable to doubts, it's prosocial, helps community and often gives a competitive and evolutionary advantage.

Islam has spread not only because it was a religion with many sensible and practical rules, but because it offered social cohesiveness, a common identity. Doing things together, like synchronous praying stimulates prosocial behavior and deeper commitments to group beneficial ideologies and cooperation.

The more costly a sacrifice or social display is, the more it is an identifier, a signal to oneself, each other and the world that one is committed and thus belongs to a greater unity, in Islam the Ummah. The specific ritual sacrifices within a group also help to differentiate it from other groups, and

hence to cultural differences. The more strict and fundamental, the heavier the sacrifices and internal cohesion, but usually this means also less tolerant and aggressive toward others. Heavy actual or afterlife punishments are then often necessary to keep potential dissenters or free riders within the fold.

Here again the doing, the bodily actions involved in ritual are more primal, evolutionary more fundamental to our learning and especially cultural learning, than cognitive progress. As J. Henrich stipulates: “actions speak louder than words?” and play a more important role in natural selection and evolution than verbal expressions. He argues that:

“seemingly costly displays influence the cognitive processes associated with cultural learning as the learners can both avoid being manipulated by their models (those they are inclined to learn from) and more accurately assess their belief commitment by attending to displays or actions by the model that would seem costly to the model if he held beliefs different from those he expresses verbally.”

The basic idea about fascism, in my view and following somewhat Wilhelm Reich’s ideas, but without his focus on sexual repression, is that fascism:

allows a superior environment to cater for inferiority complexes.

Displaying superiority, by showing off more ‘costly’ displays like larger buildings, more intricate or painful rituals, longer fasting, deeper bowing or like in animals having more elaborate signals is thus a way to cover or compensate for individual inferiority.

This is of course cleverly exploited in many cultures and commercial endeavors, cognitive dissonance used to manipulate the congregation, nation or customers. Buying an expensive car (but here sexual signaling does play a role) or trips to expensive holiday locations, but also undergoing severe ritual challenges in this sense serve individual as well as communal purposes, the set and setting, but what about the magical?

Sacrifice: bribing to the gods

It is not in essence very respectful to the deities to make deals, and Luther for one was very aware of this in those days of indulgences and buying salvation in the early 16th century. However, we all have been in situations so dire, that we would be willing to promise anything to get out of it. Even those who normally will not turn to any supernatural being, will at times get on their knees and pray and put some money on the collection plate. Maybe we just pray to escape for a moment from harsh realities, maybe we try to negotiate a deal with the unseen, making promises. We know, in times of

misery and war more people turn to religious traditions in the hope of support, grace, a way out.

One of the more common practices in rituals of either a magical or religious nature involves sacrifice. It is usually to a supernatural being, God or demon, asking for help or intervention on behalf of the sacrificer, the person who ordered or performed the sacrifice, for the benefit of themselves or their family, tribe or nation.



Sacrifice means the surrender of something precious to the god in whom a person believes. Sacrifices have probably forever been part of religions as they balance the scales. We want something and are willing to give something.

Sacrifice often involves a physical gift, an offering of something that has value and is seen as necessary to connect the two worlds. It represents a kind of exchange, making it a fair deal, both on the psychological side and in relation to the otherworld. Sacrifice could be many things, including promises to live a certain life or abstain from certain things.

A sacrifice thus can be giving up time, energy or possession, it can be a virtual promise (to do or not do something) or involve bodily experience, inflicting and accepting abstinence, pain or a pilgrimage. It usually has an element of giving up a bit of identity too, letting go of being special and adherence to what the group, religion or nation requires. In that sense it's an equalizer, the people sacrificing something become more alike (and at the same time different from the ones outside the congregation or faith).

Physical embodiment of the sacrifice act makes it very experiential and in magical terms more effective, more likely to give up the ego. Pain or stress on the body, self flagellation, even despite the sometimes theatrical overtones, will also bring about the ritual state.

Experience and commitment take precedence over cognitive meaning and communication, the ego as an assumed self dissolves. The body is the way to experience the deeper (inner) self, the emotional and instinctual beyond the mental related to the liturgy and ritual texts. The body, the community and the cosmos are thus ritually connected through sacrifice. It is a deep

connection beyond the cognitive. Again here ritual as act and not as thought runs deeper and has more to do with our collective evolutionary memory.

Offering an animal in this context is also quite common, it replaces the physical involvement of the sacrificer (or his loved ones) as in Abraham's case. It's mostly a symbolic act, using a physical token for giving up the ego, often perceived as a necessary first step to enter the ritual state of connectedness. Sometimes the entrails of the animals serve for divination purposes. The sacrificed bodies are usually burned and parts of it are eaten. That sacrificed offerings served to feed the priests and others was a welcome side-effect. The killing of animals in sacrifice is so common, that death seems to establish a special connection or correspondence, I will come to that.

Animal sacrifice is still customary in many religions and parts of the world, in the ritual context a chicken or goat is often used but animals also serve ritual in other ways. For example to honor the animal world or a specific totem animal, one can use hairs of animals, shells from the sea, while bird (eagle) feathers are used in many traditions as a fan for smudging (with sage or cedar wood) to cleanse or scare away demons.

The Islamic Festival of Sacrifice - Eid ul Adha - remembers the prophet's Ibrahim/Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael (contrasted with the Judeo-Christian notion that Isaac was the intended sacrifice) when Allah ordered him to do so, but then accepted a ram in his place. This willingness is seen in Islam and the Bible as proof of his love and devotion to God. 'Resigning oneself to God' can also be interpreted as giving up all personal (ego) desire or wishes, letting go of the personal will.

Sacrifice as a deal with the Gods

Sacrificing something that has value in order to achieve a certain goal, expiate oneself or ask for the grace of the divine is very fundamental, it's an exchange of sorts. It is the logical extension of what we do in daily life where we trade attention, gifts, money, sex, guilt, security or whatever with other people, merchants and institutions. Even though we are less Homo Economicus and more Homo Emotionalis, the Homo Sapiens in us, between eros and thanatos, wants to make a fair deal.

The giving of gifts, in whatever form, is a practical and yet symbolic way of relating to others. It is also a way to overcome the barriers of time, for we can expect something back in times to come. The role of gifting and the inherent obligation of reciprocity is of course dealt with extensively by the sociologist and structuralist ('*mind causes social structure*') Marcel Mauss in his work 'The Gift'.

The givers give part of themselves, the gift is therefore imbued with a certain power that compels the recipient to reciprocate. Gift exchanges in his view are crucial in creating and maintaining social relationships by establishing bonds of obligations and honor. He acknowledges that gifts have cultural and spiritual properties. More than physical value, they are a “total prestation” that exceeds the moment and commits to the future of a relationship, to solidarity beyond the moment.

Claude Lévi-Strauss also looked at gifts in this perspective and saw three fundamental properties of the human mind: a) people follow rules; b) reciprocity is the simplest way to create social relationships; c) a gift binds both giver and recipient in a continuing social relationship.

Now in his approach we see, as I also indicated in the chapter on history, a limited view on what gifts are. Also gift giving as just a routine to create connections with others and anchor good feelings in an NLP perspective makes sense, but feels a bit too rational.

Such an approach just entails looking at a mind-set and social setting and not taking into account the spiritual dimension, the devotional (Bhakti) and spiritual aspects of gift giving, the magical energy. A gift unreciprocated means unfinished business, also in karmic terms.

From gift to sacrifice in the ritual context is just a small step. Moreover, that part of the sacrifice goes to the officiator and often the physical gift serves to feed the participants or the poor should doesn't mean that sacrifices are not an essential element to achieve ritual efficacy.

Cognitive dissonance exploitation

The exchange of gifts has also been used as a way to secure income for the priesthood. This is a very material and human element, but has been abused. Giving gifts to the Gods but actually to the priests as a way to secure temporal or eternal forgiveness of sins, or forestall other consequences fits in with the guilt trip, the whole process of exploiting the ‘cognitive dissonance’.

This term is used to describe the feeling of discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs or facing opposing facts. There is something wrong with you, but don't worry, we can fix it.

Such a discrepancy is often used to create the need to eliminate or reduce the dissonance, and it is used in this way in religion and in advertizing. It's a basic pattern in human relationships and in our upbringing and shapes our behavior and personality. The concept of sin, of going against some external morality, is often used to induce this discomfort and then something is offered to reduce or minimize the cognitive dissonance.

Gift giving is a way to bridge external dissonance, to make friends, to repay moral or factual obligations or debts but can also be used to relieve the internal cognitive dissociation. One buys oneself a way out, gives something, makes a pledge, believing or being made to believe that this solves the conflict.

Religions use this mechanism in clever ways, such as by including this process in the ritual liturgy of sacraments (confession), offering a way out of temporal or eternal damnation or karma.

The desire to be forgiven, the repentance is used to induce penance; acts, prayers or gifts to make good. Purification of sins or other negative influences is one of the elements used. One is assumed to be sinful and by cleansing or other acts including sacrifice, gifts, pilgrimage, works of mercy and charity one can be released from these negative attachments. This making good by the act of penance, by “faith” and “good works” has both a set (mindset) and social setting aspect. The magical or spiritual effect derives from the fact that one lets go of the ego and material attachments, bows to the deity and therefore enters the miraculous state.

Public penance is used in many cultures, even in the communist ‘church’ and is believed to help create responsible behavior. It’s a kind of demotion and punishment with a social control element.

Pilgrimage

Dedicating oneself to travel to a sacred place, often far away and difficult to reach has been a practice in many traditions. Many festivals like the Kumbh Mela are in essence pilgrimages. It is seen as a way to do penance or seek a cure. Present day pilgrimages like walking to Santiago de Compostela do have a ritual aspect, but many psychotherapist now admit that such an expedition is a great way to deal with anxiety, unhappiness and psychological problems of many kinds.

Indulgences

In Catholic theology, an indulgence is a remission of punishment due to sin, the guilt of which has been forgiven in confession, but the consequences still apply. One can thus obtain release from the temporal (on earth or in purgatory) consequences of sins. It is thus not forgiveness of the guilt of sin nor release from the eternal punishment. Nor is it a permit to commit sin, a pardon of future sin, or a guarantee of salvation for oneself or for another.

The whole notion of indulgences has sometimes been abused by the priesthood and in the Catholic Church has led to dissenting movements like the Reformation. Selling indulgences in the Middle Ages became a major business for the priesthood and provoked critical reactions. Indulgences are a form of time magic, one tries to influence the future.

The anti-magical movements like the Reformation, Islam and Buddhism were thus opposed to this practice, partly because of the power it gave to the priesthood as sorcerers that could get you off the hook. To address this, things as paying for the church became regulated, like in the church tax, still collected in some countries or in the practice of tithing with a fixed portion of income for the church or priesthood.

Vedic sacrifice

The role of sacrifice in the Vedic/Hindu tradition is essential. It was and is their way to connect the personal and the impersonal. It is also a way to continually renew the religious experience as a personal token or deal with a personal God. As a personal sacrifice defies dogma and stagnation of a faith, it makes the ritual a personal meaningful event. It is a physical act, thus it is anchored in the subconscious.

In his book 'The Door in the Sky' which I see as an apt expression of ritual and myth, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, a Ceylonese historian, philosopher and metaphysician, mentions that sacrifice as the main act in many rituals is seen as a specific human activity. The Vedas tell us that 'man is the only animal that can perform a sacrifice' (and be a sacrifice too!). A true sacrifice is more than a devotional offering like flowers or fruits.

To have magical effect it has to have 'exchange' value or meaning, both outer and inner, so there must be a real connection with the sacrificer(s).

Many things can be sacrificed, libations of special drinks (pouring them in the fire) or oblations of specially prepared (on an adjoined fire) food or ghee (clarified butter). Offering (and consuming) of a magic drink like soma, made of herbs with a special, probably psychedelic effect, is commonplace. But also virtual offerings such as a vow representing a personal sacrifice, often as a token of exchange for something. When eating or drinking the part of the sacrifice that is not put into the fire, one often says 'May you never hunger or thirst'.

Offerings are usually part of a ritual but a distinction must be made between offerings intended as remuneration for the priest or to cover costs, devotional offerings and truly magical sacrifices. Things like a Church tax take away the magical. Devotion some ten percent of income to the Church (tithing) is not uncommon but more a social than a ritual practice. True offerings should be voluntary to count in terms of sacredness.

Human Sacrifice

Now I come to a sensitive subject. Most of the cultures of old knew human sacrifice, there are explicit references in the Vedas. Even the Bible talks about it, Abraham offering his son and killing newborn babies are the ex-

amples we all know. It's not something far removed from Christianity, the death of Christ is seen as a sacrifice and there were early Christian infant-cannibalism rumors, seemingly the reason Romans persecuted the early Christians. There are many findings of ritually killed people as foundation offerings and servants killed to accompany their masters in the grave.

It happened everywhere, even in recent times. The Sati practice of Hindu widows throwing themselves on the pyre (or being forced) seems very hard to eradicate. Self immolation and suicide bombing seems a growing phenomenon. The idea of human sacrifices is by now no longer acceptable but the practice of calling attention to political or religious issues by suicide, hunger-strikes, etc. seems on the rise.

There is some literature about this like J. N. Bremmers' 'The Strange World of Human Sacrifice' (2007) but hardly any explanation beyond the idea of expiation, divination and guilt of victims. I found no mention of magical efficacy of human sacrifice, with the possible exception of cannibalism which is seen as acquiring the power of the slain. It is assumed there were magical reasons for all sacrifice, but the explanations are not very specific.

Suicide sacrifice as well as killing willing or unwilling victims has been part of many ancient rites, like the bloody rituals of the Aztecs and other pre-Columbian American peoples. Tearing out the hearts of their victims, filling the hole with the 'new fire' to please the sun-god, these rites were based on a very exact understanding of celestial processes such as the 51 year interval of the sun's combined light and magnetic cycle.

Human sacrifice and even cannibalism seem to have been essential to the efficacy of the rituals in many cultures. It was part of the war tradition and had to with the assumed spirit power of human parts, especially skulls and probably served sociological as well as magical purposes. The skulls of enemies bestowed power and rank, going on a headhunt was a sacred duty and a way to establish oneself as a brave warrior. Eating the victims (cannibalism) was part of the deal, again perceived as obtaining spirit power.

Sometimes it required the sacrifice of children as an oblation (offering to the Gods) and this was even seen as a necessity to please the Gods and obtain blessings. Again this was widespread. In the Old Testament the Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, accusing the Jews of imitating the pagans in their practice of child homicide. Said the Lord:

"They have built high places for Baal to immolate their sons in fire as holocausts to Baal: such a thing as I neither commanded nor spoke of, nor did it ever enter my mind."

There are records of Voodoo sacrifices of babies, and infanticide as a religious ritual was practiced in India. The killing of female babies has no sacred meaning, boys are just seen as better for the parents, the birth statistics indicate hundreds of thousands of female babies must have been killed in India and China.

Human sacrifice was part of pre-historic culture and went on till our times. Egyptian tombs and also the mausoleums of many rulers elsewhere were adorned with the bodies of their servants, slaves and wives.

In Africa sacrificial killing was a common practice among the people of regions where slavery

and the trading of slaves was part of society. Wars were not only ways to find new slaves but in regions like Dahomey many prisoners of war and also criminal prisoners were routinely killed as offerings to the ancestors, the remainder sold as slaves. The practice even crossed the Atlantic with the slave trade. In the Haitian Voodoo human sacrifice and the use of their corpses in magical practice was not uncommon, although usually only small children were offered.

Even Christianity has its roots in the human sacrifice of Christ. He willingly made himself a sacrifice, a martyr. He must have realized that his position among the people, where he was seen as the savior and messiah, would be seen as a danger to the authorities. That he was sentenced to death could have come as no surprise. So blaming the Jews for something Christ intended to happen doesn't make much sense.

The rituals of the Church do a poor job in concealing that the death of Christ was a human sacrifice of sorts, there is even a cannibalistic touch.

History is full of tales about human sacrifice in fire, the auto-da-fe of the Inquisition times among them, but even in our times there are occurrences of self-sacrifice and what is now called suicide attacks and bombing. No doubt for the bombers themselves doing this it has a ritual aspect and is seen as self sacrifice, martyrdom for a higher goal.



Florentine Codex

Aztec sacrifice

In pre-Columbian America with the Maya, Aztec, Inca and many other civilizations, the gods were seen as the inhabitants of a magical, occult and at times terrible otherworld. They were not so much created but believed to be the presence of a different but often anthropomorphic reality. The deities look and act like humans, or animals with human characteristics, and are portrayed in myths describing mostly (exaggerated) human adventures and deeds.



It's a common pattern. Mankind, between fear and hope with regards to the powers of the deities, seeks answers to the inner need for transcendence. A way to cope with the drab reality of life and death in earthly terms.

In those cultures all of nature was infused with a deep religious meaning, so that ritual formed an integral and inseparable part of the life of man and fulfilled a collective need and served as a tool of control on the part of the rulers.

Ritual needs were the justification to dominate others, as in the "Flower Wars" between Aztec factions. These were ritual wars in which prisoners were captured, not as slaves or for ransom but destined for sacrifice. The Aztecs had a ritual calendar called the Tonalámatl which ruled which deities were to be honored, with variations in form, offerings, content and duration. There were many human sacrifices and anthropologists mostly believe they were to preserve the notion that death was necessary for the birth and life cycle or to satisfy the gods.

There are, however, indications that at least in some cases the ones sacrificed were volunteers, and were drugged before the cruel acts of the formal sacrifice were performed, like the ripping out of a beating heart.

Also the mummified remains of young children sacrificed by the Incas (in South-America) and placed on high mountain tops don't show signs of involuntary death. It might have been that it was quite an honor to be a sacrifice in such a context.

Another Meso-American practice, the automutilation or autosacrifice, was a ritual that was conducted in private as a personal sacred act. Widespread throughout the entire population, this was performed as an offering to the gods by perforating certain fleshy parts of the body, such as the genitalia,

earlobes, lips, tongue, etcetera. In the Northern American native tradition of the Sundance a similar practice is evident.

The Aztecs, by many accounts, had terribly bloody rituals. The imagery we have in the few codices that were spared the inquisitional fires and the records and letters of the priests and Spanish scribes who witnessed this (from afar we assume) confirm the extent and cruelty displayed.

Anybody who has visited their temples with those very sharp stones sticking out from the flanks must realize how streams of blood must have gushed as hundreds or thousands of prisoners or slaves were thrown down. There are accounts by Cortes and Diaz del Castillo indicating hundreds of thousands of sacrificial victims and widespread cannibalism, but these account were messages to the Spanish King with political and personal motives, also finding excuses for their own excesses.

There certainly were cruel practices and cannibalism, but Michael Harner's idea that human sacrifice and cannibalism were needed to provide protein to the nobles seems unrealistic. It seems religious and cosmological (the worship of the sun) motives and a culture based on war and conquering were at the heart of these practices. The Aztec believed they were "chosen people" and that feeding" the sun human blood and flesh was necessary to avoid the end of the world.

Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano noted:

"Bravery in combat and the capture of prisoners for sacrifice was practically the only way for an Aztec to achieve wealth or high government offices (which were not hereditary)"

He also point out that there were other privileges for the nobles. They were allowed to drink chocolate, to wear cotton clothing and to have concubines and more than one wife.

Humans sacrifice was part of the culture, but we can only guess about the real purpose was. We know that they were to be carried out in a special way, ripping out the heart and according to a rather advanced and complex calendar and at special occasions like funerals, cremations, wars and natural disasters

That these sacrifices were often massive events is clear, seen the size of the buildings and plazas and the humans remains excavated. Form those it is clear that not only the Aztec or Mexicas people themselves, but many other tribes and people were present, or at least objects and gifts that were their tribute or came in through trade and were offered in this context. It seems the underlying fear for some future catastrophe was shared by more peoples in Meso-America. Maybe there was a collective memory, the sun-theme is quite common in many accounts.

Prisoners of war and slaves were the main victims but even this is not certain, maybe people of different backgrounds sacrificed themselves voluntarily. It was part of the culture, warfare was the only way to achieve social status, there was no hereditary nobility, and the risk of being a warrior was to be made prisoner and made sacrifice.

Objects found in the excavation of the Templo Mayor and believed to be used as offerings and buried at the site were many and very varied; sculptures, flint knives, vessels, beads and jewelry, minerals, plants and animals of all types, along with the remains of human sacrifice. Images of the gods Huehuetotl-Xiuhtecuhtli and Tlaloc, representing fire and water respectively presided over most of the offerings found in the Templo Mayor. This pair of deities probably symbolized the concept of “burning water,” a metaphor for warfare.

Time travel as the purpose of human sacrifice

The notion that human sacrifice has other, more magical purposes has not been researched, at least not by people who have published about it. It is mostly condemned and there is no speculation about deeper motives and reasons.

Yet the fact that it is so common and so powerful points to deeper reasons to do this. Now this is speculation on my part but there are some indications that the moment of death allows the priests performing the sacrificing to enter the otherworld and travel in time. It is a fascinating thought, piggybacking on the soul of the deceased at the moment of death. Maybe this is why in the past so many people would attend public executions. There is a less esoteric story that they come to check on the erection hanged people seem to have.

Many people present at the death of loved ones report special experiences, especially if they are fully aware of the exit moment. I have seen few scientific reports about what happens there, but heard many accounts of a special state or energy happening. The literature about near death experiences and OBE at stress moments is abundant but research to what happens physiologically and psychologically, let alone magically at the moment of death is rare. There exist some nearly anecdotal stories about weighing the body before and after the soul has left.

I wonder why there is no serious research in this direction. The moment and process of conscious death could offer serious opportunities to research the spiritual transformation. The large number of willed passing away (euthanasia) should provide ample opportunity to do this but of course it's not considered very decent to do so.

Social Celebration

Many rituals are celebrations or turn out to be celebrations, even funerals. They are celebrating the seasons, the return of the sun, coming of age, naming and initiation, birth, graduation, marriage, birthdays, and much more. It can be just a party, a gathering of people who have been invited by a host or come together at a fixed time and date to celebrate as a kind of thanksgiving. The cohesive effects of socializing, networking conversation, or shared recreation are widely recognized. When a magical outcome is intended, it becomes a ritual. A more ritual celebration usually has a liturgy. It starts with some kind of welcoming, a procession, sermons, speeches, dedication and other parts from the ritual matrix and ends in a more informal gathering, with food, drinks and music or dancing.

In most cultures such ritual celebrations have spiritual as well as social and economic purposes. Although not openly labeled as such they are very functional in offering contact opportunities for young people beyond the tribe or village to broaden the gene pool or to help remedy the nutritional shortcomings in the basic staple of a community. In Indonesia, where slamatans are an important aspect of communal life, these parties make certain that proteins not normally in their village diet are available to the poor.

Celebrations can have ritually described food, alcoholic drinks or strictly non-alcoholic ones, and can have many forms. This can be in relation to the ritual purpose but certainly such events are an attractor, people like to go to parties. They can talk, exchange information, play games, meet new people or find potential sex or business partners, tighten their bond with the family, village or tribe, discuss communal matters informally. Celebrations are essential in the culture and also help establishing caste and power status and as I mentioned before, allow structured contact, helping to raise Dunbar's number limitation of group size.

Their magical efficacy is usually limited. Only if the celebration involves serious magical processes there is the possibility to influence matters beyond the rational, like in larger mystery school rites, where the celebration and maybe orgiastic mingling is part of the procedure.

Yearly and seasonal celebration rituals

Rituals are often timed in conjunction with events that also call for celebration. Changes of season, rites of passage, even a funeral usually ends with a coffee and a cozy atmosphere of exchange. When people are together and they feel good, they celebrate, for a reason or just because they are together. A calendar of seasonal events is more or less common to all cultures by different names and maybe slightly different timing, like Easter.

Happiness, fun, dancing, meeting and exchanging is very much part of ritual, either as the cause or as the result. The feeling of togetherness, for which Victor Turner coined the word “communitas”, results from the intention, dedication, sharing and exchanging and is partly what makes people come back and repeat rituals. The exchange part, as in potluck events, is a way to share the cost of the food but is also a way to show one’s commitment to the cause.

Potlatch ceremonies of the Northwest Indians, gift economy

The use of gifts, not necessarily as sacrifices but to establish relationships or rank, and as part of the trading routine or in exchange for future favors, is quite common. One can even talk about gift economies. In North America the Potlatch ceremony is a well known example and the model has survived in the way we celebrate, asking people to bring food etc.

The traditional Potlatch however was a gathering of a more complex nature. There were aspects of competition, peace keeping and a show of wealth. Who is rich enough to be seen or qualify as leader or chief? It was less a sharing of food than a display of power, a way to show who could afford what. Important or just ambitious members of the tribe or clan provided for all, showing their importance, building prestige and creating loyalties.



Rembrandt: Abraham's sacrifice

23 Divination, Prophecy, I-Ching and Tarot

Antennas to the Future, why and how we know (at some level) the truth, our future, love, health, or fortune

This chapter deals with divination and prophecy. Part and purpose of many rituals, a ritual in itself, a consultation of fate, the Gods, energy, or should I side with the Bible and call it an abomination, a sin? Let me start by using a modern word to describe it. I see this as an antenna for meta-dimensional information, beyond time and space limits; divination as an indirect way to connect, prophecy as a direct way.

The question whether prophecy exist is, for many, a matter of belief. Religions are full of prophets and people like Elijah, Mohammed and then there are Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce and lately the whole Mayan calendar uproar was also kind of prophetic. Most prophesies are not so much about the future as about truth, divine will, morality, about what is the right thing to do. But do we, ourselves, physically experience this prophetic connection with truth?

Truth vibration

I do, actually quite often, but in a rather small way. Sometimes, when an idea comes up, when I find an answer to what felt like a haphazard question, when I utter something that sounds preposterous but comes from intuition at some deep level, I feel a certain energy. It's a tingle in my spine, a feeling that's quite physical and cannot be ignored. I have to pay attention, it's like a call from above. It's like telling me: this is true, take notice!

This small and usually unexpected signal, telling me something is important and true beyond the normal, has helped me a lot, given me insights and helped me on the path to uncover many "secrets" and sacred connections.

It happens often when working with people, like in family constellations or in therapy. Suddenly I know this is true, this is exactly what matters, this is like a small phone call from the spiritual plane, you hit something important. Now if this only happened to me, I would think it's a kind of nervous tic, but very often other people present have the same feeling. We look at each other and nod, this is it!

I wouldn't call this a prophetic talent, but it always made me wonder about how information really works, how we get to know things, how progress happens, what is it that makes my spine jitter. Is it resonance of my 'primes' with eternal truths, Akashic records, the all, or is some entity, demon or guardian angel helping me?

This “truth” connection many people know, St. Augustine, quite versed in the magical and heretic currents of his time and being a kind of prophet himself, speaks of his mother having this too, she can tell if something is true or not.

Many people feel they are getting similar messages, warnings, help from beyond, and I often hear how they miraculously just missed that doomed plane, stepped aside, slowed down or otherwise escaped from accidents about to happen. And how often do you call someone who says he or she was about to call you? Carl G. Jung called this synchronicity, Rupert Sheldrake believes this has to do with morphogenetic resonance fields, I like to talk about thought waves, but we all have had such experiences.

And yet, who can deny that most of our holy books, Bible, Koran, Avesta are full of stories about prophets, sorcerers, and people who are involved in magic? If we truly believe that those scriptures are the basis of our culture, as politicians like to proclaim, why not accept the fact that prophesy is possible? Alas, not an easy game. Interpretation of what we, or at least some of us, perceive by way of our meta-senses is a tricky thing, as what reaches our consciousness and cognitive level might have been filtered, adapted, mingled, or mixed with memories and projections.

But what about tarot, runes, dowsing, astrology, Ouija boards, interpretation of omens and signs, crystal-ball gazing (scrying), channeling, clairvoyance or prescience? Is knowing the future, or access to dimensions outside our “normal” space-time a more basic phenomenon than we assume?

Is an awareness of the future not part of the whole of evolution? Do we know where we are going, but as ego-masked and psi-amputated humans, need to use tools like the I-Ching to bring it to a conscious level?

True or half true

The message or insights we obtain by prophetic or divinatory means are special, related to our capability to access the otherworld (via our primes). They are beyond the normal rational forecasting. Those predictions are based on models we have because of consistent experiences or on constructions or even computer models, like we have in weather forecasting or the economy. This is not to say, that what we receive in divination is not interpreted (emotionally, rational, with projections). This what makes it sometimes difficult when we hear or read the prophecies or channeled messages (also a kind of prophecy), because they are colored and deformed because of the person, the culture and maybe the intentional cryptic wording.

A famous prophet like Nostradamus wrote his Centuries, based on astrological observations an scrying (for him looking at the reflections of probably the moon in water) in a specific setting (a brass tripod) that feels like a

ritual setting, with a mindset, in a time (mid 16th century) and for an audience where kings, princes and the Church were daily reality. His predictions about the future, often about how the Church would be threatened, were thus limited to those concepts. He refers to the Bible quite often, but was this because he realized that prophecy or “seeing” as he did was not acceptable, unless covered in religious references? Today we would probably talk about progress and entropy instead of how the Church would fare versus Evil or the devil.

This doesn’t mean there is no underlying truth in what Nostradamus or other prophets have found, they obviously had access to deeper truths than rational thinking could provide, it’s just filtered, disguised, encrypted and mixed with personal projections, fears and inclinations. This is how we should read prophetic messages, and also the Bible, the Koran, they are truths within a context.

The morality or truth of such messages one can see as eternal truths coming down in a specific age and cultural context. It is further limited in that words are often meager means to convey what is understood in a realm where words have little meaning. The messages might have lost their original energy also in the translation, in adaptations and editing over time.

The initiative for such contacts can originate at both ends of the link. Prophets, mystics, saints and shamans often claim that they were called, that the Gods, angels, otherworld creatures or nature addressed them directly with a message, vision, sounds, conveying truths. Possession by an external entity, quite common in some cultures, is a one way process but originating at the other side.

Art or science of prophecy

Prophecy (and it’s half brother divination) is an art, more than a science. It seems one accesses a world (or being addressed from there) that is outside of the normal restrictions of time and place. It is never totally accurate and could it be, if we have free will?

If all things were predetermined (or known to God and unchangeable) morality flies out of the door. Prophecy is like looking at the possibilities, the multiple realities that could be, which one actually will happen (which probability curve will collapse a quantum physicist would say) is not certain. There lies the freedom there is, possibilities are no certainties. Remember that many prophecies are conditional, a kind of threat, behave such and so or come back to the Faith, or !!!

Of course, I have to distinguish here between the two (or more) time dimensions, as I explain in the chapter about time. There is linear, deterministic time and magical time (free will time) that can be influenced.

Predicting the future has therefore two directions or aspects; one is looking for what deterministically will happen (what weather forecasters and economists try), the other is more like seeing possibilities and potentials in magical time. Remember, magic means turning possibilities into probabilities, but this can only happen in magical time.

It is clear that by seeing the future, we influence the present (or rather recreate the present). The mere assumption that prophecy is real, and thus that future influences the present, has consequences. One of them is that the whole process of prophesy is a mirror and an iteration process, we will never be able to see an exact future, only a possibility that in itself influences the future.

There are, all through philosophical history, two traditional stances about the future. One states it is all predetermined and thus predictable (set in stone). The other states that everything is in constant change because of our free will.

Free will implies that we can't predict the future exactly because it can change. Of course, there are rational reasons and causality that predict the normal development, often based upon experience. In any prediction it is usually (and should be) noted that it can change based on the actions a client takes or because (later) influences from external sources. Thus, it is at best a "forecast" or "possible outcome".

I argued before in this book that the traditional division in deterministic and free will viewpoints can be overcome by changing the way we see time.

Elsewhere in this book I developed my theory that there are (at least) two time dimensions, one that is linear and one which I call magical, the time dimension that is related to free will. In this perspective, the linear future can be foretold or forecasted if there is a broad enough understanding of the causalities involved, but the magical future is changeable, merely an indication of the possibilities (on of the parallel universes of the quantum scientist one could say); the total result being that exact soothsaying is impossible.

Is there an explanation?

Prophecy works, in varying degrees, because the prophet or diviner taps into the truths of the extradimensional. It also works because we (all) have special senses (the primes) that are not limited to the place and times constraint of normal perception. It probably works because at times it is necessary that the community (people, religious community) needs to understand something, one could say that if the people (like a student) are ready (or in need) the teacher will come and ascribe this to the field like quality of

information. A need is answered, because that's how the universe works, one can call it grace, divine help or revelation, but maybe it's just a basic play of polarities, an action-reaction pattern like karma.

Obviously getting into a special state of mind, helped by a special body state and in a special setting (the three aspects of magic and ritual) helps, but there seem to be many ways to do this.

Divination, the backdoor

Divination is a less direct way to access the otherworld, it's doesn't require the trance and deep connection, but can be done with simpler means and with more rational mindset. It is however not without a certain ritual to get into the right mindset. We might not see how much training and experience goes into a tarot reading or divining rod gauging, but the practitioners of those will tell you it did cost a lot of time and trouble before they mastered their art. Apart from the knowledge and schemes of interpretation they need to get into the right mindset. With enough experience, talent and the help of their tools they can do this quick and effective, but they will admit it is still a matter of letting go of all ego, projections and allow the deeper self to do the work. The conscious mind needs to be bypassed, intuition must bring the answers. These are maybe translated back into daily life advice, as they come in images and emotions, but this is just the translation of the information received in other forms. As a diviner myself, it took me many years to learn this, and even now projections and thus false readings can't always be excluded.

I see my pendulum as a quick way to access what my intuition (primes) pick up, but asking the right questions, developing a framework and matrix to interpret the results, check the results with additional readings, develop some feedback with the subject, it all is a matter of exercise and experience. My divining is definitely a ritual, although it works very fast and yields valuable results. It is, for me, a backdoor into my inner self knowledge and senses.

Bypassing the mind

The body is a better means to connect to the extradimensional than the mind, the cognitive. This is why rituals are so essential, they are more fundamental and more essential as carriers and distributed cultural intelligence mechanisms than religion.

So to look into the future or get answers in general, most traditions have found ways to access the otherworld (or the deep unconscious as materialist would see it) using some bodily involvement. Modern science is studying this as embodied cognition or perception/action coupling, common coding, but obviously the diviners of old figured this out.

Using some link between body and otherworld, some action like picking cards, throwing stones or swinging a pendulum yield results, and obviously valuable enough to keep doing it.

Why it works, has a lot to do with intelligence and mechanisms in our body, the psyche extends into the body, the brains are just part of it. What we know in our guts, limbs and body organs is not cognitive, but closer to the deep truths and intuition we have amassed in our evolutionary development. Our self-conscious brain is fairly recent compared to the long past of our evolution.

Perception through the normal senses is effective, but usually linked to our cerebral and fairly recent capabilities. We perceive a lot more in our body, again using our primes accessing the extradimensional, our brains are more of a hindrance than helping us there.

Measure of what?

There are things we can measure and those we cannot but intuitively perceive and this I believe, measured too but subjectively. The normally measurable things are the basis of physics, as we now see it, ignoring what cannot be measured, at best trying to develop ways and means to measure ever deeper, faster, dissecting the micro and macro-cosmos into manageable parts. "To measure is to know", the motto of the physicist and the engineer, ignores the holistic, the totality, the interrelatedness of everything, and has led to the reductionist world view that has limited our world view, trying to imprison life as a mere material phenomenon. Most of us, however, experience life in a different way, as a much wider thing, we feel connected beyond the reduced measurability of the material.

Can we measure all those other things? This is not a new question we face in these days of Higgs particles and Big Bang theories: it's an age-old issue. How do we know that what we know is real, what is real, is there a reality we can perceive, or is everything illusion, Maya? How can we relate what our "self" perceives and thinks to what is outside?

Plato believed in two worlds (the tangible and the idea one) but prized thinking and ratio, Aristotle looked more at the tangible and organized and categorized our reality but both of them dabbled in the other dimensions. Plato accepted prophetic communication with the Gods. Aristotle was a kind of sorcerer himself. David Hume, empiricist and challenger of idealist thinkers, notably Immanuel Kant, didn't deny this or the otherworld, he just stated that we can never know the real causalities, never be sure what caused what, so let's limit philosophy to what we can perceive (and measure).

In the process however this all became limited to what the four dimensions yield in rational, repeatable, explainable data.

Galilei stated that we should measure what can be measured, and make measurable the immeasurable. He himself did a good job but then science limited itself to measure only the four dimensional time-space phenomena. This gave us technology and power over our world, but alas, also a mechanistic, reductionist and material world view that has imprisoned us in the limited and material dimensions we call reality. Measuring is in a way the death of holistic understanding, as it is just making a snapshot, yielding a static view of the measured, and the *ceteris paribus* condition is very artificial and limiting. Yet it has served well in physics (up to the point quantum physics kicked in) but has been ignored in other fields.

Being materialistic and in a way deterministic and fatalistic we deny the soul, the intangible and the divine. Sciences believes that chaos and chance rule reality. We have now come to the point where people like Dawkins and Dennett try to explain everything from the four-dimensional subset. They are not allowing some divine or consciousness overall presence like the empiricists and rationalists of the era of Hume, Spinoza or Kant did, tracking Plato and Aristotle and all the great sages.

We value but do not measure

Our intuition and experience tell us a lot about the intangible world but science has not (yet) found or accepted a way to measure or substantiate this intuition. Of course there are many people who use their intuition in practical ways, like farmers and artists and we all give value to things, not because of rational things but because of what we feel. In the economy we pay money for beauty, health, sacrality, in seemingly irrational ways. *Homo economicus* is far more emotional and intuitive than the textbooks assumed. The Nobelist (2002) Daniel Kahneman talks about the emotion-economy. So we gauge the value of things in irrational ways but refuse to apply this to metaphysical things, rituals, feelings and such.

Why parapsychology doesn't impress

There have been many who try and tried to prove that the magical works, or that a ritual has efficacy in the magical sense, or as some would call it, that psychic phenomena are not illusory.

There is the Catholic Church that has complicated procedures to gauge miraculous healings, looking for rational explanations before they accept a miracle. The British Society for Psychical Research, established in 1882, has been investigating the issues at depth. Then there are the more or less scientific parapsychologists that have set up all kinds of experiments to at least come up with statistically significant results, trying to prove that there

is some mind over matter effect or mind-mind communication beyond the normal senses.

The results are there, there is growing evidence that telepathy, precognition and other ESP phenomena are real, but as this usually concerns statistical results or incidental demonstrations, the skeptics and diehard materialists do succeed in labeling all this pseudoscience. Rupert Sheldrake, forever trying to find new ways to support his Morphogenetic Resonance theory, has listed an impressive number of experiments and gives all kinds of convincing examples concerning these psi phenomena in his 2012 book “The Science Delusion” but finds little support in scientific circles and the media. He mentions that between 1880 and 1939 there were 186 papers published describing four million card-guessing trials with hit rates above what could be expected from random guessing, but points out that meta-analysis showed that the results were hugely significant statistically.

Now researchers like Stan Krippner did understand that the mental state of the participants in such experiments played a role and they did psi-testing with people in a specific state, like in a REM-dream state and achieved better results. Other experiments tried to bring the subjects in a relaxed state or even ‘altered’ state and this usually improved the test’s scores. Sheldrake even looked at what animals like dogs or cats could perceive beyond the rational, like sensing when their masters would come home and came up with significant results. All research points in the same direction, but doesn’t seem convincing enough to make the ship of science and scepticism change course.

Now greater minds than mine have pondered about this question, but let me give you some lines of reasoning here, that might shed some light on it.

The future tail

I consider all events to be not only the result of the past and the present, but also of the future. This has to do with my notion of two time dimensions, where the magical time dimension goes both ways, as I explained in the chapter about time. Now if the future influences the present, there is something like a future tail that is part of the outcome of any event, including experiments with psychic phenomena. This however also means, that if the future tail is too heavy, as a specific experiment would potentially change the world view or reality too much, it would hamper the outcome. In other words, proving psychic, extradimensional capabilities beyond any doubt would influence our world and paradigm so much, that it becomes impossible or nearly impossible. We know from history, how much it took to change the Ptolemaic geocentric system.

In other words, the future tail of proving magic works is too heavy, so far.

The statistical fog

A second remark concerns the methodology. Statistical evidence has gained status, because it was used in medicine, physics, psychology and many other sciences to prove all kind of phenomena. We have learned however that statistics can be manipulated, yield false insights and are not always to be trusted. In the case of psychic research the results are called statistically relevant, but if this means the outcome is just a few percent better than random it is hard to convince the skeptics.

Take the card-guessing experiments, whereby large numbers of subjects were asked to guess what cards were picked or displayed elsewhere or by other people. Both the picker and the 'receiver' were probably from a fairly normal background, students willing to participate for a modest fee.

They probably did their best, but in such an experiment most of them would probably be in what I called their mask, their normal personality and hence not in the special state that is needed to access the special extradimensional.

Some might be, which explains that the results would always show some difference with a random outcome. Such experiments would not be convincing. Now this has been realized and one has tried to use subjects in better adapted states, as mentioned above, with some better results.

I believe that this line of experiments will not yield really impressive results, unless great care is taken to bring the subjects into a truly 'inner me' state. Even then the one might be better at it than another, other factors like relational ties, genetic predisposition, the influence of thought waves in the environment, the level of shielding etc. etc. would play a role. But unless the individual state of consciousness of each subject could be determined and gauged during the experiment, the results would not be significant.

This would require a much better understanding of the human psyche and the state(s) of consciousness than is now available. I think that older and indigenous cultures understood much better how these states work and what can be achieved. Their 'primitive' approach in many cases is much more refined than our mechanical solutions with brain scans and electrodes. Here the demystification of shamanism the way Krippner suggests would be a sensible route.

The present 'scientific' focus on statistical results as we have seen in parapsychological research, dream work and altered states research seems to be less productive, a focus on predicting individual responses is a more promising avenue. This requires deeper insight in the 'magical resonance state' of subjects, and experimenting with both objective and subjective state qualifiers. The use of techniques used in the history of magic like the various divination methods should not be considered unscientific, but studied

as potential ways to learn more about the magical and miraculous phenomena.

History of dowsing

Dowsing might have been far more common than has been assumed. Iron age images in England, in landscape and hillside imagery still recognizable today, often show figures of some importance as having two short wands or staffs. Maybe these were a symbol of them using Rhabdomancy, a type of divination by means of throwing a rod, staff or stick to find an answer to a question.

It seems that a standardized procedure to gain insight into a question or situation is a very common approach. As it bypasses the usual more cognitive approach like fasting, meditation or ritual for accessing the otherworld, I see it as a kind of shortcut.

It's a quick way to get answers from the intuitive or higher self state, a backdoor into the ritual state. It requires a mindset and some tool, usually rather simple like a twig or pendulum, tea leaves or coins, but also a trained way of interpretation and some experience. Allowing the body to make the link, access the deeper information means also switching of the cognitive, letting go of the ego in a fast way. It is basically just reaching inside, into what the body knows, using the distributed intelligence of the body.

One can see it as fortune telling and in certain contexts it is no more than that, but I must admit that in my life someone laying the Tarot for me was the beginning of a major change of heart and direction. There is a long history of using shortcuts to intuition, mostly in a simple form where yes or no answers are divined. The divining rod to find water is a well known device, throwing dice or the I-Ching in trying to find answers, the Bushmen in Africa used some surface and divined answers to questions by feeling if their hand kind of stuck to the surface when moving the fingers over it.

Before I go into how I use dowsing in the context of this book, maybe it's good to tell a bit about what is known about this technique and what theories are associated with it. The main question is of course whether it is only tapping into one's own unconscious mind at some level or that it is a kind of contact with an outside system or entity, the divinity or spirit contact that is indicated by the word divination. In the chapter of divination there is a lot about the general idea of divination as part of rituals, but the issue of using this as a way to understand the world, divining to divine divination, is a different matter.

Anecdotes and serious dowsers

The practice has not escaped the eye of both critical writers, all through history it has been ridiculed and religions have branded it as sin, but there are quite a few anecdotes.

At www.pendulums.com/history.htm it says:

"The pendulum has also had its share of controversy throughout history. During the Cold War in the 1960's, American pendulist Verne Cameron was invited by the government of South Africa to use his pendulum to help them locate their country's precious natural resources, but he was denied a passport by the U.S. government. A few years earlier, he had demonstrated his special dowsing talent to the U.S. Navy, successfully map dowsing (locating on a map) every submarine in the Navy's fleet. He shocked Navy officials by not only locating every American submarine, but also every Russian submarine in the world. Afterwards, the CIA determined that Cameron was a risk to national security, and he was forbidden to leave the United States."

The use of the pendulum or dowsing rod in esoteric context is by many considered to be a science. Among then it has various names is called dowsing, divination but also known as Radiesthesia or in French "Radiesthesie".

A cave painting dating back to 6000 BCE shows a man holding a forked stick, a divining tool still used today. Lots of cultures took divination serious, all through history, ancient Egyptians used them, diviners at (Roman) times were government officials, diviners were part of the clergy, but also the practice was often branded as evil and inspired by the devil, the Bible and the Koran condemn it, but there are always incidents where it pops up as the only recourse. The military are known to revert to it when everything else fails. British Intelligence used pendulums to predict Hitler's next move, in Vietnam marines used pendulums to ferret out underground tunnels and land mines.

A French priest, Abbé Mermet employed the use of pendulum divination very successfully during the early 1900s. He located water, minerals and missing people using maps. The Vatican hired him to locate several lost treasures. This was significant since Pope John XXII banned the use of pendulums during the 1320s, declaring the answers were coming directly from the devil. He was the pope who also made witchcraft a heresy and thus a matter for the Inquisition but was suspected to himself dabble in alchemy.

In the South of France in the 17th Century it was used for tracking criminals and heretics. Its abuse led to a decree of the Inquisition in 1701, forbidding its employment for purposes of justice.

A famous diviner was the Englishman T.C. Lethbridge. Through his experiments, he found that pendulums react not only to material, but also colors, thoughts, emotions and ideas. He noticed the length of the pendulum had some significance, and constructed tables of the various ‘rates’. He looked at many occult phenomena and put forward theories on dreams, ghosts, witchcraft and dowsing (in his books like *The Power of the Pendulum*).

Lethbridge believed that witch cults had their roots in prehistory and eventually became a religion of the suppressed classes. Similarities between eastern and ancient western religions provided him with evidence of ancient collusion.

His idea of Stonehenge as a place of healing and his dating based on divining has recently found archeological support. There are more and more indications, that the Mesopotamia root culture not only spread to the East (Avesta-Veda, Huoma-Soma) but also to the West and that even in the Bronze Age there was an exchange beyond slow migration of people. Druid lore, like the cutting of mistletoe and magic potion brewing sounds much like the lost soma story of the Veda’s. It feels that Western Europe, like Egypt, has some advanced understanding of esoteric concepts, astronomy and maybe healing techniques lost since, had more understanding of magical techniques, and maybe Stonehenge was a place where some kind of DNA healing took place, as DNA is a way reflect cosmic patterns and Stonehenge, Lethbridge already noticed this, has an orientation toward the sky or is a link between earth and sky energy.

Into the hologram

Divination has many different forms, from looking at entrails (especially the liver) of animals, via tealeaves, the flight of birds, to the tarot, the divining rod, or automatic writing. R.J. Stewart, whose book “the elements of prophecy” (1990) gives a broad overview of prophets and their techniques, here stipulates the historic difference between nature and art as the source of divination. Nature divination has been seen as more honest, with less projection and chance of human manipulation. Divination in many cultures was a political tool for the priests or shaman to influence the cause of things, not always based on what was actually divined. In Assyrian times, the outcome of official divinations was written down in cuneiform tablets, of which many are preserved. In those days the liver was seen as the place where outside conditions would manifest, but as in humans this could be due to individual and mental problems, they used animals.

The Greek word for divination, *manteia*, comes back in the suffix *mancy*, as in geomancy, necromancy, pyromancy (fire), and crystallo-mancy (scrying).

It essentially can be understood as ascribing meaning to patterns or signals picking up by what looks mechanical, but is often cleverly coupled to sense (body) input. Although it looks like one needs a specific set of tools or objects to do this, be it cards, bones, entrails, tealeaves, or flames, the underlying principle might be that we live in a holotropic world (Talbot, Bohm, Karl Pribram), where the universe is a (conscious) hologram, an implicate order that pervades everything but doesn't need to be tangible. The so-called Holographic Paradigm includes the notion that this connection is not limited in time.

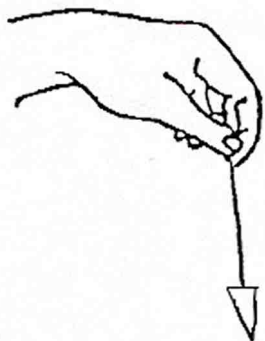
Many incidents of Out-Of-Body journeys or Near-Death-Experiences indicate that we can bring information from the past. Experiments with altered states of consciousness and regression by Stanislav Grof yielded accurate insights in historic and prehistoric details that could not be explained as prior knowledge. He also described precognitive and prophetic glimpses of the future in those states, induced by LSD or holotropic breathwork.

Grof called such manifestations beyond the usual boundaries of ego and/or limitations of space and time "transpersonal experiences." In physics, the notion that things are intricately linked is called "entanglement."

It happens at subatomic levels and is so strange that Einstein dubbed it "spooky action at a distance." There are experiments entangling two macroscopic diamonds, demonstrating that quantum mechanical effects are not limited to the quantum scale.

Divination is, however, not a laboratory experiment in an enormous Hadron Collider; it is an ancient practice - a way of seeing the patterns of 'what may be'.

Divination was part of many cultures, without an augur or specialist in reading the "signs," the Aryans, Maya's, Mongolians, Greek, Romans, etc. would not venture wars, conquests, or expeditions, and I am sure that many a modern day entrepreneur or stock market speculator has his own way of feeling the future. Even using a simple procedure or tool like a pendulum or "touch of health" kineshetics gives access to the sub- and unconscious where we (might) connect to everything via the "primes", but with some filtering and projection as to make the outcome less reliable.



Dowsing with a pendulum: pallomancy

Talking about psi-capabilities, I am not only talking about someone else's experience here. Even as I am limited in many things, like in visualization, I do have a talent that I think has to do with a connection to the otherworld and the magical realm. This is not a very broad talent, but it serves me in a specific way and offers me a way to transcend the limits of causality.

It's a kind of sneaky bypass into the inner child state, where psi contact happens. In the beginning it required some kind of ritual effort, some preparation, concentration and intention, but as I became more adept at it the practice became like a second nature and works very fast.

In short, I am a diviner and much of the insights in this book result from using a pendulum in my work with people and in developing hints and intuitions into models, matrices and more substantial ideas. I can understand that this practice will be seen by many as unscientific and irrational. I will therefore explain how I came to be a diviner and how I use this technology, and point out how the intuitions I get are checked against reality and for the content of this book merely formed road signs pointing in a direction that then was explored in other more rational ways. The outcome of my divinations has a high degree of repeatability (which sometimes amazes me too). I will go into my dowsing methodology in some detail here.

The challenge for me here was to combine subjective data (obtained with a pendulum) into a broad picture and hypothesis and make this logically coherent, check it against other evidence and sources. The way I did that was by first assuming that rituals “work” and then developing a framework (a matrix) of measurable characteristics or dimensions (repeatable within some margin), analyzing the factors involved and coming up with a model. Further work might necessitate to adapt that model or even abandon it but this is why it's a working hypothesis, not a given truth



Dowsing in a crop-circle

I became dowser (with a pendulum) due to a serious illness. I then needed to learn this technique in order to deal with certain food allergies and intolerances and normal methods were impractical or impossible. Concerning the disease (Sarcoidosis), I did notice that certain foods would make the symptoms worse, so I asked about this, maybe there was a specific diet? The doctors then (1998) said there was no relationship between diet and rheumatism (which by now is more accepted) and I was sent home in the same condition (in a wheelchair) I had come; live with it and take painkillers!

My homeopathic adviser (Elise Dijkstra) pointed at the solution. She disagreed with the doctors concerning the cause and told me it all had to do with food allergy, intestinal irritations, leaking gut, etc. Of course this had to do with stress, overweight, too much working, and in my case, suppressed anger. But I had to watch what I ate, certain fats (trans-fats) and substances like MSG (monosodium glutamate) would trigger Sarcoidosis attacks. She suggested to use a pendulum to check if a certain dish was safe for me or not.

I did and dowsing turned out to be a very easy way to test (in)-tolerance. I experimented, expanded the scope of my dowsing and found out it could be applied to literally everything and it became a major tool for me. Over time I have learned to use the pendulum in a more precise way and found it to be a way to access knowledge and data far beyond the accepted boundaries of time, place, causality and logic.

In fact, I began to notice I could find out things that were considered paranormal, although I never considered myself a “sensitive”. I started developing theories about why this worked, got interested in ontological and epistemological questions, and widened my scope of application of the dowsing. By looking in many areas I have developed models, matrices, ideas about the wider reality, the present book is but one of a whole series of studies and projects.

Many of my projects concern the human psyche and it was mainly through psychotherapeutic work using a pendulum that I have developed my notions of primes and (sub)-personalities. In therapy, the live interaction of a pendulum session allows for quick assessment, feedback and falsification and further development of the method. I have tried to develop models and theories, which would harbor the dowsing data in such a way that further experiments could establish the validity or uncover inconsistencies. With this then find ways to test it and see if one can predict the outcome of events.

Ethics of divination

Is it an ethical thing to tell the future? Aren't we meddling with things beyond our territory that much wider implications than just doing some small magic?

The Bible is quite clear about it:

"When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead" (Deuteronomy 18:9-11).

The old testament Jews were quite familiar with such things; the diviner Balaam (see Numbers 23), paid by Balak, was adept at interpreting signs and omens and tried to curse Israel. There was thus a realistic fear for such practices. Moses also wrote:

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

It is of course not very consistent that the Bible (and the Koran especially as it is a prophetic faith) accept "true" prophets guided by the true Lord, the ones that tell the truth, but see the opponent sorcerers and prophets as inspired by the devil.

Influencing the future is, if we take the common interpretation of the Religions of the Book, thus not permitted. But what about praying, asking God to bestow all kinds of good things on us? Divination can be seen as praying for and with an answer: a conversation with the spiritual dimension.

The biblical prohibition of divination (and magic) is circumvented by many practitioners/believers by somehow involving God in the process, or in Islam, by involving Allah using the Koran (texts) in the process.

Are there good reasons for a ban on divination? Let me state (as a warning, too) that using divination (or contacting and consulting the spirit world and in general magical techniques) is not a neutral thing. It has many effects, often far beyond the psychological and social implications usually ascribed to rituals.

It has dangerous sides, one of which is that dabbling in the occult and meddling with reality is always done from an incomplete understanding of the whole of reality, even as we follow rules and liturgies that came from ancient and "reliable" sources.

We stand to get what we want, not what we need. Projection and corroded intentions are hard to eliminate; the dividing line between white and black, left and right-handed practice is never clear. The real outcome of any magical act might turn out quite differently from what one expects, aims at, or hopes for. Even in what is considered very well intended magic, like in healing, there are many risks, not in the least because we tend to look at and heal symptoms rather than going for the deep causes of illness. Magic should never be used in order to manipulate the will of others, or to cause harm to any living person or creature.

There is also the question of trespassing borders. Maybe we are not supposed to know all, as this would imply we want to become equal to God, assuming divine powers. In the Garden of Eden (Genesis), there were two trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (or of Self-consciousness I argue elsewhere).

Adam and Eve eat from this tree and are punished with self consciousness and the feeling of nakedness; they are sent away and will never come close to the Tree of Life (immortality).

The two trees together are the qualifications of God, and reserved for him. If man could live forever and have the wisdom that came from the tree of knowledge, they would be too much like God. God seemingly does not want us to become like him too much. Some aspects of this Tree of Life have come to us; the Kabbalah is supposed to be a representation of it. In my notion of the divine, truth and love is the first duality; the two biblical trees represent them.

Yet there are some good arguments beyond that to be careful with divination, like that perhaps God does not want us to know the future at all; he wants us to live in the “now” and focus on our present. When you live in the future, in what often is an “if only” state of postponing action or change now, you forget the demands of the present. It can be an escape from reality, a step away from responsibility.

I have noticed that there are questions that in this sense are “illegal,” like asking for the time of death or questions of such a fundamental importance for the development of a person’s consciousness, that no answer can or should be given. One is not meant to get an answer to some questions and a “good” diviner will feel this or know this.

Non-theological ethical reasons to be careful with divination are eloquently expressed by Alejandro Jodorowsky, one of the very few real mages of our times. He learned, through personal experiences, not to tell the future or give clairvoyant advice to those who consult him for psycho-magical advice and suggestions for psycho-magical creative acts. In

the book “Psychomagic: the transformation power of shamanic psychotherapy” he states

“I do not believe in the possibility of predicting the future, insofar as from the moment you see the future, you modify it or create it.”

He refers to self-fulfilling prophesies. Clients who assume the work of realizing the predictions, many times meet with fatal consequences. He calls professional fortune-tellers hijackers of the normal course of life.

He sees his work as a Tarologist and looking at the genealogy tree as a projective test to locate a person’s needs and where problems reside and so that he may give guidance to help the client with creating a future him/herself. But Jodorowsky believes, as I do, that we choose our destiny in advance and that there is no such thing as coincidence.

Divination, necromancy and witchcraft

A good starting place in examining how divination is part of our history is, of course, the Bible. Even as it condemns divination and sorcery, it’s so often referred to that it obviously was part of the culture.

The attitude toward divination seems to change over time; in some parts any use of such magical techniques is forbidden, sometimes interpretation of dreams and prophetic visions were acceptable, but communion with the dead (necromancy) was strictly forbidden.

Divination was often connected to witchcraft. Not accidentally, most revered prophets were male. This has to do with the patriarchal nature of these older civilizations and maybe the perennial fear of men for the power of women concerning birth and healing. Midwives were often a main target for witch-hunt.

In the Bible there are quite a few witches, starting with Lilith, the spouse of Adam. King Saul (Samuel 28.7) consults the witch of Endor, and in Exodus 22:18 the injunction

“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live”

is not a vocational incentive. The Greeks also knew witches. Circe and Medea are good examples; both were using sexual magic, something blamed on witches ever since. Medea is an indication that the image of witches has changed from seductive sexual beings to old and ugly hags.

The influential Roman poet Lucan has further spread this notion with his description of the witch Erictho. The sexual association remains part of the witches image, but has become very negative; in the *Malleus Maleficarum* (witches hammer) of 1486 it says:

“All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in woman insatiable.”

Maybe it serves to delve into the difference between the more male inclination to go for identity and power and the more female direction toward love and relationships. A lot has been said about this, but as we describe the male approach as more related to the third chakra, where power, will and intuitive knowledge of the truth resides, and the female as related to the heart chakra of love and connecting, we can see here two kinds of magic and thus divination approaches.

The female is exemplified by the faeries and their spells around the crib of a newborn, the male by the augur divining the outcome of a battle. Modern witches, like career women, sometimes try to bridge the identity/relationship divide. Modern witch Starhawk defines magic as

“the art of changing consciousness at will”

which, in a very broad sense, for her encompasses political activism.

It’s the intention that matters. Where is the magical power seated, what practices are used to address, call forth, and use these powers? One could even look for the magical and mystical (active-passive) concentration on other chakras as a way of outlining contact modes with the metaphysical, a kind of classification of magic.

I-Ching

Let’s look at some of the ways we ritually work with the future. One of the oldest divination or prophesy tools is the I-Ching. For those familiar with “the book of changes,” the notion that this ancient Chinese method of divination is an antenna for the future is an unusual, but perhaps useful description. The I-Ching is used as a divination tool and consulted to indicate the outcome of things, often the future, related to specific questions or actions and is also described as a hypercommunication tool.

The way the I-Ching is thrown resembles the way Tarot cards are used, but there are many ways to try to access information beyond the space-time limitations, divination being part of many rituals in many cultures. Divination comes from the Latin *divinare* “to foresee, to be inspired by a god,” related to *divinus*, divine. Divination is the attempt to foretell future events by ways of omens or reading of signs.

The I-Ching is a good example; it has been used for a very long time as a divination tool. It was consulted to indicate the future, often related to specific questions. In a rather magical way the questions we pose about the future are linked to the way we throw the dice or coins, and we are presented with an outcome in the form of a text from an ancient Chinese book.

These texts are ambiguous, but for many present an insight in what is about to happen or what they have to do. For those familiar with the I-Ching, the

book of changes, the notion that the I-Ching is an antenna for the future is an unusual, but acceptable description.

If the I-Ching is an antenna for the future, somehow working outside our notion and realm of linear unidirectional time and causality, but still effective, this opens a real can of worms. The I-Ching is but one example; there are many other ways to deal with the future like Tarot, dowsing, clairvoyance, or prescience. This attacks the traditional notions of causality, sheds new light on issues concerning determinism and free will, and puts a bomb under what we call “physics” as science sees it. Its such a frightening idea for our whole system that its quite logical that the question has not been asked or addressed, except in Science Fiction.

The value of divination techniques

The I-Ching was written down more than 2000 years ago. The Tarot in its present form is at best seven centuries old, but divination is probably as old as human self-consciousness. How is it possible that these techniques work? Are they extensions and adaptations of practices that were found by very wise, maybe prophetic people and thus manifestations, corresponding to fundamental laws, or are they human inventions that acquired significance and “energy” because they have been used so long and have built up “belief energy?” I think they are both.

There is fundamental (correspondence) power in them and there is human power, built up over time. In this respect they are like holy places or holy objects, which also have two components. In this view it obviously helps to separate the more human (archetypical) from the fundamental aspects, not to diminish the effectiveness, but to understand where cultural things enter the formula.

The Tarot, for instance, clearly uses imagery of the early middle ages, and sticking to these originals has its value. On the other hand, we live in cyberspace times, with different archetypes emerging; the modern hacker or wikileaker now might replace the trickster or fool of old, the neurosurgeon or genetic engineer might be seen as a whole new breed of archetypical agents. So why not create new Tarot decks with new imagery, but retain the probably more fundamental numbering and suits?

The Tarot

A well known divination technique involves the tarot, a deck of cards that is now often used to address the meta-dimensional to obtain information about pending decisions, the future, and similar issues beyond the normal senses.

The Tarot, initially just a card game (and the Chinese had playing cards long before), has been linked to other esoteric traditions and is used in many ways. Laying or reading the Tarot, can be done in many ways; most can be described as Tarot rituals.

They are more or less clean antennas and don't require an induced trance, liminality stage, or immersion. The link to the meta-dimensional does require a clear intention or question from the one who asks for the information; the person interpreting the sequence, position and meaning of the cards has to be tuned in, but it's not like a shamanic journey.

Tarot of Marseille

The original (or at least oldest) Tarot of Marseille tradition, seven centuries old, is supposed to originate in the knowledge, science, and art of the men who built the cathedrals and their understanding of symbolism, but in more modern times the Tarot has evolved as a spiritual tool with many variations in both the cards and the interpretation. Usually the number of cards remains the same, but there are hundreds, if not thousands, of different sets.

Tarot, originally but a game, in esoteric practice goes beyond its typical use as a divinatory tool. It is a psychological tool, self help tool, introspective tool, meditational tool, creative tool, and in some respects a magical tool, a link with a wider, meta-dimensional reality.

The tarot is or has become a Legominism, a kind of coded history or evolutionary symbol, a means of transmitting (by way of initiates that recognize it) information about the planetary evolution, about the purpose, goals, and direction of life. The Great Pyramid, Chess, and Kabbalah are other examples of Legominisms.

Many people have made connections and interpretations of what the Tarot is, beyond a pack of cards, with symbols and numbers. Some, like Ouspensky (an associate of Gurdjieff), have come up with interpretations and historic links that are not substantiated, but the way one can interpret a sequence of 21+1 cards are many.

There is the link with the Kabbalah (Tree of Life) and its 22 connections between the 10 Sephiroth and the numbered cards attached to the Sephirot: 1 (aces) to Kether, 2 to Chokmah, 3 to Binah and so on, court cards having a more personal touch. The Sephiroth can be seen as similar to the Chakras in Yoga. Self-realization requires the awareness and rediscovery of all levels of one's own being, from Malkuth - the physical reality - up to Kether as the spiritual perfection.

One can see the Tarot as a symbolic or even coded guide to map one's life. Dividing them in 4 sets of 5 cards, with the world as the final one and the Fool as the free spirit, opens an interpretation of the cards as symbolic jour-



**Ace of Swords from the
Camoin-Jodorowsky Tarot,
a restored version of the
Marseille Tarot.**

ney through life, from incarnation to liberation of an individual soul. The juggler heads the four influences in childhood.

I try to see in the Tarot as an archetypal outline for rituals, although I have found no clear reference to this in the literature or internet. The 22 greater (major) arcana (secrets), including the Fool, seem in themselves and in the numbered order, also to indicate a liturgic order for ritual. One can read it as the procession of ritual archetypes and participants, or even influences on the ritual space, parading toward encounter with love, fate, justice, going down in the dark, then the positive forces uphill and finally reality, with the coyote mind (the Fool) around.

The cards are: I (The Magician / The Juggler) II (The High Priestess / The Popess) III (The Empress) IV (The Emperor) V (The Hierophant / The Pope) VI (The Lovers) VII (The Chariot) VIII (XI) (Justice) IX (The Hermit) X (Wheel of Fortune) XI (VIII) (Strength / Fortitude) XII (The Hanged Man / The Traitor) XIII (Death) XIV (Temperance) XV (The Devil) XVI (The Tower / Fire) XVII (The Star) XVIII (The Moon) XIX (The Sun) XX (Judgment / The Angel) XXI (The World / Wisdom)

(XXII / 0 / Unnumbered) (The Fool).

The lesser (minor) arcana, the 56 cards in 4 suits, also has an esoteric meaning; many have studied it and described it as a map of mental and spiritual pathways.

The ideas of the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky and the Fourth Way about the role and symbolism of the Fool or Idiot are interesting. In their view, the Fool is not the wise person and Jester who mocks the status quo; he is the fool who is unconscious, a robot who needs to awaken, psychologically asleep in a life of fantasy. Gurdjieff took this Idiot notion quite seriously and turned it into a therapeutic ritual, drinking and toasting to 21 different kind of Idiots (see : "Der verwirklichte Idiot - Die kunstvolle Psychologie von G.I. Gurdjieff" by Bruno Martin).

P. D. Ouspensky, in the first paragraphs of "The Symbolism Of The Tarot" and in "A New Model of the Universe," talks about the Tarot and points out that for learning and understanding "the sense of symbols" (and thus the

hidden forces of Nature and Man) and for teaching the fundamental principles as well as the elements of the esoteric language, the Tarot is the most synthetic and one of the most interesting methods.

He places the twenty-one cards in the shape of a triangle, seven cards on each side, with a point in the center of the triangle represented by the zero (Fool) card, and a square round the triangle (the square consisting of fifty-six cards, fourteen on each side). He describes this as a representation of the relation between God, Man, and the Universe, or the relation between the world of ideas, the consciousness of man, and the physical world. The triangle is God (the Trinity) or the world of ideas. The point is man's soul. The square is the visible, physical, or phenomenal world. Potentially, the point is equal to the square, which means that all the visible world is contained in man's consciousness, is created in man's soul. The soul itself is a point having no dimension in the world of the spirit, symbolized by the triangle.

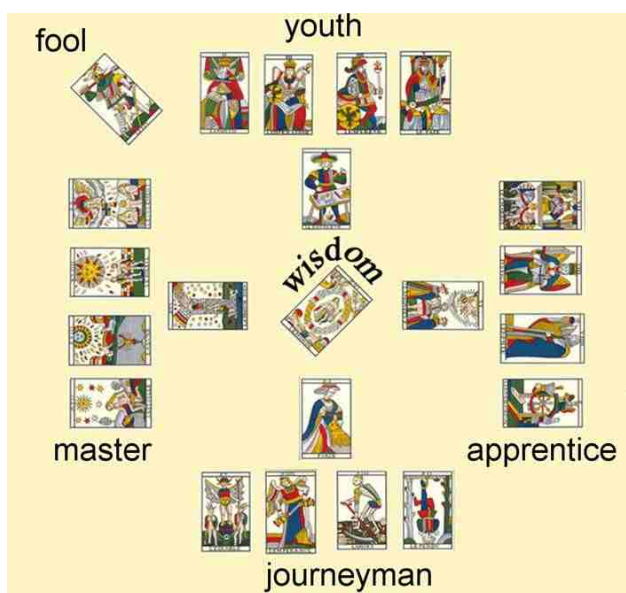
Another way of arranging the Tarot cards is in 4 groups of 5, with the world/wisdom in the middle as the final stage, the fool at the side, and having four phases: childhood, apprenticeship, challenge, mastery. There are numerological harmonies in this arrangement.

Tarot Rituals

The way one reads or lays the Tarot is in itself a ritual; a reading can be very ceremonial or just picking a few cards. There are various ways tarot readers might approach it, such as the ceremony they attach to it or the paraphernalia they use with it. For some, a kind of ritual is an integral part of a reading; it prepares the reader, focuses the mind (of reader and client), clears the psychic space, creates a sacred environment, keeps unfavorable influences at bay, and is essential to maintaining the readings integrity.

Others see this as somewhat superstitious or based on fear; they might consider all ritual as fear-based, being overly anxious in order to separate the reader (the messenger) from (the source of) the message.

This has to do with what the ritual is supposed to be. If it is seen as a way to structure meaning into our existence using some kind of symbolic act, it has a function. But if this function gets lost, the ritual becomes empty. Another argument for having some kind of ritual is that it shows respect for the tradition, showing reverence and humility as one is dealing with great mysteries and higher knowledge.



24 Images and imagery: the visual

In ritual there is a lot to see, both with our inner eye and in the outside world, colors, shapes, movements, and we are obviously influenced by this, imagery is an important part of the ritual matrix.

Seeing things, perceiving reality through our eyes seems the most easy and common of all to understand, but happens to be one of science's nasty enigma's.

We think we know how our eyes work, how light seems to pass through our retina and is then converted into images in our mind, but apart from brain scans and activity monitoring we have little idea how imaging works.

It obviously works with electric and chemical processes in our brains, but are these just temporary traces? Is there a storage mechanism for data, memes, ideas beyond short term memory or is our grey matter nothing but some kind of tuner for access to something inside (a holographic field) or outside of our skull?

Our notion of perception has changed and will change, modern insights and findings like embodied cognition, mirror neurons, and common coding indicate that acting and perception are linked in more ways than we knew. The body obviously interacts with our brains in many ways, there is local intelligence in limbs and organs, and the way we act and move influences our thinking and vice versa. In ritual we use these links, which are much older than our self-conscious cortex. Divination is one of the ways these links have been used in what for a long time was seen as irrational practices.

When we look at something we have a mental image and this is kind of synchronized with other senses. Physically the sensation of feeling the stamping of our feet on the ground and the seeing our feet doing that are following different physical pathways and we should notice a timing difference between them, but we don't.

The synaptic pathways are slower, one should see the stamping before you feel it and the delay should be noticeable. Research into visual perception by people like Benjamin Libet also makes clear that vision (and perception in general) is not a straightforward process, there are anomalies concerning timing that cannot be explained by 'normal' physics.

The visual turns out to be very much a mental construct, we see what we want to see, what we expect to see and create a visual reality for ourselves or co-create a consensual world that might be total illusion, as quantum physicists and Vedic sages tell us.

People like Rupert Sheldrake point at the possibility that our vision is a field phenomenon, that senses are not the mechanical sensor/receptors processing incoming data, but more complex interactions with a reality we also co-create. It seems more like we sense and transmit energy and manifest an image of reality directly with our mind. The reality we think we perceive bubbles up, from an unconscious level of interaction (hence my notion of primes) toward the level we experience as conscious.

This deeper perception affects our body, moods, behavior and subconscious (pre-)volition, it guides our automatic state of being. Another way of saying this is that our whole body is our subconscious mind.

Here the different states of consciousness like dreaming or meditation and phenomena like lucid dreaming, near death experiences and out-of-body experiences show us that reality experiences may be less physical than we assume.

The endless variation in otherworldly views reported from dreams, psychedelic trips, mystic experiences, etc. is so vast, so immense, that the limited space-time dimensionality of normal life perception makes sense, as already Kant remarked. There is more, but we sensibly limit accessing it to special occasions (ritual, dreaming) or special people. The shaman, journeying other realms and often achieving better understanding, finding deep truths and influencing health may be seen as a fraud or trickster. We then, however have to accept that at least his or her placebo-talents (and the ritual context that make them work) do result in practical benefits.

Imagery and visualization are very much part of the magical domain and play an important role in many rituals; they are the doorways to the imagination, the roots and fundament of our inner worlds, but also a link to the otherworld and in the magical sense, tools to create. The layout, the colors, the statues, the way people dress in a ritual- there is not only a lot of symbolism in it, but the visual cues reach deep in the sub and unconscious levels of the psyche.

This is the age-old part of relating to the otherworld, as we can see in cave-paintings and in the jewelry and statues from very early in the development of the human race. What is the primary purpose of theater, literature, and especially poetry other than guiding the imagination, which is mostly a visual gift? And can we read Shakespeare without noticing the symbolism, often in many layers superimposed on plot and characterization?

Even in the watered down and modernized versions of ritual, like in the movie "The Secret" the use of visualization is positioned as the primary magical tool, as the key to influencing reality by way of the imagination.

Imagery and symbolism are the twin mothers of the ritual realm, and there is much debate about the role of imagery in thinking.

What I miss in the theoretical and experimental approaches of the researchers and philosophers about imaging, imagery and how we perceive inner visions is that they make no distinction between the (sub-)personality state(s).

If, as I believe, the inner child or ritual state differs from the masks or outer (sub-)personalities in using the same hardware (the brain) in a different way, the different states might also work with a different representation. Now the experience in trance states and psychoactively induced altered states of conscious, again in my view closely related or identical to the inner child state, show that in most people the visual elements, the imagery, the vividness of the views, the whole experience is quite different and often more intensive than what happens in the mask states. In fact so many people report that those experiences are more real than what they normally see or feel. They also frequently report new insights, seeing imagery that has no links to previous experiences and rather feel like coming from another realm. This refutes the notion of David Hume and Kant, that all imagery and thought are based on previous experiences and associations with known objects and situations and Hume's notion, that vividness is the main identifier of reality.

Looking at the ritual state therefore and taking serious the notion in most traditions, that what the priest, shaman or seer brings back from their journey is valuable, symbolically correct, sometimes new and directive for the whole culture, more research is necessary. Prophecy, lucidity (seeing the grand scheme and interrelation of things) and developing a vision to deal with ecology, cyberchaos, economy and society are essential if we are to bring humanity back on a sustainable path, ignoring these has been a costly experiment in quasi-enlightenment and rationality.

Visions, vision quest, journeying, the inner eye, lucid dreaming, these are some of the practices and aspects of seeing in a ritual context. This ritual imagery has a physical counterpart, we make representations, copies of our visions. So of course in ritual practice the use of images, statues, paintings and such is visible and part of many cultures, but not of all. Some reject this representational 'projection'.

There lies an interesting notion, pointing at the potential and dangers of pictures in a magical sense, images have power, they can be used in contagious magic like voodoo, but in general they are energy objects in themselves. In modern times the use of images and moving images (video) has become so widespread and images are used so widely to influence and one could say hypnotize us, creating new myths (like how a woman should look) and

changing perceptions, culture, relational patterns, that one could seriously ask if the ban on images in some religions doesn't make some sense.

Aniconism: the ban on images

The use of images, statues, pictures in ritual is quite common, although there is a distinction between purely symbolic imagery and that which depicts anthropomorphic imagery, Gods, heavenly entities and such, as has been forbidden in the Jewish faith (Exodus 20:4) and spilled over into Islam. There is no specific ban on human images in the Koran, only in the Hadith (stories about the prophet Mohammed) there are a few references.

The Old Testament however has a high status within Islam, so copying the ban on graven images and idols (aniconism) is quite logical. Only the Shia, with more of a focus on the magical, accept pictures of people. The concern about (amateur) movies around Islam, portraying Mohammed rather disrespectful terms, is thus understandably.

In the 8th century the Byzantine emperors issued a formal ban on images, followed by the Islamic rulers, mostly to please the Jewish population. The Byzantine ban was reversed 40 years later, the Islamic ban on images of people, nature etc. is still there.

Images are essential for many rituals, are age old as the cavepaintings indicate and are part of most cultures and religions. Sacrificing and praying to statues and icons, carrying them around in processions is also a very old tradition.

The underlying question, why are images of people (and Gods etc.) banned in the first place, is an important one. There must be some explanation, as not only in the bible, but in many traditions one sees imaging people as improper or having special powers. Many indigenous people resent their pictures being taken, they feel part of their soul is taken away with it. In some vision quests and substance-induced ritual states, one tries to see one's own face, not very easy, but seeing oneself in the dream state is important.

Images, especially faces and within the face the eyes and the iris of the eyes, give away a lot of information. One's face is a key to the personality, the Chinese have developed this in great depth. Chinese people believe that the face of a particular person represents his or her personality, health and fortune. Face reading also known as Mian Xiang is a popular ancient practice of Chinese people, used to study the personality, past and future prospects of a particular person, also for diagnostic medical practices. Modern technology uses the iris for identification, but more and more face recognition is becoming part of our techno-society, we are recognized, profiled and put

in databases, our soul or assumed soul, in fact mostly our personality is captured in data banks outside our control.

In the West images are so much part of the culture, especially since media like photography, film and internet have spawned billions of pictures. Imagery has become an important part of the new myths like that we have to look young, white and happy to count at all. But there are indications, that there is increased awareness about what pictures, especially faces, can do, to one's self image, to one's status and privacy. Now that face recognition becomes a realistic technology and organizations like Facebook are using in not always disclosed ways, the FBI and NSA use it and there is a growing concern about this.

Profiling of people, not only based on the surfing and buying habits, but done by analysis of pictures and video, is becoming a common practice for administrations and security agencies. People now realize that they are but target-groups and that extensive profiles in a way is identity theft, one become what is in the database, not what one really is.

Images can be dangerous, in the magical context, because they establish a connection, contagious or sympathetic. Having an image of someone might give some power according to the law of similarities, there is a correspondence between the person and the image. Of course having clothes, or better hair, nails etc. even works better, think of the voodoo practice of bewitching people.

Images and statues also have an aura, mostly very slight, but when enough people watch it, the aura grows. This explains why certain statues and paintings, watched by millions, gather energy, and become sacred or in modern terms, very valuable. This by the way requires that seeing with our eyes is an active projection of something (light/photons/energy), something the physicists will find hard to accept. I believe this, that we project energy by looking at something, is the case, and it explains notions like the evil eye and the phenomenon, that the eyes of shamans and holy people sometimes have an extraordinary intensity, they look through you.

Looking is sending energy

The notion, that looking is a two way process and that by looking (or more precisely by seeing) we send energy (of a kind not measurable by physical instruments) is something that would topple the scientific understanding of how our eyes and seeing works. Rupert Sheldrake, building on his understanding of morphogenetic fields and telepathy, has designed experiments that show that looking at someone can be perceived by what he calls the extended mind, a concept similar to what I call the primes.

In his staring experiment, one of the “Seven Experiments That Could Change the World: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Revolutionary Science” he asks people to experiment with the feeling of being looked at from behind. This is a remarkably common phenomenon. So is the experience of looking at someone from behind and finding that they turn round.

In another experiment, the Photo Experiment, instead of looking at the subject directly, the looker looks at his or her photograph instead, while the subject is seated in another room.

That there is an energy exchange with the objects we look at kind of support the notion of aniconism, the ban on images and notably pictures of faces. Someone looking at us or our picture (or another witness in radionics terms like a hair, something we also encounter in voodoo) sends energy, and this projection can be good or bad, but for privacy reasons we might want not to be exposed unnecessarily to this kind of communication. It influences us in magical ways and even might actually steal a part of our soul.

We are all subject to the opinions of others about ourselves, this influences, mostly unnoticed, our self image. The projection of others can become a defining part of who we are, at least in our outward personality, we show a mask that goes well with the image people expect from us. This is one of the problems we are now facing with the rise of picture oriented cyberspace social networks, like Facebook. We become the image, the avatar we put on top of our Facebook page, even if this is not the real us.

An eye that sees us is a common symbol in esoteric circles like in masonry, meaning the eye of God is omnipresent. The Egyptian eye of Horus has a similar meaning, but this is not a two-way thing. To see the face of God is considered a deathly experience and in the Bhagavat Gita the moment that Krishna shows himself as the God he is and the impression it makes on Arjuna depicts how seeing the divine is a very deep and even frightening moment.

The most powerful tool of the magus is his imagination!

Magic and imagery are nearly inseparable, and according to the para-psychologists like Stan Krippner most of the psychical and psi-capability now studied in laboratory conditions also have a lot to do with imagery and is more or less limited by this.

The cultural role of (the renderings of) mental imagery, often very symbolic, is obvious. Cultures, tribes, nations and cults identify themselves with certain images, from the Bear Clan to the Swastika of the Nazi's. Sometimes the imagery is very much related to the core myths of a culture, to its history and historic figures, the imagery in the context of stories is a

kind of mnemonic reminder of the cultural evolutionary history. Religious art in this context is a way to spread visions and the cultural identity related to them.

Cultivation of mental imagery is the core of many indigenous religions or cults, developing the inner or third eye. Visions as in specific prophetic experiences or related to contact with otherworld entities are often the defining event in a tradition or religion, as in Islam and in the Mormon faith.

The induction of the visionary state or lucid state is done in many ways, the whole gamut of deprivation (food, sleep, contact, light), ecstatic dance, music, ritual acts, special costumes, paraphernalia of all kinds, gestures, texts, hypnosis, self-hypnosis, breathwork, mortification, physical restriction, group mind manipulation, pain, isolation and ingestion of substances or teacher plant concoctions comes into play.

Preparing and focusing on obtaining a vision in a specific context, like in a vision quest, is often described as making a journey, a flight (as in going high) and in our times (in connection with psychedelics) as a making a trip. It is often experienced as becoming high, and in structured environments this is even indicated in levels, like navigating the 3 worlds or reaching the 33th level.

Mind's eye: vision quest

When we talk about the mind's eye, the third eye or the power eye, these all refer to what we see inside our head, with eyes closed or as hallucinative images projected in the normal reality. What we can see is quite different, some people are very good at seeing images, focusing and manipulating them, there are people with ultra-sharp and wide (eidetic) visions and others that can't see an apple, even as it is there right in front of them and they just have to retain the image for a short while.

The level one can see these inner-eye semi-real things, situations or peculiar imagery depends upon an inborn capacity to visualize, but also on practice and the state of consciousness one is in. I believe the inner child state is the one that is the most visual, partly because we first experience this state in early childhood, when words or concept have little meaning. It's the inner child or ritual space state that facilitates the vision quest or shamanistic practice, deep meditation and magical routines in general. Not everybody is good at it, but visual imagery capabilities can be trained and in many traditions the cultivation of the visionary talent is the main education for the witch, priest, monk, hotar, shaman or medicine men.

This training can take a quiet form, like in the Vajrayana (tantric) Buddhism, where it involves long meditation on texts that indicate what and how to visualize and specifically what to do with the imagery one masters.

The manipulation of the images of sometimes very complex “worlds” of gods, demons and symbols (first imagined, only afterwards painted as thangkas to remind one of the process) is used to influence bodily processes, like using a shrunken “world” to clean internal pathways like the Ida and Pindala around the Sushumna central channel or Nadi of the backbone. In other cultures the visionary state is achieved in sometimes brutal ways, like the Sundance ceremony of Native American and First Nations peoples.

In the training of visualization capabilities the improving of the vividness of the image usually comes first, by blocking noise, concentration and meditation. The second stage is then the controlledness of the image, can one manipulate it, change it, all with increasing the realization that this influences the daily reality, but is not real. Discriminating between mere (psychopathological) hallucinations or active and conscious manipulation of the imagery is part of what makes a great seer or shaman. Experiencing the process of seeing as real living in two worlds and knowing the difference discriminates the true magician from the lunatic. This is not to deny that the lunatic or epileptic enters the same extra-dimensional space, but he or she has trouble separating it from ordinary reality, in some cases their messages can be interpreted as oracles.

Visualization training based on scripts, and then actively and by feedback reinforcing bodily response or asking to describe and intensify the stimuli like colors etc. is a way to develop the talent. A less conscious but effective way to influence the ability to “see” is dream incubation, planting a seed (suggestion) for a specific topic to come up in a dream. It can be used to guide the imagery in the dream state.

Dreams and visions are both seen as contact with gods, spirits or demons. Tylor saw dreams and visions as the origin of religion.

After a session or event, reworking that what was seen, helping to identify the symbolism and bringing the experience to a more conscious and cognitive level helps processing and remembering the vision, similar to what one does with dreams and in dream-analysis. These methods are also used in modern hypnotherapy, which relies heavily on imaging and suggestion.

There are many forms of vision quests, and the Acid Tests of Ken Kesey probably qualify as a modern and psychedelically induced variation on the theme. I believe that all these methods have in common that the intermediate goal is to reach the state of inner awareness where contact with the extra-dimensional or extra-mundane is possible and the practical goals like healing or other results can be achieved.

What one tries to find there depends on the cultural context, often it is about finding a totem animal or guardian spirit, establishing contact with a specific natural phenomenon, extra-mundane agency, spirit or God, asking

them for help, warding off the evil eye (apotropaic magic), connecting to the core truths of the tradition, or understanding one's own psyche and life's path.

In general it's about connecting to the deeper layers of reality, exploring the extra-dimensional space either mystically (passive) or magically (active). For the shaman the passive situation is often when he or she listens to the teachers, teacher plants, spirit guides, the entities that called them to this and the active part is directing other spirits or entities to do certain things. A special situation of passive surrender to the magical realm is the possession trance, inviting spirits or entities to take over physical functions.

The result of a vision quest can be, like in rites of passage, to reach another (social) status, to see the future or the cause of present problems, manipulate the reality (health, harvest, hunt or war outcome) but it can also bring new insights that change the course of the community or the individual.

In shamanic practice, the shaman often enters the otherworld on behalf of others, he as the more experience traveler or "flyer" knows where to find the answers or magical actions that are appropriate or necessary.

The mirror

Mirrors have a magical quality, they are used in many magical operations, but also in rituals. Mirrors are simple and yet effective tools to explore and train one's magical qualities, specifically one's imaging talent and psychic skills.

Mirror work trains the inner eye to perceive the unseen. Throughout history scrying (mirror gazing) has been a magical method to look into the future, answer questions, solve problems, find lost objects or identify criminals. For this normal mirrors or shining objects were used, but there are also special mirrors made especially for scrying, called magic mirrors, not always very reflecting.

Looking at yourself for some time, without too much focus, detached and without too much light (a candle works fine) will eventually lead to changes in perception. The face may begin to change in the mirror, altering in shape or features, revealing hidden aspects of yourself, some see this as past lives images. Looking into a mirror with some soft focus on the third eye will bring some change in the level or state of consciousness.

Some will see, before their eyes or in some inner view, visions, scenes, people, often perceived in peripheral vision. Even if nothing is perceived in the mirror beyond the normal reflection, there is a connection with the extra-dimensional because one sends energy (by seeing) to oneself. That connection might open a flood of intuitive thoughts, inspirations, ideas or knowledge, sometimes an inner voice or sounds.

The surface of a fluid is a mirror, but shiny metal surfaces were used very early, mostly to see oneself. In a way mirrors are objects of human vanity and certainly they were expensive possessions in the pre-industrial days.

Shiny surfaces, like those of gemstones or crystals are used for decoration, but in scrying one looks at objects like a crystal ball to obtain images or visions from the extradimensional. Mirrors reflect, one's own image but used in another way, they are shiny and return images to where they came from. Using small mirrors on ritual garments is also a way to fend off unwanted influences or bad spirits, to turn away evil. Looking not directly but via a mirror at an object, like the moon, offers also another magical perspective.

Gazing upon shiny surfaces, starting with a still fluid, is one of the oldest forms of scrying, a method of divination that we know existed in many cultures, the early Egyptians used dark fluids to look into, Arabs looked at their polished thumbnails, the Magii of Persia, the Greeks and Romans looked into mirrors or mirroring objects. In Rome the magical mirrors were called *specularii*.

Nostradamus' scrying was with a bowl of water on a tripod. the inside of the bowl was painted black and probably he looked at the moon or sky reflections.

Mirrors also have a dark magical side – they capture one's image and are held to be a soul stealer. It is believed that if a dead person sees himself in a mirror, his soul will have no rest, so when someone dies often the mirrors in the house are covered. Seeing one's own reflection in a mirror in a room where someone has died might be interpreted as indication of one's own impending death. Breaking a mirror is considered bad luck in folklore.

Why and how do we see mental images

Do we see things in our mind like a kind of projection on a screen based on the eye-sense information processed in some way (perception), or do we see because our mind builds an image?

An important question for philosophers and scientist that try to understand how thinking and imagination actually works.

Do we think (process) in terms of images, words, ideas or concepts like the memes of Richard Dawkins (*The Selfish gene* 1976)? How does our memory works, how do we store things in our mind?

Few answers here, despite the technology that allows us to gauge and follow the physical processes in our brain.

A question also heavily debated is how and what (mental) images really are in our brain and mind and where they originate. Brain scans show, that if we see images or imagine images, they are not located in one half of the brain but are related to activities in both hemispheres, with some more activity in

the left. Before this kind of technology was available it was believed imaging was a right brain thing.

For a long time, from before Plato to long after Kant and Hume it was assumed that we actually reproduce pictures of what we have seen somewhere in our brains, the pictorial theories of imagery. The problem is that what we see can be influenced by what we believe or want to see, such images in our mind are called cognitive penetrable, so there is some processing going on that changes the reality or the memories of reality (pictures).

Another problem is that one can see, given the right stimulus, like with certain psychotropic substances or in hypnotic states, images that are so vivid, so fantastic, so rich in beauty, detail, color and scope, that we could never have seen them in ordinary reality. Do they belong to an “image cloud”, a field out there that exists and we tune in to when we “see”.

The description theory states that imagery depends upon conceptual, non-imaginal thought, and not on the perception of pictorial images, but there is ample evidence that there is at least some overlap between the two, in physical terms (scans) and as cognitive processes (thinking).

The information processing approach to perception, depicting the sense organs as passive transducers of stimulus energies has been challenged.

It turns out that the sense organs play a far more active role than just passively sensing, they seek the information, explore the situation in a way related to the intention or purpose of the action.

Think about how we consciously or not, scan the sky for meaningful images, often seeing faces as the human mind is very geared toward seeing them. The enactive imagery theory is based upon this idea, that imagery is not a static, but a dynamic process.

That we not see things, even with the mind’s eye, as a whole, but scan continually, becomes clear through the study of eye movements during imagery (and REM sleep where dreams occur). So-called saccades are quick, mostly unconscious but purposeful flicks of the eyes, which play an important role not only in vision, but in mental imagery as well. In normal vision they happen about three times every second, playing a vital role in our exploration of the visual world, and how it’s interpreted.

That imagery or visualization impacts the body and health is illustrated by the psychotherapeutic technique known as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). If the imagery process is disrupted for people holding an trauma related image in their mind by deliberately moves the eyes in an image-irrelevant way, so disrupting the normal spontaneous saccadic pattern (rapid scanning movements that also happen in REM sleep) those visual memories of the trauma and the related symptoms diminish.

If images are but one species of mental representation (brain states), with other kinds of thoughts like words or concepts also used in cognition and sense information processing, then things like the mnemonic (memory) coupling of words to images, as used in age-old memory techniques (St. Augustine and Giordano Bruno were experts in this field) can be explained as an inner association of two species of representation.

25 Alchemy: ritual roots of science

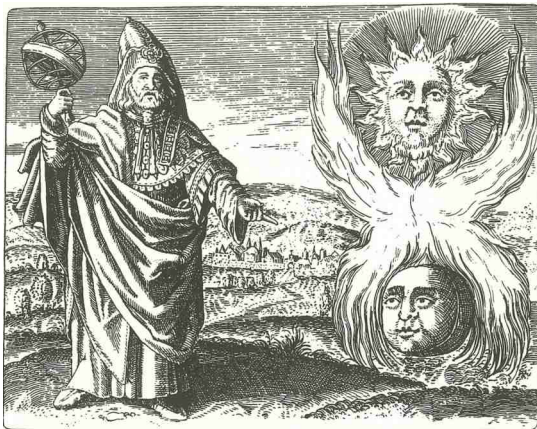
Science has become our new religion, and has its own rituals. These date back to earlier traditions, of which alchemy is a major one.

During my studies at the Technical University of Delft, I had to choose a direction for my final years and decided on process technology. There was some practical research involved and eventually I found myself working on bubble and mixing phenomena in a distillation plant. Wow! This came close to alchemy, sitting there amidst machinery, pipes, valves, in a big laboratory hall, trying to understand and improve a process that was used on a large scale in chemical plants all over the world. In those days I had to learn about bubbles and flows, about stochastic process control; the notion of the “Great Work” or where chemistry originated was alien to me.

This sense of working with equipment, fluids, gases, material things, these hands-on experiments however had a magical flavor. It is so different from sitting in auditoria trying to follow this or that professor. It was real, exciting: inventions were in the air. I even applied for a patent, some mixing device for an atomic reactor. This was regarded as very politically incorrect in those days.

So I can identify with the attraction of alchemy. I can see how people like C.G. Jung, who probably never put a Bunsen-burner under a retort or alembic, could still entertain this romantic notion of the work of the medieval alchemists. The mere material objectives of looking for better metals, better ways to make brandy, turning base metals into gold of course had to be disguised by lofty goals of self-development, by looking for the Philosopher’s Stone within oneself, the transformation of the raw goals of mere necessity into divine mystical oneness.

The image of the alchemist as the *homo universalis*, combining all the scientific knowledge of his day to find the ultimate key to the universe has by now faded a bit. We now know the path from fire maker to shaman to black-



Aurea Catena Homeri.
Annulus Platonicus.
Superius & Inferius
Hermetis.



smith to alchemist to nuclear scientist has not yielded happiness and divine union but atomic bombs and ecological disaster.

On the other hand, I too will use the interpretation of the alchemical process as a ritual, as an outline of the road to self-discovery and inner growth to make an important point. I will try to show that what we now see as the scientific way is also a ritual.

But first I want to make some remarks about the ritual aspects of the alchemical. I am indebted to Jeff McBride, great magician and fire-wizard, for his insights and translation of the alchemical process into a modern fire-ritual in his modern concept of Fire Dance and how he uses the astrological and psychological roots of alchemy.

Fundamental roots

Alchemy is an ancient practice and art. The cultures known to practice alchemy are the Sumerians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, Arabians, Grecians, and Romans. The Soma rituals of the Vedic culture and the concoction of healing and mind-altering brews in many cultures of old qualify as a kind of alchemical cooking.

There is, as Laurence Gardner points out, the connection of alchemy with secret and secrets with secretion and notably of human secretions. He mentions menstruum ("menstrual discharge") as one of the secret elixirs "star-fire" in his somewhat speculative books about the Grail Kings. There is an alchemical comparison between a base metal being transmuted into gold and the supposed action of the menses on the ovum.

There were special deities, who supposedly taught humans about the secret and sacred procedures, like the Egyptian Toth, who showed up in a Greek incarnation as Hermes Trismegistos.

The connection between sky and earth, of divine astrology and the earthly processes of Nigredo, Albedo and Rubedo was essential in the alchemical liturgy and the Hermetic "as above, below" is the core insight. The work

was set up as a ritual, considered a holy practice and experienced as magical, a contact mode with the otherworld that required concentration, intention and mastery of the craft.

The roots of alchemy are clearly the skills of those working with fire. The early technicians, blacksmiths, shamans and practical developers of food processes like distilling alcohol. Their craft was kept secret, within guilds or castes, it was considered holy, powerful and magical but also dangerous.

What we consider as normal, using chemicals for many purposes - under the kitchen sink we all have bottles with rather poisonous or aggressive contents - in earlier times were very special and seen as divine substances. Mixing, heating, cooking, we just turn on a machine, flip a switch. For the alchemists of old these were intricate processes, dangerous, with unexpected results. No wonder one had to seek the protection of the Gods.

The goal of alchemy is to transform the base into the pure, of elevating the common to the rare, transmuting matter toward a heavenly and spiritual level. In the Catholic Mass the bread and wine are transmuted into the body of Christ. The tangible results of this ritual such as the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life were like gifts coming back from the otherworld. They had miraculous qualities like being able to cure maladies and bring youth and eternal life. To obtain these, alchemists were addressing the hidden order of divine reality - that which I call the extradimensional - as priests and shamans do; following a precise liturgy, a scenario they learned from their masters or from old scriptures. To get access to this higher order of reality they had, and this again is the core of all ritual, to achieve this ultimate state of connection and egolessness. This is what they called the *Opus* or the Great Work, corresponding with the work to change the material.

Here my view of Alchemy starts to differ from the classical interpretation, for I think the need for inner focus, clarity and detachment was a necessary step to get to this "inner me" or higher self center, where there is contact with the otherworld. The Magnum Opus in my view is not the ultimate goal but is part of the work. Once a sincere contact with the all is established and the ritual state of oneness achieved, the alchemist had access to wisdom and understanding beyond time and place. He would acquire a state called *soma athanaton*, the immortal. There he would intuit or gnostically know how the material world, chemistry and so on really worked.

The practical purposes, the gold, the elixirs, the healing potions were the excuses, the mask that had to be shown to the world. There had to be some result, some promise of a rational outcome, for jealous rulers or priests and the stake were always close at hand. So I believe that while material realization might have been the stated goal, the real goal was enlightenment, which would, as always, would entail giving up the material. This is the paradox of magical work.

Apart from the details of alchemical ritual, which are already covered in many books, let me point at what I think is the relevance of alchemy for today's scientists. This is that science is basically a ritual, which has lost its contact with the spiritual. Alchemy can remind science of its origin as a holy profession.

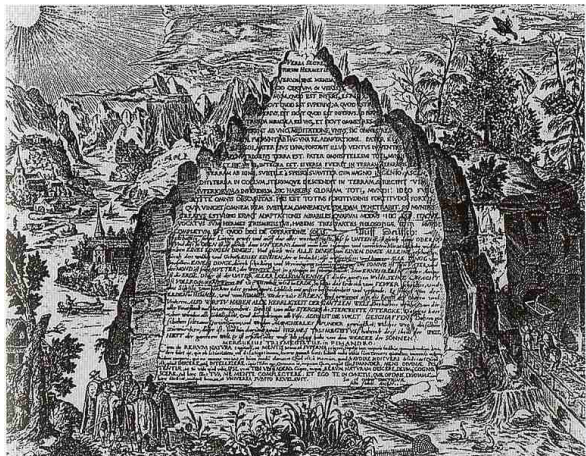
Ritual is the root format of science

Seeing science as ritual seems a strange idea - isn't science supposed to be logical, rational, objective, why would people see it as a ritual? Certainly present day academia doesn't recognize it as such. They will, but only for historical continuity, keep the traditions going, have their ceremonies and costumes, graduation speeches and pretend these are rites of passage. Accepting the whole scientific world as a magical operation for personal and scientific development is beyond their scope.

Similarly the medical profession is full of psychologically effective ceremony. The provision of placebo drugs can be seen as ritual magic, as can their white garments and priestly attitude about what is good for you.

If you want to be a scientist, you have to give up any irrational belief in exchange for the scientific straightjacket of discourse, (hypo)thesis and antithesis, of footnotes and references, the empty formalism. In most cases it means learn to be a good follower, a good foot-soldier, before you dare to think and publish for yourself. It's all peer-review articles, with just a hint of innovation. The success measured in number of references, rankings and fame only within the inner circle, fragmentation and specialization without an overview, in-the-box thinking. Academia has become a dry desert pretending to be a green pasture of progress. Of course, business has kicked in. Popular books make one famous and money talks.

But there is another view possible. The academic process could be seen as a great way



An imaginary image of the Emerald Tablet
by Heinrich Khunrath 1606.

to separate the truly talented from the flock of conformists. An initiation rite that guides the average toward an average career and yes, this includes the majority of academia. It's the cream of the crop, the few mavericks that really matter, at the expense of the others that supply the straightjacket that one has to escape by a Houdini-like act.

Look at what is actually happening in the career of a brilliant scientist really engaged in some deep subject with clear intention and focus. He or she goes through the ritual stages that I already identified. First one has to bow, having to give up one's own ideas and identity by studying the work of others. This maybe involves sacrificing time to do the professor's job, bowing to the institutions and learned ones and following the liturgy and routines of his field. But then he has to free himself, step away from the old, renew himself and rise, like a Phoenix, with the new fire and new insights.

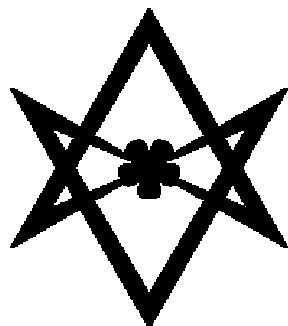
I think that this view, seeing academia as a harsh and ritualized battlefield, where the average and mediocre serve no other purpose than being the decoration and sanding paper for the few, is understood by few but influential minds.

Maybe progress can do without the academic model. The lone scientist, the small inventor is gaining new status, big business accepts that massive research facilities may be less effective than the small group or individual, but we still have quite a bit of dead weight out there.

The personal psychological process of discovery, invention, research and writing is not much different from what a Zen monk experiences in his quest for the True Nature. The path for a Zen Monk is symbolized by the Ten Seasons of Enlightenment as portrayed in the ten Ox-herding pictures.

The stages of looking for the Ox, spotting it, finding it, riding it, realizing it, leaving it and finally coming back to reality in acceptance of the True Nature are universal. The scientist is a seeker like the monk. In the end real success doesn't come from hard work but happens like grace falling from the heavens. Great discoveries often come in the form of dreams or even visions, the intuition that develops and is honed in the routine brings one to a place where the discovery, the great insight, the breakthrough just happens.

It takes longer than attending Holy Mass or a yoga-class but it is a ritual procedure nevertheless. Also the more one trusts in the process, gives up the ego and opens up to what is always already there, the more miraculous the results.



*Crowley's Thelema symbol,
obviously related to male-female
conjunction*

Great discoveries very often come in dreams or at an unexpected moment. It feels as if one has to let go of intent, of conscious trying for the answer or insight to come. Rational minds engaged in what is now called 'Psychology of Science' like Gregory Feist reason that there must be a rational explanation for this. They look at the environment, social structures, context and psychological profiles to uncover the miraculous process of discovery.

So far they haven't looked at ritual as a source for innovation or discovery, not at magical procedures and certainly not at techniques to connect to the spiritual dimension or to tap into the Akashic records. Like anthropologists who are only looking at set and setting and ignoring the spiritual efficacy of ritual and the magical dimension, scientists will no doubt uncover what chemicals, electric signals and environmental factors are at play but concerning the real processes (time and consciousness) remain flatlanders unable to look up or down.

And yet science in the past did look beyond. Natural philosophy was not separated from religion, cultures saw art and discoveries as given from above, did not doubt divine inspiration, was not so obsessed with individualistic recognition and yet laid the foundations of today's technology and scientific understanding.

The great example of a class of scientists before science, were thus the alchemists. They did see their work as a ritual endeavor, seeking inspiration and personal growth as well as discoveries, new techniques, magic elixirs, wealth and prestige. Their aims were in the world and beyond the world.

Fire, from blacksmith to alchemist

From cooking to melting to chemistry, alchemy has a lot to do with fire. The first fires were caused by lightning and maybe by volcanic eruptions. Humans (or proto-humans like *Pithecanthropus Erectus*) first started to value fire as a tool for warmth, cooking, and protection but also discovered other uses for it. To bend wood and harden it to make pointed sticks, to melt ore and metals - these were seen as magical acts. Fire allowed practical metallurgy, and smithing brought great advantages in making weapons and tools.

We can assume that alchemy was born at the tribal fires of old where people discovered that the fire acted on different materials in different ways. This was important knowledge and had to be guarded; in history the secrets of making better weapons were decisive in survival. This probably led the blacksmiths and fire workers to create societies or early guilds to protect their knowledge, their secret power over fire and metals, by others often seen as magical powers. Blacksmiths, healers, and sorcerers were not far apart in status but the fire allowed a kind of proto-chemistry that evolved

into archaic alchemy. Melting, cooking, distilling, separating, dissolving, and crystallization; the basic procedures of chemistry today could be performed with a relatively small fire.

The work was dangerous, the knowledge incomplete. Many would-be alchemists must have suffered from explosions, poisoning, or long-term ailments due to chemical compositions of a harmful nature. Their knowledge was carefully guarded and only given to their apprentices after severe tests, written down in cryptic terms and protected by oaths and the discipline of the brethren in the guild or secret society. Their art, for this is what it developed into, went beyond the mere material.

In working with fire the magical results were easily attributed to heavenly helpers. Ambitious or curious fire-workers and blacksmiths became sorcerers and magicians, aiming at goals loftier than just making better chemicals or metals.

They were scientists, explorers, experimenters. Examples are the Mesopotamia priests or sorcerer-scientists who developed some understanding of electricity, whose battery-like contraptions have been found in excavations in Baghdad. These early chemists believed they could even unravel the secret of life and death and enter the timeless space of the otherworld in their rituals, which they did with some success.

Wandering in the otherworld but limited by their projections and only able to bring back what could fit their assumed self-image and perceived reality, they would “invent” or discover tools and methods, sometimes very practical for healing and such. With their acquired understanding of the world of herbs they could make healing concoctions (or poisons), but as they did have some notion of the supernatural, they also aspired to make fluids grant eternal youth. These miraculous drinks show up in many old stories and myths, folklore is full of fairy tales about potions to shape-shift or live forever.

I would like to point out here what I have observed in modern ritual and among many so-called spiritual teachers. They too, because of transference, initiation, psychedelic experiences or training, have achieved higher states of consciousness. They have had great understandings and mystic experiences and by coming down back into the world, might have retained a few of those insights.

These however become conscious only through the filter of the assumed self and there is always some level of distortion, masking, personal projection. But then, in the conscious and thus deluded assumed self state they still think they have the same level of insight, wisdom and spiritual frequency as they had in the special holy state. So they start to preach, give Satsang, heal, become teachers and therapists, happily projecting their “small” truths, often imprisoned in their own mask world and cut off from

further growth. Now this is not to claim there are no real teachers, real healers, real sages. Some no doubt did retain more of these special talents and insights but in general I have noticed the gurus and spiritual teachers who have turned “professional” are nowhere near the level they reached once, certainly not in daily life. Many have developed a routine or subpersonality that brings them to a higher level when in their “teacher” chair. I believe that the more mature traditions or religions have better understood (but often forgotten) how this works and have rigorous training programs and selection mechanisms before someone calls her /himself priest or shaman. I have a healthy reserve concerning self appointed enlightened ones, and I have met and interviewed many.

These days we have more access to ways to achieve altered states of consciousness, beside psychotropic drugs there are many other methods available. As we now know, many of the old civilizations had access to psychotropic or hallucinogenic plants or concoctions, thus the “initiated” ones in the secret societies and the ruling classes had some notion about how to escape the limits of time and place and enter into altered states of consciousness. Prophets and high priests probably were the ones most adept in doing so, and they must have discovered a lot about the extra-dimensional and what could be achieved in those extraordinary states. This carried over into the work in the secret societies and guilds concerned with fire and early chemistry. The medieval alchemists in European and Arab countries sought to find the philosopher’s stone, a substance or process to achieve eternal youth and magical power through their chemical experiments on matter and metals. Many of these spiritual-scientific experiments lead to discoveries in metallurgy, medicine, and magic.

The new alchemists

Visionaries such as Aristotle, Ptolemy, Archimedes, Paracelsus, Isaac Newton, Einstein, Bohr, Pauli, Jung, Heisenberg and Schrödinger found laws and understandings of the tangible world but usually also explored the other realms. The interesting question here is whether their insights were truly the creative progress of knowledge or obtained from other sources, be it extraterrestrials, divine entities, devils (atomic power has that side), time-travelers from the future, or an internal connection to the timeless realm where everything is, the Akashic (records).

The dreams of Wolfgang Pauli that he shared with C.G. Jung indicate he got many of his insights that way, in a state that J. W. Dunne (see the chapter on time) already recognized as giving access to another (time) dimension. Now one of his main insights, the Pauli Exclusion Principle (no two particles with the same specs) never had a rational explanation, there is no theo-

retical argument. It just happens to be that way, and even then not always, as recent experiments indicate.

Gold Alchemy: The true nature of gold

For a while there was the romantic notion, a kind of myth, that alchemists were really only looking for internal spiritual development, their work was only the Great Work of looking for the divine within. Their chemical and physical procedures to refine material, extract purer and purer metals, using chemical reactions to find new substances or upgrade lower materials like lead and mercury to gold were supposed to be mere routines to help them reach a higher state of consciousness. I think this was true but wrongly interpreted and mostly projections from people who were looking for an escape from a grim world of wars and materialism. They were hoping, like C.G.Jung, to find in alchemy the solution for their own quest.

I believe the true purpose was access to the magical realm but as a result they were on to something. They must have had, based on their “contacts” with the extra-dimensional, some notion of what was possible. In principle they had the same tools as modern chemists and genetic engineers, but in a more primitive form. Maybe they hit on some interesting concoctions, maybe they experimented with Faustian genetics but kept them secret. The stories about special potions are not so surprising for me. I have had weird experiences using ayahuasca, mescaline, DMT and such. Are the substances and materials discovered or made by people like Albert Hofmann and Alexander Shulgin (LSD, Psilocybin, 2CB, XTC) not miracle potions?

The alchemists were fascinated by gold, not only because of the chemical qualities and value (gold was not always the most expensive material) but because it has special qualities. I think this is especially true of some of the radio-isotopes of gold and maybe also, as Laurence Gardner believes, for the mono-atomic state. I will explain these qualities elsewhere, but I feel that melting and refining gold endless times was not without reason.

Alchemical notions of fire

The old alchemists speak of the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire; of the three principles of salt, sulphur, and mercury; of the two aspects of life, the male and female; and finally of the one principle, the tincture tetraktys. Pythagoras expressed this already thousands of years ago in the symbol of the triangle in which this principle is at the same time a reflection of the ten numbers one to ten. Fire shows up in alchemy at many levels. There is the common, physical fire but also the secret fire, the more spiritual component of the “great work.”

A major symbol of fire is the so-called Aesch Majim, the purifying fire, a fire-water principle in which the primal wisdom finds its roots, which is also to be seen in the Jewish Kabala. The alchemist must proceed by finding ways to reconcile the contradictory forces of fire and water. The Great Work consists of the union of the Sun and the Moon with the aid of Mercury. Mercury is a fire symbol, has possession of all, both fixed earthly things, and those which are immortal. He is nourished by fire.

The principle of transformation of matter to spirit is central to alchemy, of rising from the sense world to the spiritual level. This is in line with the process of moving from the assumed me in the sense world (see the chapter on psyche) to the center of the inner me, where the cross point with the extra-dimensional can be reached.

A traditional representation of this process is the ‘Golden Chain of Homer’ or “Catena Aurea Homeri,” with 10 stages, considered a metaphor for transformation. It is connected to Plato’s Ring and the Superius and Inferius (above/below) of the Hermetic tradition. Plato, much more than Aristotle, was aware of the extradimensional.

The Hermetic philosophy offers, in the dialogue with Poimandres (Hermes’ mentor, acting as divine intelligence), a cosmology which is fundamentally Platonic, enriched with Stoic physics. Hermes asks Poimandres to teach him about the things that are, above all he wants to know God. A vision then appears in front of his eyes: everything is light but after a short while part of it is replaced by a descending darkness. This darkness changes into a watery nature, corresponding to the watery chaos in Genesis. The watery nature gives forth smoke and produces a wailing roar. Then an inarticulate cry is heard, which Hermes believes to be the voice of fire.

A holy word, the Logos, descends from the light and mounts upon the (watery) substance. The Logos is an active aspect of the Nous. Its activity brings about a change in the watery nature. The fire leaps up from the watery nature to the height above. The element air follows after. Earth and water are still mixed with one another and stirred by the Logos. He fashions the seven governors (the planets) out of fire and pneuma (a mixture of fire and air in Stoic physics).

Alchemical sex

One last remark about the focus on “science” as a material and mostly metallurgical and chemical direction. There are other “sciences” possible. Different healing traditions have emerged as a result of an alchemical focus on different fields.

The shamanic practices of making special drinks or substances to induce altered states are no doubt the result of alchemical procedures. Soma is a well known example but the many psychedelic, medical and sex tools are equally the result of an alchemical/scientific process.

In the East both Chinese and Indian traditions incorporate sexual imagery into the understanding of alchemy. The union of the eternal opposites, yin/yang, yoni/lingam, man/woman, and other dualities are unified into the “one thing,” the great mystery.

These traditions see sexual union as a way to transmute bodily, sexual energy (kundalini) into union with the Divine.

The Emerald Tablet of Hermes

In ancient Egypt, the legendary Thoth was the creator of magic, mathematics, language and writing. The Greek aspect/name of Thoth was the mythic figure of Hermes Trismegistos, whose “Emerald Tablet” was said to contain the secrets of alchemical transmutation.

The Emerald Tablet was rediscovered in the West during the Renaissance, and led many alchemists of that time to study both Arabic and Western Alchemical texts. The Tabula Smaragdina offers the alchemical philosophy and methodology in a nutshell and is like a book of law for the magician.

Now this is not an easy manual. The nature of alchemical language is intentionally cryptic: even our modern word “gibberish” comes from an Arabic alchemist’s name, Jabir. His cryptic alchemical notes were incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

Verba Secretorum Hermetis

1. It is true, certain, and without falsehood, that whatever is below is like that which is above; and that which is above is like that which is below: to accomplish the one wonderful work.

2. As all things are derived from the One Only Thing, by the will and by the word of the One Only One who created it in His Mind, so all things owe their existence to this Unity by the order of Nature, and can be improved by Adaptation to that Mind.

3. Its Father is the Sun; its Mother is the Moon; the Wind carries it in its womb; and its nurse is the Earth.

4. This Thing is the Father of all perfect things in the world.

5. Its power is most perfect when it has again been changed into Earth.

6. Separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtle from the gross but carefully and with great judgment and skill.

7. It ascends from earth to heaven, and descends again, newly born, to the earth, taking unto itself thereby the power of the Above and the Below.

8. Thus the splendor of the whole world will be thine, and all darkness shall flee from thee.

9. This is the strongest of all powers, the Force of all forces, for it overcometh all subtle things and can penetrate all that is solid.

10. For thus was the world created, and rare combinations, and wonders of many kinds are wrought.

11. Hence I am called Hermes Trismegestos, having mastered the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.

12. What I have to say about the masterpiece of the alchemical art, the Solar Work, is now ended.

A ritual can be described as social alchemy but the effects usually reach more levels than just the interaction between people. It touches our inner powers, and as such is truly alchemical. The traditional notion of alchemy, involving repetition of chemical procedures, is very much ritual and takes many layers, including the superficial purpose of making gold, finding the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life.

26 Ancestor veneration as time magic

Life and death are mortal things, they occur in time. It's not surprising that birth and burial are the two poles of our existence and show up in rituals in many ways.

Life starts at birth (or some 9 months before) and usually a new child is reason to celebrate, sometimes baptize or perform other birth rituals. The actual birth is not an easy moment for mother and child and there are rituals to help one to remember birth or to achieve a rebirth.

The traumas of birth that Stanislav Grof has charted so well come in many forms and reliving them can be a great way to release them. More or less ritual rebirthing has even become the name of a whole therapeutic school. That we have to die to the old before we can aspire to be renewed is a classical theme in esoteric teachings.

We also anticipate death, the fear of death is a fundamental force and influence in life. In ritual this is reflected in prayers, in projections about an afterlife, and in how we treat death and our ancestors.

Dying in itself is seen as a ritual moment, there are manuals and books like the Egyptian and the Tibetan Books of the Dead about how to prepare and assist in dying and moving on to the next realm. We find some form of last rites, helping the soul in making the transition, in many cultures. The more common ritual after death is taking care of the body, usually by burial or cremation.

Burial rites are seen as a sure sign of a religious awareness, and for archeologists things like special burial places, monuments and grave goods are indications of this religious awareness.

Burial comes in many forms and the accompanying rituals are intended to help the deceased go through the process of reaching the better part of the beyond. It concerns dealing with the underworld, furnishing him or her with tools, food, even servants for the afterlife or the parallel world. Human sacrifice in connection with the death of high ranking leaders is not uncommon, also there was the custom of wives following their husbands on the last journey, voluntarily or not.

Let me tell you about a deep experience of death and dying I once had. This happened when I was "sitting" (guiding and guarding a psychedelic trip) with a friend who was actually facing death because of a severe illness (can-

cer, she got total remission) and was probing into her past and the hidden causes of her disease.

I had suggested that she look for her own image and also visualize herself at her deathbed. When she needed some private moments, I decided to do the same myself in a connected room nearby, using the piggyback effects of the substance she had taken.

The piggyback effect is a well-know phenomenon wherein psychedelic effects are somewhat transferred to the people around. After quite some struggle to see my own face (one of the challenges of traveling in the inner realms), remembering photos but not really seeing myself, I gave up on that and imagined myself in my deathbed. That was easier. I could feel myself lying in a bed, surrounded by friends and kin, feeling utterly loved. I could look at all their faces, feel the love I had for them and them for me. It was really a very emotional and positive situation, even as we all realized it was a farewell.

I was aware that what I saw was not their normal mode; they and I were in our core self mode and communicated without words. It was a very deep and soothing moment. I was crying for happiness, utterly moved, as I realized that not only my friends were there, but among them also those I had quarreled with. Impossible as it was, space-wise, all and everything I had seen and experienced in my life was around me. Not as a film playing my life, as sometimes is experienced in near-death experiences, but as a grand theater vision, where time coagulated.

Wherever I focused became clear and sharp, and yet everything else was there also. Then I realized the core message of what I experienced. This actually was (is) the sight of my face that I had been seeking so frantically before. What I was now seeing was “Thou art That” in a very literal sense: I (as my face) was the same as what I was seeing; my sight spread out for me like a grand vista.

Now the word for face and sight in Dutch and many other languages (German: Gesicht) is the same. I was facing the mirror, the complement of my face, my life.

It was so beautiful, so perfect in that it became clear what my friend the Rainbow bard Fantuzzi sings “it’s all love or call-



ing for love.” I was in a divine state, my life and everything in it made sense.

This made me aware of what death really is, being the moment when you can see the whole of life, the lessons you learned and make peace with it, accept it is as being perfect and yet over. Time vanished from the equation - everything was just there, and it was clear that life and time mean little in the face of death. I truly hope that when my time comes I can recall or experience this again.

This somewhat psychedelically induced experience mentioned here also illustrates the importance of imagery in the fundamental questions in our life.

This experience of the future revealed to me in my being-toward-death is very close to what the philosopher Heidegger calls “the moment of vision” (Augenblick), a redemption of time in authentic Dasein (being there=man).

For Heidegger, we are time: the unity of the three dimensions, “ecstasies” of future, past, and present. We always live it in the anticipation of death, where it ends. We live toward the future (death), but what comes out of the future is the past, as in my case of seeing my life, my personal and cultural baggage, my “having-been-ness” (Gewesenheit).

Ancestor veneration: a time-magic phenomenon

In the context of Bert Hellinger’s Systemic (family) Constellations I have often observed that in clarifying family patterns, secrets and faults and forgiving family members and deceased family members, really magical things can happen. Suddenly long forgotten or estranged family members start to call, renew contact and often admit their attitude in the past was maybe not appropriate. It often feels as if the past has really changed. This made me think about ancestor worship. Hellinger derived his approach from observing Zulu rituals. Ancestor veneration may then also, or even primarily, be a magical procedure to change the past, fix family or tribal problems by elevating the preceding generations to a higher status.



Hellenic burial site (Photodisc)

In most traditions there is some form of ancestor worship. In the Biblical tradition the commandment about honoring one's parents points to this. The ancestors are honored, festivals, parades, all kinds of sacrifices are dedicated to them, they have a special place or shrine in the house. Sometimes this ancestor worship has grotesque proportions, sometimes even human sacrifices.

The practice of human sacrifice was widely spread in premodern times, and happened nearly everywhere. Like in the Vedic culture of ancient India, where there is even philosophical discussions in the scriptures about the difference of sacrificing many or just a few victims.

Ancestor rites play a major role in many cultures. Often it is believed that the dead are still with us and demand attention like they were spirits. Addressing them is a way to get favors from beyond, using them as intermediaries.

Sometime they are blamed for adverse conditions and need to be appeased (propitiation). This is related to the belief that the (living in a sense) dead possess limitless potentialities, which they can exploit for the benefit or to the detriment of the living depending on their moral behavior.

The social or non-religious function of ancestor worship is often seen to lie in strengthening cultural, tribal or family lineage identification, and in cultivating kinship values, filial piety, and family loyalty. By honoring the ancestors the elder members of the clan or family, themselves close to being powerful ancestors, are also guaranteed some respect. Maybe offering of food to the ancestors is a way to secure some nourishment for the poor and elderly in a community.

I will offer an additional explanation why ancestor worship is in fact useful and even necessary, from the set, setting and magical points of view. We are not beyond the magical practice of many older cultures, even though we tend to rewrite history from the point of view of the victorious, denying the weaker or 'primitive' parts.

We don't see it as ancestor worship, but in the Christian faith we do have many saints, usually ascribed superhuman holiness and miraculous powers. We look at them, pray to them, see them as role-models; this is a form of ancestral veneration, much like what science considers primitive practice and superstition. Westerners also honor their dead in graveyards, celebrate Halloween or Samhain, but don't usually have ancestral altars in their homes.

Ancestor worship; fixing a karmic past

Thanking and venerating the ancestors in this respect can be seen as a way to influence or change the past, knowing (or feeling) that this again will

have beneficial effects in the future. Ancestor worship is thus a form of time-magic. In terms of karmic load it can be understood as changing the past (or for the rationalist, changing the perception of the past) by honoring and worshipping the ancestors so that a “better” past is constructed. Even if that past was terrible, their ancestors cruel or stupid, by imagining them as great and positive, they would change the present and the future. “Upgrade” your past, erase the nasty shadows and your future will be brighter.

If I state that we can influence the future by such means as divination, prophecy, visualization, and that thus time is illusory, then influencing the past also follows as a logical step. Elsewhere, in the chapter about time, I explained that as consciousness is using time to manifest, magic - which can be seen as high level consciousness manipulation - is mostly a time related practice aiming at changing the past, present and future in the magical time dimension, which is different from normal deterministic time.

I thus see most, if not all, magical practice as manipulation of and beyond time, or at least one of the time dimensions, the one that is related to free will. By magically altering the present we influence the future, but this means that by manipulating the past we can also influence the present. So if we can amend the past, then what is more logical than amending the most obvious influence, that of our parents and ancestors?

Whatever they were, if we can elevate them to a higher status, make them maybe better than they really were, imagine them to be heroes and benefactors or even deify them, we thereby in a way upgrade our own past. If we have great ancestors, we ourselves must be great too. Now this principle works on all the three levels of set, setting and magic. Psychologically, if we change our perception of the past, we change our present. By repetition we can change our belief most effectively, so we do this daily or regularly.

Being descendants of great, powerful, holy and heroic ancestors makes us carry that heritage as a jewel, makes us proud and happier than having some evildoers in our past. The same applies at the level of society. If we are descendants and part of a great people, then we have to carry this greatness ourselves, to honor it and do great deeds as well.

One socio-political effect of this is the way we build monuments, and name streets or cities after great leaders or saints. The ancestors are a binding force in creating how we feel to be a people.

Magically, I believe we can actually change the past. Rituals are an effective way to rewrite history in our minds, our common social history and thus change the past.

Ancestor worship has been the subject of many studies and books by A. van Gennep (1960), E. Idowu (1962), and of course Frazer (J. G. Frazer, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead* (3 vol., 1913–24).

It's interesting that they all look at it as an important religious practice originating in a tradition, but don't acknowledge its magical and especially its time-magical roots. In fact they don't even look into why it's done at all, beyond the idea that ancestors are the most logical and accessible link with the spirit realm and the afterlife.

Reincarnation and rebirth

Death is part of life: eventually we all must die. Many people wonder whether this is the end of their existence, the notions of an afterlife, hell or heaven abound. Non-Western cultures often think more cyclical, death is just the conclusion and a phase in the continuous cycle of life, death and rebirth.

The cyclical reincarnation of the soul is part of Buddhism (not in Zen) and one of the basic tenets of the Hindu religion. The way one lives, acts and thinks now is decisive for the destination of the soul after this earthly existence. This can be progressing to higher states and castes or going down to become an animal or lower being. Escaping the wheel of reincarnation, transcending the need to return is the ultimate goal, but until then the immortal soul will come back. The wheel, the cycle of rebirths is called Samsara.

It is interesting that in the mythical beginnings of the Vedic cosmology, death didn't exist, the first one to die was King Yama, who still figures in the burial rites. The notion of karma, that the moral quality of one's actions influences one's rebirth is not part of the very early Vedic belief of the Aryan Brahmin, it is absent until the period of the shramana religions.

In many religions there is this notion of reincarnation or rebirth", while in Christianity it has been suppressed fairly early. I think this repression had more to do with economical and social considerations than theological ones. For the poor, the slaves and prisoners the idea of an afterlife, given their abominable lives, was attractive, killing themselves or fighting till death made sense. The notion of reincarnation of course makes one more relaxed about death, not being the end of everything. In the behavior of fundamental suicide bombers in Islam we can see this too, the prospect of high status in heaven makes self-sacrifice easier.

The influence of the Roman emperors on theological disputes is well known. Councils like that of Nicea, 325 CE were more inspired by worldly concerns than theological truths. Nicea marked the beginning of the end of both preexistence and reincarnation, and salvation through union with God in Christian doctrine. God would deal with us sinners at the Resurrection, there was no place for a second chance. Emperor Constantine was attending the Council, mostly to assure his worldly empire would not be disturbed because of irreconcilable differences between the various religions and

within what then became the state-church, Christianity. He issued the first edict against “heretics”, mostly to silence the Arian controversy concerning the status of Christ as the son of God.

The classic Greek believed in rebirth. The Orphic religion taught reincarnation, it was part of the ‘curriculum’ of the mystery school at Eleusis. In the Roman era belief in reincarnation was quite common, it was part of Neoplatonism, Manichaeism and Gnosticism and later of the Cathar faith and now lives on in many spiritual groups like the Theosophists. Today, more than 20% of Westerners believe in it, although not all in the same way.

The idea of reincarnation offers a great escape of guilt, one can blame the past. It has received much attention in the West in relation to all kinds of regression therapies, where one makes contact with former life experiences. The most fantastic stories come up and there is a tendency to blame past lives for problems in this life, we can then relate misgiving and bad luck to karma and refrain from looking inside.

I noticed that purported karmic issues do manifest in this life. Even as they may be part of the soul’s scenario for incarnation, they are part of this life. They maybe constitute even the fundamental issue, the core attractor as Manuel Almendro calls it.

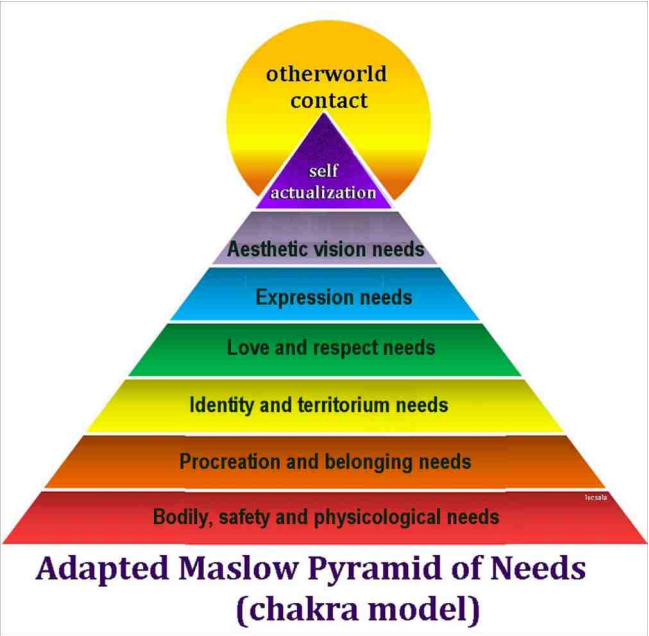
It is not certain for me if this focus on past lives makes sense, for blaming anything outside the present self offers an escape from dealing with the reality of the now. Even as many tales of near-death experiences and a host of books and studies deals with this, there is reason for scepticism. What we believe become true, but it’s a subjective truth. This doesn’t mean therapy forms like rebirthing are not effective, but the results should be applied to the present incarnation, not seen as an excuse.

The traumatic experiences that form our personality and character (the sub-personalities I describe in the chapter about the psyche) are certainly related to what we went through. This includes the pre- and perinatal situation so aptly outlined in Stan Grof’s Perinatal Matrices (BPMs) and systems of condensed experience (COEX systems).

We might repeat or cause those experiences because of the soul’s scenario but this is because we are charged dealing with them in this life. The memories and past life stories are then great hooks to figure out what went wrong this time. Or, in the recent view of seeing even (some not all) psychopathological problems as ‘emergent crisis’ (Almendro) using them to deal with basic instabilities as a way to find a new balance.

Information about past lives might be something we pick up at the archetypal (collective unconscious) level or by accessing the spiritual otherworld, where everything is stored, the Akashic records. Also one can

construct a past life based on some accidental cues, imagining complex memories as a form of post-cognition, constructing a coherent explanation after the fact.



The hierarchy of needs in a different light and with a layer on top indicating the magical connection with the otherworld.

27 Thought waves, aura, chakra

Movements, clothes and regalia in ritual can have a meaning beyond the rational. Apart from the mirror neuron resonance humans and maybe all material objects affect their environment in a non-material sense. We radiate something beyond our skin, in ways that depend on the distance and in ways that are independent of distance. This influence is used, conscious or unconscious, in rituals, where we follow certain procedures, move or hold our head or hands (mudras) or use clothes and headgear to influence that radiation. Maybe radiation is not the right word, for we cannot measure this with normal equipment, but there is something that extends beyond our skin and the immediate temperature effect close to it.

There are many ways to look at this in a magical and esoteric perspective. Mostly these perspectives originate in the East, but things like aura and chakras are well known in the West now. Beyond the psychological typing and the structure of the psyche, as I have outlined before, one can examine the aura and its layers or study the chakras.

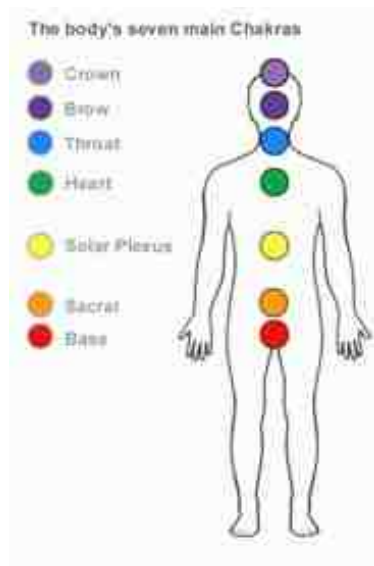
A fundamental notion here is that the human sphere of influence extends beyond the skin.

The aura, astral, emotional and etheric layers are one way to look at that but here I would like to first mention the idea of thought waves where our thoughts are part of a mind-at-large or a thought dimensional (a kind of field) that extends beyond our body and likely beyond the limitations of the tangible dimensions.

Thought waves

The vibration of another person's aura, which in essence is his presence in the extra-dimensional can be felt both consciously and subconsciously but not measured directly. Indirectly, as a change in body state, it is easily ascertained. It is likely, that aura radiation and thought waves are similar or essentially the same.

Thought waves, not measurable in the normal physical realm, are part of a reality that many people experience, like when someone calls that one was about to call.



Picking up thoughts or feelings from others is a well known phenomenon. The level of what one picks up or radiates differs, it can be very plain and body related like pain, or very vague and spiritual and here a comparison with the aura-field levels makes sense.

This thought-field or aura-field is why we feel good or bad in the company of certain people or why we are attracted to people with similar “radiation”.

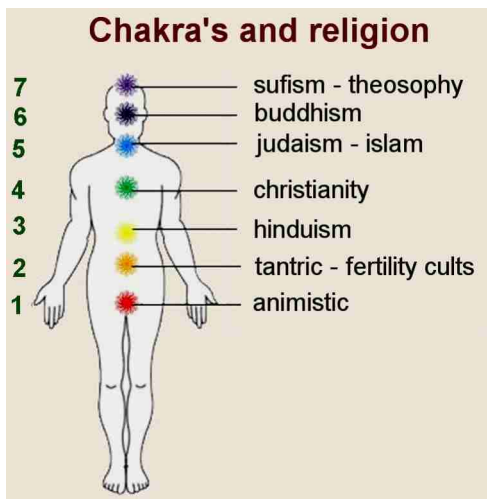
Here the notion of group mind or collective state can be mentioned. The aura of a group that is interacting intensely or collectively like in sports or at a concert, will harmonize, their spiritual frequency will move toward the same level and their auras will have similar colors.

Here the susceptibility for other people’s radiation or aura can be limited through intent (creating protective bubbles), clothes (gold, natural fibers, hair) or posture (crossing legs or arms). The group-mind effects are used in army training, monastic or cult environments. Shaving one’s scalp helps to pick up other people’s radiation, thought waves etc. and diminishes individuality and dissenting thoughts.

The idea of thought waves that connect us via an as yet immeasurable medium or field to others and the energy of things, fits in with the general “fourth dimension” notions but is more specific. I am not talking here about the electromagnetic “brain waves” that can be measured with “normal” equipment but about invisible exchanges of information, thoughts we send and receive and might be coming from people but also from object and in a ritual context, from movements, tools, substances.

If these thought waves (on their own or as part of an information dimension) exist, they explain things like telepathy and many ESP (extrasensory perception) phenomena. If they reach beyond normal space and time they offer an explanation of divination, prophecy and much of what we call magic. To me the notion of thought waves seems like a very plausible way to look at magical and ritual practice, and offers also potential for healing.

In the chapter on Tools and Gold I will come back to this but here I will briefly hint at the idea, that we can shield ourselves from thought waves by



certain symbolic acts and symbols, but also by using certain materials, of which gold is one of the most powerful. The historical use of gold in crowns and ritual garb points directly at this quality of gold but this understanding has been lost. It does explain why gold, apart from its physical qualities, is still such a valued material.

Chakras

In the Chakra model, that comes from the East and was introduced here only in the late nineteenth century, the number seven figures prominently; in many traditions this is a sacred number, with many correspondences.

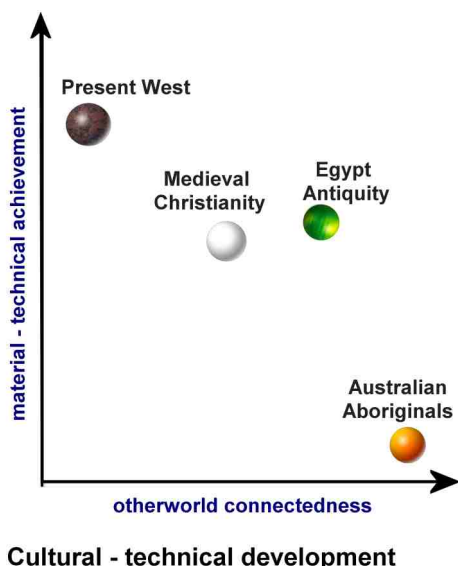
If we just take the number seven correspondence, we find: seven major celestial bodies, seven layers of existence, seven (subtle) body layers, seven temples (including the one we build in our mind).

It is an interesting coincidence that modern string theorists in Physics have come up with an 11 dimension model. The 4 manifested dimensions plus the 7 dimensions that one could equate to the seven magical layers, etc. makes 11 again.

The Chakra System identifies the seven major energy centers in the body as located along the spine. There are more chakras, and in some magical traditions these are used. Many of the lesser chakras or power spots are also addressed in healing techniques like acupuncture and ayurvedic treatments.

Religions are usually mirroring our energy chakras; the Hindu focus on truth and power relates to the 3th, the Christian blood/love focus to the 4th, Islamic and Jewish rules and regulations to the 5th, and Buddhist visualization (visionary) to the 6th. The more esoteric are tantra (2nd chakra) and the nature/earth focus of pagan and pantheistic religions to the 1st chakra. The 7th chakra religion is not very clear but Sufism comes close.

We develop our awareness/consciousness in



each of the energy nodes but in our rational world view we place the most value on cognitive awareness (intelligence). Spiritual awareness comes next and can even be measured; we are able to sense holiness, especially if it centers in the inner child.

The most common mystical experience (at least in the West) is the unifying feeling of the heart, when all is love and one. Mystical experiences in other chakras, like the lucidity and omniscience experienced when the mind exalts, the tantric orgasmic or the magical (will) power experience are less known.

There are awareness levels in each mode and node, together forming a rather complex image of one's being and potential but definitely not used as criteria for getting a job in big business. These levels can be measured, maybe with some projection variations but this has not been the subject of any scientific research as far as I know (excuses to Bovis, Tomatis and the few who tried).

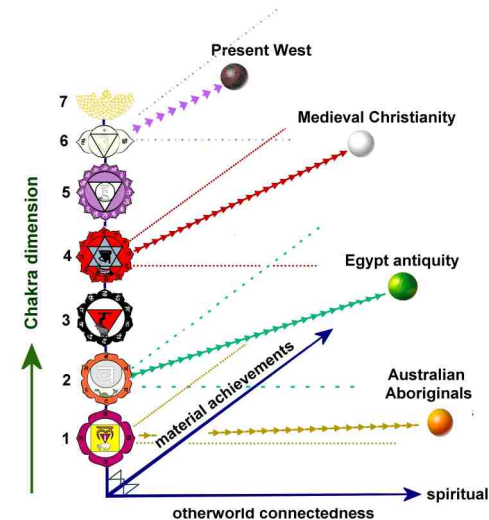
Cultures and chakra

In the two graphs about different cultures I try to illustrate, that the additional dimension that the chakra-column gives clarifies a bit why and how the differences between cultures manifest. One can be technologically or spiritually well developed, but at a different level of chakra development.

What is the Aura?

The Aura is an energy field that surrounds everything and can be perceived as a luminous radiation or layer. The auras of people, animals, and all living things are stronger than those of inanimate objects but some objects, such as sacred statues, also have noticeable auras. The Aura of humans is similar to a Halo around the head, as depicted in religious art.

Some people can see or “feel” and describe the aura that surrounds people and animals; this is an art that can be learned and developed, albeit not by everyone. Some claim one sees it only as intuited in the mind's



3D Chakra and cultural - technical development

eye and that it has to be transposed to form images in the mind. Sometimes one only sees them with their eyes closed.

Special photographic techniques like Kirlian Photography give some indication about the electromagnetic fields around the body. The so-called aura-photographs often offered at psychic fairs are mostly humbug and swindle. They are merely based on skin resistance differences in the hand; these are projected as lights around the head by way of led-lights in the device, giving at best an idea of the energy in the fingers that may have some relationship with emotional states.

The aura is not an extension of the electromagnetic (light) spectrum (otherwise infrared and UV cameras would give an image) but rather is perceived by aura readers as colors. Aura colors change depending on health, mood, spiritual connectedness, etc.

Aura layers

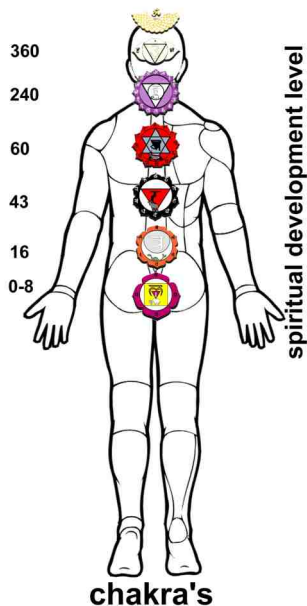
The following ethereal or subtle bodies are, according to mostly Eastern traditions, part of our subtle body system and are recognized as layers in our aura. There is a connection between the seven aura layers and the chakras.

The Ethereal Layer is close to the human body and radiates just a few centimeters. It is usually grey, white, or blue in color. Its vibrancy indicates the health. It is primarily connected to the Base (1st) or Kundalini chakra (life force). This field can also be seen around trees, plants, animals, and even inanimate objects such as statues.

The Emotional Body lies beyond the ethereal field and radiates about 8 centimeters. It is connected to the pelvic/sexual chakra. It contains, when healthy, beautiful, bright energy spots of near primary color, indicating the emotional state

The Mental body lies beyond the emotional body, radiating some 20 centimeters outwards, and is composed of clear yellow, green, or blue colors when healthy. It indicates the thoughts and attitudes of the person. It is connected to the solar plexus.

The Astral body is closely connected to the heart chakra, has more pastel colors such as



It is possible to assign numbers for specific characteristics to the

pinks and blues, and extends up to 30 centimeters from the body. It indicates the capacity for conditional and unconditional love.

The Ethereal template layer, radiating up to 60 centimeters from the body, is a type of x-ray or blueprint of the physical body and its illnesses or blocks. This field is connected to the throat chakra.

The Celestial body radiates 90 centimeters from the body. It is connected to the third eye chakra (brow) and emanates multicolored, pastel, iridescent, shimmering threads of light. It is the layer of spiritual ecstasy, awareness, memories, and dreams and reflects our subconscious mind. The Celestial Layer is the emotional level of the spiritual plane and is where the physical mind comes to connection with the spiritual mind.

The Causal body or Ketheric template relates to the higher mind, connection with the divine, and is connected to the crown chakra. It is essentially a photographic negative of the mental and spiritual aspects of the person. It is usually filled with golden shimmering light and is surrounded by a gold or silver white egg-shaped halo or an outer rim of protection, which holds all other aura layers together. It extends 130 centimeters outwards from the person.

The aura energy can be most easily felt in the palm of the hands and on the fingertips. It is felt as some warmth and elastic tension, but not everybody is sensitive to this.

The normally invisible energy of the aura can also take the form of links or aura chords establishing emotional bonds with others. These are sometimes seen as aura chords of light that extend from the heart chakra, binding one emotionally to someone else. This can be positive or negative.

Synchronicity and information

The invisible energy connections between people discussed in this chapter don't need to be framed in terms of aura or chakra energies, they could be described as being part of a morphogenetic field (R. Sheldrake's thesis), and information field or as an extradimensional link. The fact is we all experience seemingly unexplainable coincidences, the synchronicity Carl Jung was so interested in.

These connections, energy lines, metaphysical links are not limited to humans, we have them with animals and certain objects. Modern physics accepts now that everything is connected to everything else as a strange, non-locality concept, but in ritual this has been known and used for ever. The placement of objects, the energy of a location, the effect of moves and postures has an effect. This may seem illogical and arcane, but rituals have been around a bit longer than 'enlightened science'.

28 Setting: social effects, ritual paradigm, Janus.

The way a ritual is set up as an event in the world, how it is staged, placed in space and time, how the liturgy deals with actions, implements, officiators, participants and how the links to the otherworld are made, all this I group under the general heading of setting.

Many of the practical things are dealt with in the chapters about correspondences, the ritual matrix, etc. but here I focus on the social, both within the ritual and of ritual as a category. I will argue that in ancient times, even before there was a well developed religion, ritual was such a fundamental part of life, nearly inseparable from the profane, that one could speak of a ritual paradigm. This ritual era existed even before language in its symbolic form developed, before self-awareness was fully developed and myth and religion created out of a need to explain things.

Ritual was part of pre-humanoid life, has clear roots in the animal life and behavior and has been anchored in our body and psyche at a very fundamental level. Ignoring these deep roots and the need for ritual as basically the way the body connects with the otherworld (the extradimensional) is one of the problems of our rational times. We are separating ourselves from a very basic part of what we are and where we came from, but at a price!

Ritual as a physical and social phenomenon (setting) has received much more attention than the psychological (set) while the magical has been mostly ignored. Many books and studies deal with the tangible aspects of ritual, in the religious context and as part of anthropological studies. So this relieves me from dedicating much space to the setting, apart from trying to structure what is known and experienced as I do in the ritual matrix and give some examples of the ritual practice like I do in the chapter about fire.

Ritual before religion and myth

There are however a few insights that are different from current understanding which I like to share, but first let me explain why religion doesn't figure prominently in this book. Grouping myth, ritual and such with religion under a broad umbrella of irrational and even illusionary practices, as outdated remnants of a primitive past, this fits the Western paradigm of rational scientific categorization. Name it, frame it, study it as something we can do without, at best see it as a potential way to understand our psycho-



logical and social development. Science want to explain things and will create abstractions and theories to do so, but what is the reality of a belief system?

There are endless studies and books and numerous theories and classifications about religion but ask the indigenous shaman what his religion is and he will not even understand your question, but if the secrecy of his craft allows it, he or she will sing, dance, heal and pray with you. Religion is concept, a way to look at experiences and actions from the outside. A child will absorb that what we call religion not as beliefs or structures, but as internalized experiences and stories, songs, symbols and eventually might be able to express what formed as a set of beliefs, but first comes the experience, the practice, the sacred.

Religion as a cognitive construction, ritual the primordial essence

For most people, the notion of 'formal' religion has little meaning, religion is an intellectual concept, an etic (from the outside) description, not at all related to their experience and practice.

A Hindu will not normally describe himself as a being part of the Hindu faith. Maybe he or she identifies with a specific kind of worship, this or that deity, but it's the practice that matters, not how it's called and how it is different from religious practice far away. It's the way one prays, the rituals, the daily routines that are not usually seen as different from the secular things like eating or work; all are life, routine, experience.

This categorization is a Western preoccupation, we want to explain ourselves, separate the form from the content, making the whole thing a cognitive exercise. An American would know his or her religion, the specific of their denomination, attach value to being different, better, more holy, etc. Someone in the Africa jungle couldn't care less how others call his or her belief system, they might know how some other people, another tribe have different practices, might even see them as enemies and hate them, but this is not based on really trying to understand their beliefs. Religion for most other cultures is just a given, a tradition one should follow and not question.

One could say that Western thinking, especially the so called scientific approach, is a projection of our preoccupation with our own layered and stratified self-image. This has to do with the way we have, in the West more than elsewhere, securely masked our inner me, shielding and hiding of whom we truly are in a world, where appearances and outer form have taken over. The critical interest in religion, in the theological understanding maybe has to do with the dualist and theistic character of the Judeo-Christian faith. God is seen as a personal God, as separate from us, the omnipotent and om-

niscient but far away almighty. The more monistic and pantheistic approach, with an impersonal totality we are part of and manifests in the many has less need to separate the human (experience) from the all.

So in this perspective religion is just a concept, a building we have erected to justify ourselves, construct meaning in a cognitive sense, and provide a stage and platform for a class of priests, scientists and theologians. The underlying reality of ritual, prayer, myth, magic and living the good life is what matters more to those we call believers, faithful, the ummah, the church.

The social perspective

Let me quickly traverse the models and theories concerning ritual (or religion) as a social institution. People like Durkheim and in fact most anthropologist have concentrated on the social, seeing this as the root for rituals (and religion and myth etc.). There has been some looking into the psychological processes, but talking about initiation or circumcision few really looked at what this meant for the boys involved. A rite of passage was seen as a step in the social order, not as a personal growth phenomenon. One looked at the setting, not the mindset and the magical efficacy.

The functionalist approach, which started with Bronislaw Malinowski, was basically going against the speculative notions of the earlier 19th-century ethnographic scientists like Sir Edward Tylor's and their ideas about animism and how evolution happened. Malinowski, who during WWI spend time with the Trioband people of de West-Pacific, encountered a very different social structure, different sexual behavior and different cultural trauma pattern from what Freud believed to be universal, like the Oedipus complex. He didn't deny Freud's insights, but pointed at fundamental differences in other cultures which led to different patterns and relationship models, like the Trioband people.

The functionalists were looking for causality, assuming every social institution has a reason, is the result of some kind of rational cause or process, is basically an interconnected and rational as-is system open to empirical observation. So there is no need for conjectures about history, Gods, chance. They were looking for explanations and often could point at underlying rationale for things like incest, first fruit ceremonies, marriage patterns, etc.

In line with the Zeitgeist they were mostly system-thinkers, looking for rational causality, also for social developments. Even if the rationale was very flimsy like around circumcision they would not accept that there were other non-rational reasons possible, like divine intervention, chance occurrences, true magical efficacy. They would not accept-non functional elements in the development of societies and cultures. Any society thus was a

logical and coherent system, homogenous and well integrated. And the approach did yield very many insights, found unsuspected side effects that could explain certain customs, and gave a seemingly solid base to anthropology and sociology, comparable to Newton's law.

But like in physics, eventually it became clear that chaos, uncertainty and more complicated feedback and feedforward systems would not yield logical and stable institutions, but some amount of chaos and instability, not only progress but decline and regression. That observation alone was problematic, that the observer was part of the process and biased in what was observed, that truth is always a partial truth. This is already clear from comparing the basic assumptions of the various functionalists.

Malinowski assumed macro-biological needs as the root of development, Radcliffe-Brown some machine-like interconnectedness, Durkheim the sacred-profane split, and by all means I am guilty of assuming an extended causality (including interaction with the extradimensional) but still aiming at some kind of structure and functional logic.

Personally I love systems thinking and always look for structures and schemas, but I have learnt that cause and effect are often interchangeable, the arrow of time and rationality is going both ways. I am still siding with Einstein's refusal to accept God as throwing dice, and hoping and in this book pointing at some multidimensional (consciousness) explanation of it all. And just as those functionalists had their biased perspective, I probably have mine, believing that the root of social development lies in ritual (that is in the connection with the magical) and trying to revive the ritual paradigm.

I believe that understanding ritual will help us deal with many of the negative developments we face these days, like loneliness, fear-mongering and replacing freedom with fake security at the expense of privacy. My plea for a ritual revival aligns well with moving toward a different kind of social interaction in the cyberspace age.



Hecate (Capitol)

What we now project as being in the cloud, accessible but not tangible, is not much different from how we used to see the otherworld in the past age of ritual. We use wifi, email and not prayer, but the nearly religious fervor of the tweet generation to stay connected and homogenize isn't very far from how older traditions were using prayer beads, mantras and tribal identifiers.

Let's see how thinking about ritual developed, the different viewpoints can help to get a wider picture.

Concentration on the social

Ritual theory mostly concentrates on the social part and sees ritual as a type of critical juncture where some pair of opposing social or cultural forces come together.

The setting is what interested the anthropologists, certainly in the 20th century. Ritualization is seen as a strategic way of constructing a limited and limiting power relationship.

It can be legitimating the power structure of the state, the religion, belief system or ideology, as a way of economic (surplus redistribution) and social control and here modern thinkers are not far from what the Chinese Xunzi (ca. 312–230 BCE) said about ritual in Confucian terms.

Ritual has been used, by the worldly authorities and the religious bigwigs to keep the people docile, obedient (and poor and ignorant) all through the ages, already Xunzi knew that rituals were great political tools.

Ritual influences, as a social phenomenon, groupism (to conform to the cultural pattern of a group) and formalism (fostering the repetition of the traditional).

Ritual theorists like Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz and Emile Durkheim did see the opposition between ritual and belief, (bodily) action and thought, even as these two come together in rituals, art and religion in a symbolic fusion. Their link between ritual and religion is too strong for me, but they do point at the act/body aspect of ritual.

Geertz, with his focus on explanation of meaning in cultural phenomena, worded this opposition as the distinction between ethos (moral and esthetics of a culture) and worldview (cognitive, existential aspects of a culture).

In ritual the World as lived (dispositions) and the World as imagined (conceptions) are fused under the agency of a single set of



Xunzi



Heka (Egypt)

symbols, they come together in the act. The two worlds turn out to be the same world.

Ritual and Political Power

Setting is not only how a ritual is performed, but also how it is embedded in the environment, the culture and what role it plays in the political and power structure of a society. Priest as spiritual leaders and kings and rulers as worldly leaders are complements, both with their realm and function, but also competitors for attention, power and material wealth. Popes and emperors have at times worked together, but also waged wars against each other and this pattern even in the smallest villages and tribal communities. The circumstances favor the one or the other pole, worldly dangers the worldly rules, disaster, diseases and bad crops the priests.

The use of ritual in politics is obvious, not only to defend the status quo of church or state, but also by opposing forces and political aspirants. With the purpose of forging new alliances and assemble people new elements are often incorporated in existing rituals, not varying so much as to damage the traditional formats, but used for new agenda's. Luther for instance can be seen as using the Bible, part of the old order, to change the Church by using its timeless and uncontested value.

Sociologists or the ancient philosophers concerned with society were, for a long time, not really interested in rituals, one saw them as superstitious, a way to keep the people in line and entertained, maybe as functional in social cohesion but not as an economic factor. They considered ritual as a private matter, not of great public importance.

Ritual however pervades many aspects of life, at the private and the society and economic level. At home it might be a personal matter, honoring the ancestors and deities, asking for private grace, but in more public situation ritual as in ceremonies, feast, festivals, seasonal celebrations becomes a social glue. Beyond kinship and rational (trade) relationships the feeling of belonging, of being part of a clan, a tribe, a village, town, city or state is fed by rituals.

Rituals at home

Cohesion in that sense is a basic factor in society and ritual unites. This not only true for large public rituals, rituals at home or in small groups also serve many purposes. If home rituals are extended into public rituals, a kind of upscaling like we see in bringing the Hindu agnihotra lighting of a fire or candle to massive public fire rituals, they are better embedded in the culture. Using (traditional) home rituals as the basis for public rituals or vice versa is a way to anchor them in the minds of the people.

Most writers did accept ritual as a political tool, a way to manipulate the people, establish or maintain social order and ignore the true magical effects. They may see, like Durkheim, the increased sense of belonging and being holy as a factor underlying ritual, but that people actually benefit beyond their feeling good in spiritual and magical terms by participating or watching rituals is not generally appreciated.

“Ritual is not in good odour with our intellectuals.... In their eyes only economic interests can create anything as solid as the state. Yet if they would only look about them they would everywhere see communities banded together by interest in a common ritual; they would even find that ritual enthusiasm builds more solidly than economic ambitions, because ritual involves a rule of life, whereas economics are a rule of gain, and so divide rather than unite.”

A.M. Hocart (“Kingship” 1927)

This limited view has changed lately, like in the work of Lisa J. Lucero but only in the sense that one recognizes the economic importance of ritual as away to acquire and redistribute a surplus in goods or labor. She takes the Mayan culture of Mexico as an example of a culture based on such a surplus mechanism, notably the rainwater that was so important for the Mayan agricultural economy.

“Water is the surplus material par excellence in many cultures, as water is essential to agriculture and easily appropriated by those who control rivers, dams and reservoirs. Thus water rituals (often in the context of fertility, rain and river fluctuations) are very basic and important.” (L. Lucero)

Manipulating or extracting surplus is how many leaders succeed. It takes material capital to support rulers, their families, their courts and supporters and to allow public works and events that maintain the status quo.

One now tends to accept rituals in the context of managing surplus, as ways to balance the material inequalities between rulers and people with promises of future support and contact with the otherworld. Kings and rulers don’t survive if there is some unbalance, they have in a way to pay their dues too, not only by providing material support in case of need, famine, drought, etc. but by being an intermediary with the gods, securing rainfall,

Nile flooding or victory in war. Without that balance, their power will not last. This balance is anchored and stabilized by linking the ritual, while aiming at the future, to the past. Ancestry, being related to previous rulers or priests, points to a better link to the past and constitutes authority and justifies receiving offerings that once were intended for the ancestors, that sometimes became deities.

If we accept ritual efficacy, we see that the magic of public rituals is essentially time-magic, securing some benefits in the future but heavily depending on the connection of the rulers and the faith with the past, the ancestors, the lineage.

Assuming a connection (through time) with the roots of a civilization, a real of fabricated link with the hero's or the past, the founders or first settlers of a place, gives status and ritual prestige. This link can be virtual like a assumed name or through material objects associated with the roots of a culture, magical objects and magical places.

Edmund Leach (1966) notes that ritual pervades all aspects of society and life, and Pierre Bourdieu (1977) found it is not surprising that the politically ambitious transform ritual action into political fortune. Ritual is more and more seen as integrating religious, social, economic, and political life, as a stratum for power and thus manipulation.

This goes for all aspects of life, civic (birth, marriage, death), legal (ownership, inheritance, courts), trade and war, public works like roads, temples and irrigation systems, but also for memorial, seasonal and calendar related ceremonies and feasts. Through ritual one can achieve stability as well as change, the political players can involve and mobilize the people or at least active participants.

So ritual is more and more seen an important factor how a few people get others to contribute labor and services with a virtual compensation (in their mind and usually with a promise for the future or the afterlife) but with an imbalance in material terms. The notion of Michael Mann (1986) that economy, ideology, military force, and politics are the four factors in social power or social control, needs to be appended by accepting ritual as a intersecting mechanism for these factors.

The original experience forgotten

Rituals have of course changed over time and in line with cultural and cognitive development but often a core has been retained, the essence has intuitively survived. We have however distanced ourselves from our 'primitive' past and are now less in touch with our intuitions. The direct experienced 'knowing' that was the root of many rituals got lost, the content became empty form.

The deeper and essential meaning of retained older rituals of long standing traditions is therefore not so easy to recognize and often there are multiple levels of interpretation. Not only the audience, but also the priests and officiants have a limited understanding, they dutifully repeat or follow the prescribed liturgy, but often have no clue as why they do this or that, sing or say this, or what the effect is of deviations. They only know that this is how it should be done, and deviations might be dangerous.

This is often the reason that traditional rituals like the Vedic fire rituals are done in a very exact way. The officiators do realize (or are warned in the scriptures and by their predecessors) that there are important details they don't recognize as such, so they observe the tradition very literally. They often see rituals as revealed by the higher forces, not as human constructs, hence their holiness.

Frazer already saw this, but more practical:

“myth changes while custom remains constant; men continue to do what their fathers did before them, though the reasons on which their fathers acted have been long forgotten. The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice.”

A primal experience beyond theories

Ritual is not the only means to reach a state of connectedness with the otherworld. For the ‘sage’ or ‘hermit’ living in the woods rituals have little meaning as they seek to reach heavens more directly and by the inner road. For the active folks ‘in the world’ a ritual is the usual way to contact the otherworld. Ritual is not so much, as some state it, a metaphor for conscious living, it is more a willed relating to the wider or ultimate reality. It is a way of transcending mundane existence and routine behavior, with a sense of meaning and direction, it gives at its best a jump in consciousness, transformation, social alchemy and a deep ‘connection’, at its worst a structure and stability to the participant and the community.

A ritual is dialectic, we shape the ritual and the ritual shapes us.

The gods of magic

Gods and divinities and how they are placed in the pantheon are usual good indications about the social and cultural importance of what they stand for. The great example is of course Agni, the Vedic and Hindu fire god. The role of fire as a social factor is reflected in how he is regarded as the main connection with the otherworld.

I have been looking for a god, divinity or demon, associated with ritual, but found no direct reference. There are many gods associated with magic, in most cultures there is such a figure, often there are even a number of magic divinities, with lesser Gods for specific practices like divination.

The most prominent Greek goddess of magic and witchcraft is Hecate, depicted often as a trinity. She is quite popular with the Wicca and neopagan witchcraft communities, where her three faces are seen as the energies of the Maiden, the Mother and the Crone, the eternal cycle.

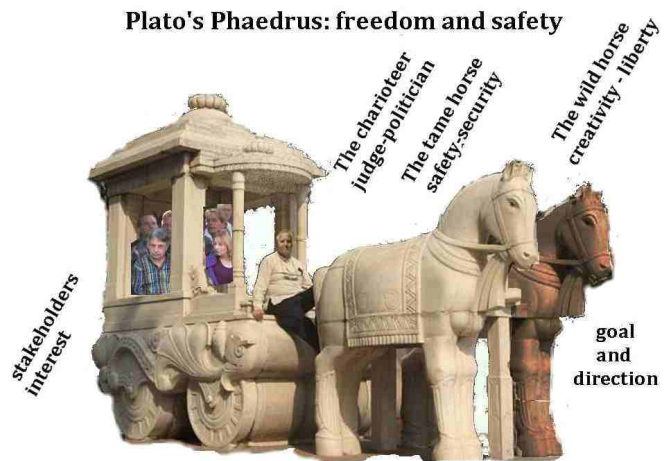
She has been traditionally used to adorn or bless crossroads, a logical association with the three faces. She appears in the stories and myths as both very beneficial and very cruel, and as she is carrying a torch, mostly as a goddess of the darkness, the hidden, she is gatekeeper to the realms of the otherworld.

She was the only child of the Titans Perses and Asteria from whom she received power over heaven, earth, and sea.

Bridgid plays a similar role in the Celtic pantheon. Spelled sometimes as Brighid ("breed") is a goddess of Triplicity and a member of the Tuatha De Danu ("People of the Goddess Danu"), she was acknowledged as the deity of creativity, magic, healing. She brings the transforming energy of fire quickening and forging, also bringing new life.

Egyptian Magic

An Egyptian God of magic is Heka, his name is also the Egyptian word for "magic" and "magical ritual". He was a primordial being, from "before duality had yet come into being". As the god with magic powers and spells he was the personification of divine magic that the ancient Egyptians believed produced the magical power of the sun and of



Plato's image of the two horses offers a god image to look at the issue of freedom versus safety

life. Heka (also Hike) was sometimes depicted as the son of Khnum. Heka literally means activating the Ka, the aspect of the soul which embodied personality. Egyptians thought activating the power of the soul was how magic worked. “Heka” also implied great power and influence, particularly in the case of drawing upon the Ka of the gods. Heka acted together with Hu, the principle of divine utterance, and Sia, the concept of divine omniscience, to create the basis of creative power both in the mortal world and the world of the gods.

The connection between heaven and earth via a messenger gave rise to deities, gods that came with gifts from the above, the Prometheus figure, with fire, magic, crafts and other tools and understandings. Both The Egyptian Thoth and the Greek Hermes were gods of writing and of magic in their respective cultures. Thus the Greek god of interpretive communication was combined with the Egyptian god of wisdom as a patron of astrology and alchemy.

There is no clear god of ritual

Now I noticed that there was no god specifically for rituals.

Many gods would be called upon in rituals, some would have this interworld communication function like the Vedic Agni, but I could find no mention of a ritual god. So I looked for a deity that would fit the bill. It had to be a primordial god, a deity that was there before the enthronement of mind and self-consciousness.

In the Greek mythology that would mean that he or she had to be like Titan, a archaic deity from before Zeus, that smart ruler, impersonator and hierarchic chief of the Olympus. The Greek mythology, as some like Immanuel Velikovsky have argued, is not only a representation of cosmic (solar system) history but can be seen as an account of the development of consciousness too. in the Roman archaic pantheon.

Ritual in my view existed before religion and fits the archaic time idea, with deities that were more primitive and nature related.

Well, I found one and he perfectly fits the bill, and although I am not starting a new cult, it's kind of nice to have a patron of ritual. But first I will explain why ritual is so much more related to the older gods and how the distinctions made by Georges Dumézil therefore supports my idea that ritual was something of an earlier era and paradigm.

Dumézil has pointed at a structural difference in level between the prehistoric Indo-European gods of beginning and ending (like the Vedic Vāyu and Roman Janus and the Zoroastrian Angra Mainyu) and the other (later) gods who fall into a tripartite structure. These primeval gods are sometimes called Uranic gods and like the Titans of the Greek are later somehow de-

throned by their offspring. Reason and personality overtook the intuitive, and the Uranic gods were often debased.

Dumézil and his influential trifunctional hypothesis of the prehistoric Proto-Indo-European society discerned a tripartite ideology (“idéologie tripartite”) as reflected in the existence of three classes or castes, priests/rulers, warriors, and commoners (farmers or tradesmen).

This in connection to the three functions of the sacral, the martial and the productive, reflecting the most ancient organization of society.

This again was mirrored in the pantheon, where often tripartite combinations of gods appear.

Proto-Indo-European mythology was divided in the same way: each social group had its own god or family of gods to represent it and the function of the god or gods matched the function of the group.

Janus Bifrons, my God of Ritual

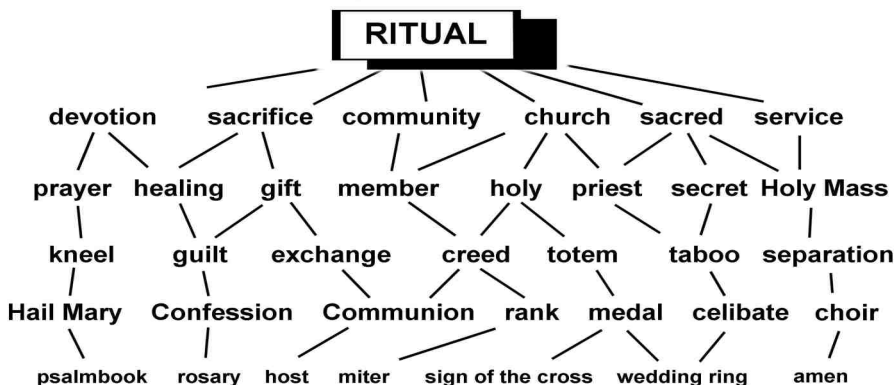
I couldn't find a traditional God of ritual, so let me fill this historic hole. The Roman god Janus is whom I think is the quintessential patron of ritual. His two faces - one looking to the future and one to the past - could also be interpreted as looking toward the two worlds, the tangible and the extradimensional. In ancient Roman religion and myth, Janus (Latin: Ianus) is the god of beginnings and transitions, so also of gates, doors, passages, endings and time.

The Romans named the first month of the year, January (Ianuarius) in his honor, according to tradition considered the highest divinity at the time, so he was seen as a archaic figure.

Janus presided over the beginning and ending of conflict, and hence war and peace. The doors of his temple were open in time of war, and closed to mark the peace. As a god of transitions, he had functions pertaining to birth, journeys and exchange. He is also god of the doors, from where comes the word janitor (doorkeeper).

That Janus was very much a ritual deity is illustrated by the fact that King of the Sacred Rites (rex sacrorum) himself carried out his ceremonies, he had no specialized priest (sacerdos) assigned to him. Also Janus was ever present in religious rites throughout the year, and was ritually invoked at the beginning of each one, regardless of the main deity honored on any particular occasion.

He is the god of beginnings and of motion and since movement and change are bivalent, he has a double nature, symbolized in his two headed image. As the god of change, transition and time he is of course magical, but I would interpret his two faces also as magical and mystical. In my interpretation of the ritual state, one would have access to the other time dimension,



Taxonomy of ritual

different levels of abstraction

where there is access to past and future, hence his intrinsic association with omens and auspices.

Janus and Jana (Diana) are a pair of divinities, worshiped as the sun and moon, whence Janus received sacrifices before all the others, because through him is apparent the way of access to the desired deity. It might be that the two faces of Janus are related to another phenomenon, the twin pillars that show up in many temples (from Masonic lodges to the Kaaba in Mecca). These have to do with the twin solstices, the divine twins in many religions,

Taxonomy

Ritual is more fundamental than religion and at the same time less cognitive, it is related to a stage of development that predates religion and covers aspects of life that are not exclusively human. In that sense it is a category in the philosophical sense, which is not so much primitive as it is basic. Not as basic as things like space and time and nature, sex or kin, but more basic than language, religion, church or law.

To illustrate what place ritual has in our world view (not that of an internet junkie, but say of a medieval believer I tried to create a taxonomy. It's not a true folk taxonomy, but an attempt to classify the concepts and things around a ritual, organize them according to the abstraction level. I am not an anthropologist or linguist, but it would be nice to see what items a different culture would place at the various levels. Taxonomies are a way to compare concepts and there are some interesting points there. The middle layers are usually the most common and most exchanged words in daily com-



munications, and are usually shorter and more the same in different languages. The word Mass (Miss) for Eucharist is such a short word, it derives from the phrase “Ite Missa Est” at the end of Mass, the sending away message. An easy word and recognized because it is in the last phrase from a ritual held in Latin, not understood by the common folks.

Anthropologists see taxonomies like the local categories and names of plants as typical for local cultural and social systems, think about the many names an Inuit has for snow. They try to interpret these classifications as they indicate the conceptual order of things. Not an easy thing, the famous sociologist (and armchair anthropologist) Émile Durkheim in “The Elementary Forms of (the) Religious Life” (1912) based his view of the separation between profane and sacred and totemism as the root of religion on observations of Australian aboriginals. I feels however he didn’t fully realize they probably didn’t have that dichotomy. For them everything was sacred, not only their ritual objects but also the hunt and their trekking along songlines. So the relative classification of their objects and practices was maybe correct, but their paradigm was totally different from Durkheim’s.

To understand the paradigm of earlier civilizations and cultures is not easy and for a long time they were seen as primitive (as in behind), the whole notion of totem and taboo as fundamental categories came about as they were looked at from the paradigm of separation of the sacred and the profane, of religion and science. This was something that late 19th century thinkers like James, Frazer and Durkheim could not ignore, as their time was full of new technological (profane) miracles like electric lights, telephone, photography, cars, trains, etc. Honoring the ritual paradigm of other cultures was not in their book. Even the Hindu and Buddhist traditions going back much longer than the Christian one, were regarded as primitive and superstitious. And even today, science has become so materialistic and separated from the sacred, that honoring or worse studying the ritual paradigm is out of the question, one would risk one’s career and respectability.

Animism

Durkheim sees rites as ways of dealing in thought and action with the fundamental dichotomy of sacred and profane: as two separate worlds. The sacred is not connected to the divine but just set apart by a prohibition or ta-

boo (as a totem), he doesn't see religions as coming out of animism or naturism, where physical entities or even abstract concepts possess spiritual essence. Durkheim doesn't support notions, like Edward Tylor's that visions, dreams or extraordinary natural phenomena were enough to create religion.

Maybe animism is a natural stage in development. Jean Piaget pointed at animistic patterns in the way the world is experienced in a child's mind as consciousness develops. There is a stage of implicit understanding that all events are the product of intention or consciousness. Piaget explains this with a cognitive inability to distinguish the external world from one's internal world.

Modern physics has changed the way we look at what makes things exist. The physicist Nick Herbert has argued for "quantum animism" in which mind permeates the world at every level. In the sense that mind here can be exchanged with consciousness or even intention it means that every natural system has an inner life, a conscious center, from which it is aware of its existence and actions. This comes close to panpsychism, where there is a spirit in all, but maybe at different levels of awareness.

The terms animism and panpsychism have become related in recent years as the understanding that all nature is "alive" as it can only be manifested if it is observed has grown. Rupert Sheldrake has claimed that morphic fields "animate organisms at all levels of complexity, from galaxies to giraffes, and from ants to atoms".

Daniel Quinn sees himself as an animist and defines animism not as a religious belief but as a religion itself, and considers it to be the first worldwide religion, common among all tribal societies. I find that in a way appropriate, because I see the various neopagan and cyberpagan movements certainly as tribes. Tribal revival not as an outdated model of cooperation on the path of developing civilization, but as a way of being and acting together in its own category. I have participated in some urban tribe events and helped develop the notion of Tribes of Magic.

We now know that tribal life in the past wasn't so hard as we assumed earlier, it was more connected, with much more leisure and freedom than we now have in our 9-5 society and more magic, more ritual and more connecting. Daniel Quinn termed this understanding the "New Tribal Revolution". New tribalists argue that tribal life as an open, egalitarian, classless and cooperative community is the natural state of humanity, as proven by some two million years of human evolution.

Ritual as paradigm

We live in the days of internet connectivity and quantum uncertainty, coming out of the paradigm where everything was placed under the computer umbrella. Before that there were systems and feedback as the main paradigm and before that the industrial revolution made people see and classify all as being machines, including our body and mind. I would argue that the ritual as paradigm has been, in era sometime before 3000 BCE, more prevalent than anything else, and lasted much longer than these newer viewpoints on reality.

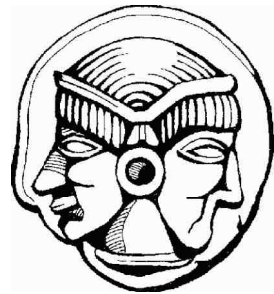
Even today, in societies like that in rural Bali, ritual is what matters most and for many religious people, ritual is the way their life is organized, where they get the meaning for what they do. More people in the world today live and honor the ritual paradigm than our western materialistic perspective.

If we see ritual as the way to connect (or reconnect) tot the extradimensional, to the realm we belong to, from where most of our decisions in and about life come, then seeing it as the basis of life is maybe a bit pretentious, but why not.

Like Helen Armstrong advocates a revival and new appreciation of myth, I plead for a revival of true ritual. It offers so much, not only meaning but a new connection and structure. Life is a ritual in itself. If we project the matrix, the sequence of human life onto that of a ritual, then the stages like birth, consciousness, masking, identity, education, creed, sharing, celebration, communion, identity crisis and death show up in ritual too. Our life is a stretched out ritual, a quest for the otherworld we will reach at the end and involving set, setting and the magical all the time.

The approach is straightforward. We have to first to honor and appreciate and then let go of ego, as this is what manifestation is all about, a divine play to recover the monad, the essential message that love and truth are one. Ritual, as life, is not supposed to be easy, it is a dance along the various energies and challenges we encounter, from the mere material to the highest spiritual.

Everybody has their own scenario to follow, but those who believe in conscious incarnation could say, this is a choice and whatever we encounter is what we needed to fulfill the scenario's goals. So for everybody this dance is different, but shares the common goal of reuniting the three worlds, the individual, the others and the divine. In this sense life can be



interpreted in the light of the ritual scenario, but vice versa a good ritual should have all the aspects and elements of life. As an example, a good ritual should honor all the chakra energies.

In the Appendix chapter nr. VIII, you will find an analysis of Holy Mass in this perspective.

A step back: beyond the theory there is experience

Is ritual really what I or all these theories claim? Experiencing ritual is different from describing ritual and my experiences are colored by my projections. We can bring together facts and stories, interpretations and theories, as I do in this book, but it's never more than a map of the moon, the moon itself is of a different order. As Jules Henri Poincaré explained in 1908:

"Science is built up of facts, as a house is with stones. But a collection of facts is no more a science than a heap of stones is a house."

Empiricists like David Hume, who in fact was not denying deeper meaning but just pointed out that it is so hard to separate the observer from what really happens, justly stated "impression is what matters, ideas are just constructions of the mind".

There are things we cannot comprehend, not because science hasn't solved it, but because it is beyond the material world and it is scientifically (objectively) impenetrable. The New Mysterianism of Colin McGinn claims that. Then there are the "philosophical materialists," I think about Carl Sagan's view of the material world as "all there is, or ever was, or ever will be." They agree that everything can or at least should be described in terms of chance and impersonal natural law without reference to any sort of transcendent intelligence or mind. To them, ideas are epiphenomena of matter.

Well, that's humbling, it means whatever theories or conclusions I come to, they carry with them a very personal interpretation and coloring, they are at best filtered and constructed "ideas". Although I try to construct models and postulate theoretical explanations, I also have to admit that those are of a different order than the experience. The experience of a ritual is always more than what can be put in scientific models, theories or even poetic words. It has this mystical side, escapes rational description, doesn't follow our 'normal' cause and effect relationships and resembles much more what we experience looking at great art, listening to great music or eating an excellent dinner, it is a sensual thing. Being on the "inside" in a ritual is or can be like a mystical experience, beyond the mind, beyond thought, even beyond emotions, just experiencing. Ritual is away from thinking, sometimes even thoughtless, mimetical, obsessive, routinized, habitual and often seems illogical. But then it was there, all through history and long before.

29 The ethical questions; karma, natural law

Can we influence reality, the future and are we allowed to do so? What is the relationship between ritual and our notions of good and bad, how does ritual, as a carrier of culture and morality, relate to the law. The law and the political system use ritual, are in fact anchored in ritual, even as, over time, we moved away from notions like karma, divine order and looked for rational ways to deal with order in society. In this chapter I will deal with those questions, as they resonate not only with the social aspects and meaning of ritual, but with individual conscience and the divine or at least magical dimension of ritual. Whatever our religious stance concerning morality is, when we enter a court of law (or a session of a political body) we enter into a world of ritual, where notions of justice, fairness, guilt and responsibility come together in procedures with a magical intention. The law is maybe rational, but the process of law assumes an ideal, a supernatural idea of right and wrong. The roots of the idea that we can order or regulate society and the interactions of humans lie in the notion that we are conscious and responsible beings or at least in the pretense we are.

To start with the ethical; what about the effects of rituals, who is responsible for good or bad outcomes, who dares to step into God's shoes in trying to change things, manipulate the future?

These are not empty questions, not in my life anyway. Very often I am faced with serious dilemmas concerning responsible magical and ritual acts or behavior. Am I allowed to influence the order of things, am I playing God or do I justly gauge the consequences? Is knowing the future not also influencing the future? This has to do with my belief that practical magic in ritual does work and is thus consequential.

Can one heal a person, cure a disease, but at what level, is superficial healing acceptable, can we influence another person's life? When is magic nothing but becoming aware? Maybe I should give another personal example of how magic works.

The root of magic, consciousness

In 2008, just before the financial crisis hit, I participated in the Waldzell Conference in the Benedictine Abbey (Stift) of Melk in Austria. It's one of the world's most fantastic historic sites with a Baroque church and a history going back to 1089. The conference turned out to be a parade of ego-pushers, but I met some interesting people and was not the most silent critic of the whole setup, an exclusive super-expensive conference for hip do-gooders and would-be philanthropists.

Anyway, at some moment I am sitting next to the abbot of the monastery and he asks me what I think of his place. I told him it was materially a big success, lots of tourist traffic, but spiritually it was empty. Just a few remaining monks focused on the library treasures and the splendor of the Baroque church, but no spiritual spark. As I had spoken about magic there, asked some questions to speakers, he asked me if that could be fixed. I was kind of embarrassed, in a way he called my bluff. But he was a kind man, sincerely looking for answers to a question he must thought about a lot. So I contemplated what to do and kind of connected to some level inside me, and said, yes, it can be done.

How, he asked, and I answered intuitively, now! Let's go, it's in the church! In the middle of the conference, we were sitting in the front row, he stood up and guided me to a side door, guiding me through the cloistered and very private part of the Abbey toward the Church. This was already quite special, normally no outsiders were allowed to come there. But for some reason both of us got in this "liminality" state, where identity dissolved.

I had no idea what was to happen, just knew I had to go to this Church, a Baroque masterpiece, with gold everywhere, impressive, radiating the power of old Austria and the Church. When we came to the door, a magical insight came to me.

I asked the abbot to take me to the place, where his poorest, most destitute parishioner would stand in this Church. He looked at me, the lights went on, he understood and he took me to a place near a big pillar, in the back of the church, close to the door. Walking there, we were both shedding tears, as the truth sank in, and we embraced each other as we came to this place, this hidden corner that, we both knew, was the essence of this and every church. There, where the true Christ would be in the form of the poorest member of the congregation. There, where all this splendor and power symbolism would mean nothing if there was no love and connection with whomever was standing there.

Not much needed to be said, he understood that this humble spot identified the true spirituality, that in whatever service this was what it was all about; honoring the least of the least as being worthwhile, being welcome, being the guest of honor, the guest of love. Now this whole thing came to me intuitively, was not a mind trip, but just following what my legs told me. Go there and open up, you will be guided.

Some would call this a mystical experience, but the abbot had specifically asked for magic and that was how it felt and feels to this day. To this day, whenever I go to a big cathedral or mountain chapel, I look for that place, for it is where I belong, it's the place of true power, of elevation and humbleness, where I am reminded I am not different, better, but just the same.

This example shows, how magic works. Not with miraculous acts and much pomp, but as the result of awareness, opening up to what is there already, feeling the underlying truth. I don't know if the monks did anything with this insight, but it made me humbly bow my head to whatever wisdom was coming my way. This was not my doing, but some deep truth given to me, and maybe to this abbot. In this case the ethical question had more to do with the karma of the place than with me or the abbot, and maybe with whom was I daring to hold up this mirror to a man, who obviously dedicated his life to this cause, the Melk abbey.

The ethical questions concerning magic and thus ritual are not easy, whatever our intentions are, we are dealing with consequences, on a personal, communal and extradimensional level, the last reflecting back into our normal reality. Not by chance the pronunciation of the word magic in Dutch is "Mag Ik" meaning "Can I", asking is what I am doing allowed in an ethical sense. Even apart from questions like black or white magic, this is very fundamental. Am I allowed?

This has to do with morality, conscience and the question where this set of norms and rules we live by, consciously or unconsciously, originates. Beyond what church, rationality or divine transmission tells us, I believe we have access to a wider reality where the interrelatedness of all things shows us the true 'truth' which is then filtered before it reaches our conscious mind. I have discussed this in the chapter about consciousness under 'conscience' already, but in relation to the ethics of ritual there are more issues.

Karma, as in that what you cause now is reflected in what will happen to you later, is basically the action-reaction mechanism we see in physics. In many religious tradition, it is extended to include the notion that we might have, in this life, to experience the consequences of past lives. Or, that what we do now will result in better or worse conditions in future lives. Now the problem is that whatever we do, we reckon with the consequences, so totally detached non-karmic actions are impossible. If we do things, even without seeking any recompense now, we somehow know this will be repaid in the future. It sounds nice, do it for God, be of service, let go of attachment, but can we?

Karma is either personal karma or what in very broad terms could be called family or clan related karma. Beyond the notion that there is immediate action-reaction for whatever we do karma is often perceived as energy we bring into this life from previous lifetimes. Family karma is different, there are energies associated with families and groups, clans, villages and even corporations or institutions that we carry with us, sometimes protective and

beneficial but in many cases this energy is “tilted” or negative. In some cultures this is described as curse, it does have considerable influence on our well being, health and development, and is the subject of many rituals too, but here I will deal with the ethical.

Time and Steiner’s idea of Karma

Rudolf Steiner didn’t see Karma as the iron law of the past determining the present, but described it as much more complex and flexible. For as free will must have a place in the universe, as he believed, not everything in the present can be determined by the past. Man has to have a choice, for good or evil. So then karma must be understood by looking both forwards and backwards in time.

Karma is the law that every action must be balanced out: action is reaction, somewhere in time.

From my perspective, I see karma a bit differently, and without the chance element Steiner allowed. There is purpose and direction in everything. God doesn’t throw dice, I agree with Einstein on this, but differ from his dimensional model. There are, I explain also elsewhere, two time dimensions, the logical causal deterministic one and the magical, non linear one. I think that free will is acting in the magical one and that karma is a direct action-reaction mechanism: the kickback is immediate, but the effect might become apparent only later. Bringing karma from an earlier lifetime is an interesting idea, but if one sees every incarnation as a conscious choice, then the so-called karmic load is just part of the scenario or life curriculum the soul has chosen.

Many rituals aim at influencing the world around, helping the participants, fixing problems, achieving specific material and immaterial goals. From improving relationships, healing, winning wars to making rain, there is much we need and want. Here the ritual truly becomes magical, as in “cooking the world” which is what Brahmin are supposed to do.

However, whatever the expectations, there is always the divine will (the natural order or fate), which supersedes the human will, so the outcome of a ritual in this sense is always uncertain.

Dangers, ethics and karma of magic

Ritual addresses or ‘channels’ a raw and potentially dangerous psychic force, so we have to be careful. We are literally ‘playing’ with fire and this can turn out good or bad, there is no morality in fire as such. There is a thin line between success, and physical or psychical problems or illness.

Performing rituals comes with a sense of real or perceived ‘power’ and there is an ego-attraction there that is hard to escape. For many being the

center of attention is enough to make them ‘fly’, but remember the story of Prometheus. He took the fire from the Gods to bring it to the humans and give them civilization. But Hephaestus, the son of Zeus and Hera, got the better of him, tied him to a crag and an eagle would eat his liver that would regenerate every day. Or think of Phaethon, a young son of Helios and Klymene, who attempted to drive the Sun Chariot without proper knowledge, nearly causing the incineration of the Earth.

Do not bury your emotions in a ritual, but neither should you elevate them to the level of dictator or ego-maniac. The obsession of self-importance and personal identity is counter-productive in ritual work. Humility is the true trait of the magus.

If we see a ritual as a magical endeavor, intention is the main attribute and the key to success in terms of both material and immaterial results

(in Love under will: Aleister Crowley, an English occultist and mystic).

The will in his view is the driving force, expressed in intention, but has to be aligned with the various realms and the ‘divine’ will. If love and truth are present and expressed in body, mind and heart of the people, little can go wrong. However, bad intentions by some can turn things sour and corrupt the outcome of a ritual. That’s why in the Vedas so much attention is given to warding off black magic.

There are strong ethics involved in ritual work and magic in general. Not only do we have to be careful not to overstep the boundaries of participants and honor their cultural literacy (sensitivities, tolerance) but the purpose, intention and effects of a ritual need attention.

I would like to point here at what I observed in modern ritual and among many so called spiritual teachers. They too, because of transference, initiation, psychedelic experiences or training, have achieved higher states of consciousness. They have had, in a mystical or ritual state, maybe great understandings, mystic experiences and by coming down, back into the world, might have retained a few.

These insights however become conscious only through the filtering of the assumed self and thus there is nearly always some level of distortion, masking, personal projection.

But then, in the conscious and thus deluded assumed self state they still think they have the same level of insight, wisdom and spiritual frequency as they had in the special holy state. So they start to preach, give satsang, heal, become teachers and therapists, happily projecting their “small” truths, often imprisoned in their own mask world and cut off from further growth.

Now this is not to claim there are no real teachers, real healers, real sages, for some did retain more of these special talents and insights. In general I

noticed the guru's and spiritual teaches that became "professional" are nowhere near the level they reached once, certainly not in daily life.

Many have developed a routine or subpersonality that brings them to a higher level when in their "teacher" chair or role, a saving grace for their disciples. I believe that the more mature traditions or religions have better understood (but often forgotten) how this works and have rigorous training programs and selection mechanisms before someone calls her/himself priest or shaman. I have a healthy reserve concerning self appointed enlightened ones, and I have met and interviewed many.

Effects

Cause and effect, action and reaction, what we do resonates in the extradimensional. We can use the word Karma here, to indicate that what is done has a wider effect, it will resonate through time and all the dimensions. Apart from right or wrong we have to understand that a ritual effects, sometimes as an amplifier, many layers of the tangible and intangible realities. Start with respect for the Earth and the people, and try to extend that unto the other worlds, and you will realize that you and everybody are connected, and that what you do will come back to you, good or bad alike. Using a ritual setting and enclosure like a circle or a ritual space this (can) act as an amplifier, multiplying the energies and karma involved, this is sometimes referred to as 'the law of three' (See Laws of Magic), but it's more likely that 'action equals reaction' leads to "same for same".

Morality

The distinction between good and evil is either supposed to be a rational choice (like in Kant's categorical imperative), an essential quality of nature or a God-given morality (Ten Commandments of Moses) and forever discussed for its implications, in relation to free will or determinism, ethics and human nature. I think that there is a morality beyond the dogmatic or rational, there is an underlying order (and in there good and bad depending on the situation and perspective) that we can perceive. Not via the normal senses, not via rational thinking, but via the primes, the exchange mechanism with the extra-dimensional where that morality is anchored. One could call this morality as based in God or in nature, and as such the revelations (turned into dogmatic morality) that came to us are (filtered) truth perceived by those who had access to these dimension, but they are mitigated, adapted, colored truths.

Morality in my view is thus an essential quality of the metadimensional, but anchored more in the extra-dimensional spiritual realm than in the concrete physical world. To access this morality we need to make contact with that

realm and we do that best by letting go of the mask (personality) and using our primes. Ritual is a practical way to at least try to do so. The better we achieve this descent into the deep self to consult our conscience the better we will find true and unfiltered morality, eternal justice.

The English word conscience is less clear here than the German “Gewissen” or the Dutch “Geweten” which refer to what we once knew, to the primordial knowing we carry in our soul, the natural law we feel to be rightful.

The taboo; the sensible barrier

In most traditions and cultures there are taboos, things that are not allowed. Things not to eat, things not to do, places to not go, relationships not allowed, correspondences out of bound, sometime they make practical sense, sometimes we lost the true meaning of the taboo, but there are many. They limit our daily life, are written in rules, passed on by the tradition, upheld by the law, they are the profane and sacred but I feel they also are a magical demarcation. I think many of these rules that make sense at one level, also have a deeper meaning. I think they really are related to magical practice that is beyond the limits of safe and ethical and are like warning signs. Transgressing them is not only considered sinful, but must be forbidden because they open a field of magical possibilities with great dangers. Human sacrifice, I have mentioned this elsewhere, opens a door to time travel and transcendent experiences that are beyond what the layman could endure. They are part of high level ritual, but with purposes that have escaped the rational mind. When we read about how the Spanish priest described the rituals of Aztec and Maya cultures it seems alike abominable practice, but do we really know what happened, in the minds and souls of those close to it?

Ritualism; the great escape

I like to see Janus (Bif(r)ons) as the God of Ritual, his double face reflects past and future, the illusion of time, the masks we wear, but also the two sides of the ritual medallion. We can do rituals for many reasons, but a clear danger is that we aim at the form and not the content.

This remark will make me not popular with the ritualists, but much of present day interest in ritual is more about the cognitive, the psychological and social than about the magical.

The emphasis on rituals and liturgical ceremony in the neopagan communities is often an intellectual game, designing new formats and staging events with like-minded folks. Nice and socially meaningful, but often more ceremony than ritual.

The thousands of websites and books about witchcraft, Paganism, neo-animism, Druidism, tantra and other esoteric traditions deal more with form, formulas, the right dress, movements, songs, implements and such than with the magical efficacy. It is even fashionable to limit the effect of rituals to the social and psychological, emphasizing personal growth, awareness, denying true contact with the otherworld or claiming all that is just part of our inner world.

Of course anybody can play, meet and pretend, but the effects of rituals can be more than just a good feeling and camaraderie, belonging, brother- or sisterhood, I argue there is a deeper meaning in rituals that can backfire. I have never heard about ritual addiction, but met many people who would qualify, devoting a major part of their life to it at the expense of other, also essential activities.

Ra Uru Hu: the Human Design System

Do the stars define your life? In Astrology there is a lot of deterministic thinking, you are born at a given moment and this decides what's in store for you, it's kind of a karmic scenario. It is interesting to see how different methods come up with more or less relevant indications about one's life. I am not a real follower of astrology, but like to understand the principles, is there anything beyond the statistical relevance in relation to place and for instance season.

I have experienced the influence of sun and moon and planets, like during conjunctions and eclipses, and absolutely believe that changes in electromagnetic and maybe other extra-dimensional fields do have an effect, but how do I deal with the notion that I have freedom. If everything is fixed, what about free choice.

My favorite astrology approach is the Human Design (HDS), an I-Ching astrology with 64 hexagrams, 9 chakras and a very visual insight in what your birth date means in terms of fixed energy patterns with a clear distinction between design (soul/inner child/higher self) and personality. The message of HDS channeler Ra Uru Hu is:

"What can you do, most of your life is given by what your birth date (as in your astrological chart or Human Design Chart) gives you. Accept what is, accept the limitations, and try to live with it."

A short introduction of HDS in a Nutshell by Ra Uru Hu himself:

"The depth of Human Design reveals what choicelessness means. At the deepest level of your being there are reactions taking place. Reactions. Reactions when a hanging gate meets someone else's gate, a planet enters a gate, a cat enters your aura, when you eat food in a specific way, when you breathe. There are reactions

upon reactions. These reactions begin at the very base of our being, from which everything else emerges. That emerging energy travels up the corridors of your design, affected by your environment, the people in it, and the larger environment of the solar system. As it emerges through the conscious places in your design there is an accompanying thought traveling along it, "I am making this happen." In the thinnest slice of time the thinking mind rides energy it did not initiate and uses it to maintain its supremacy as the lord of your behavior, forcing that nameless energy into the framework of a created identity and story about the world. Mind cannot touch life. Life is the unfolding of an unending chain of reactions. Strategy and Authority pulls the form deeply into its groove, maximizing its potential by placing it consistently in places and around stimuli that evoke reactions that deeply nourish the form.

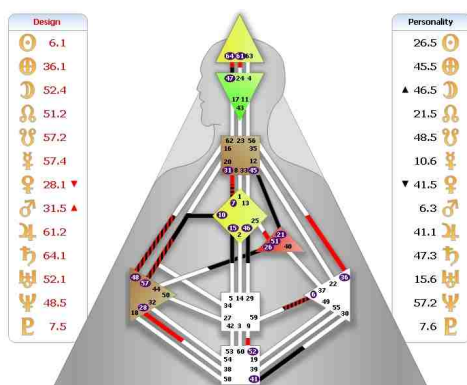
So what is freedom if we are trapped in the expression of energies arising unaided by us in every moment? Freedom comes through seeing that. How do we get to see it? Through the strange journey of the mind "allowing" the form to return to its natural expression, through Strategy and Authority ((two central HDS concepts). Life unfolds through us and around us constantly. As the mind comes to see that the body is in harmony with life, that it no longer needs to perform the role of decision-maker, it relaxes into watching. The amazing thing for the mind in this process is the discovery that it actually has nothing to do with the re-emergence of the body's intelligence, it is happening on its own. The mind sees its powerlessness.

So what is freedom if the mind is futile and the body is running on its own? If we are not in control of anything what is there to do but to appreciate the spectacle? When everything is unfolding choicelessly, when we are not preoccupied by the un-

folding, trying to change it or divert it, there is transcendence.

That is an altogether different relationship to this dream of life. We watch a gigantic play unfold, a whole planet spinning and dancing through the days. We ourselves watch the character that is "us" play its unique role in this kaleidoscopic play. A role accompanied by a

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The Human Design astrology of Ra Uru Hu

profound awareness and unique perspective of the play of life that is happening all around us, in us, and through us.

To want to change ourselves is the deepest misunderstanding of what is going on. What is happening is perfect, regardless of our experience. Whether you play a hero or a villain it is the deep choiceless dance of the cosmos emerging through us. To not need to be free from choicelessness is transcendence, transcendence that emerges only through the correctness of the form, through Strategy and Authority. “

Quite an outspoken and nearly deterministic view, you are what the celestial constellations, the planets make you. Acceptance and awareness is the only choice you have. There are many astrological systems, but HDS astrology is the only one I know clearly separating personality from design (our original purpose). It points at how imprisoned we are in the automatic processes in our psyche and that awareness is the only way out.

Change and neuro-plasticity

The question of course arises, can we ourselves change at all?

This is both a philosophical (theological) question and one about how the psyche works, in physical terms.

To start with the physical and biological; we are rewiring our brains all the time, just by using them.

The modern keyword for brain change is neuroplasticity, a term that has to do with the convergence of cognitive modifiability and the neurosciences, and refers to changes in neural pathways and synapses as a result of external stimuli, in popular jargon rewiring the brain.

Neuroplasticity has replaced the formerly-held position that our brain is like a stone tablet, once programmed that's it. The brain is not a fixed organ, developing toward some peak state around 20 and then slowly going down. The brain is and stays responsive to structural and functional change as a consequence of external stimulation, accidents, operations and mental processes.

Our brain is changing, evolving and creating new neural connections all the time, until we die. In that sense it is not different from other organs, nearly all our body cells renew themselves every 7 years or so. The plasticity of the brain (tissue and neurons) means we can and do change, and that to a certain extent we can even influence that process.

That we can modify our brain, at least it's function, is part of what Neuro Linguistic Programming has heralded. This in line with Ron Hubbard's understanding of how we program and can reprogram our mind (and here the physical brains) with neurophysiological patterns, engrams. Engrams are

the, still hypothetical, more permanent patterns (traces) with a physical existence in the brain.

There is evidence that this rewiring the brain, creating new pathways, happens at the neuron level. The basic mechanism is called synaptic plasticity and was introduced by Donald Hebb (*The Organization of Behavior*, 1949) and is often referred to as:

“Cells that fire together, wire together”

It’s called the Hebbian theory and it gives an explanation for the adaptation of neurons in the brain during the learning process. This means that activity in the brains does leave a physical trace, and if a certain pathways is stabilized because we use it a lot, we could indicate it as a program or an engram.

The work of Eric Richard Kandel and Donald Hebb about how cells and neurons learn, memorize and thus change, is fascinating. Our brains becomes more efficient at specific tasks with stimulation, not very different from a sportsman exercising his muscles.

Their work provided a mechanistic basis of learning and memory, but why limit this to biological processes and mere adaptation? If this works in invertebrates and vertebrates, at cell level and higher up, why not accept this learning, changing and evolving not only for the brain, but for the psyche, the mind-at-large, social organizations and why not make the jump to extra-dimensional entropic effects, magic and spirituality?

That there is electro-chemical activity when we perceive things and in the processes of storing and recall (memory) is clear and not much disputed, but is this more than just a tuning mechanism? Where is the long term storage or the visual image? Are all our perceptions and memories maybe just the result of filtered and constructed access to something bigger than our brains, existing in the brain as a holographic superstructure or outside in the extradimensional?

The same question about what we perceive and whether there is only individual realities or a deep reality pops up in other parts of this book, like in the chapter on will and the one about the senses.

Modifiability and karma

This brings up the question how basic human behaviors, habits and functions can be fundamentally and long term modified. Is it a matter of some physical modification (chemical, electrical, an operation) or are the physical results there because the psyche decided to change and the body obliges?

Is someone autistic because his or her nerve cells are different or his mirror-neurons don’t work the same? Or is there autism because the psyche at

the soul level has decided this is the way to go and the body has adapted to new ‘frequencies’?

Is it mind over matter or just matter changing, is the spiritual the change-initiator, or is change just a result of physical chaos and chance events?

The general idea that we can change, that we have some kind of influence over our destiny, that free will exists we find in all religions, therapeutic methods, psychiatric schools, initiatory practices and is now even part of the epigenetic lore. We can escape the genetic blueprint, nurture can change what nature has given us, (some) DNA can be silenced or activated and this carries over to the next generations.

Karma as a concept has, in the various uses of the word, both a deterministic and a free will side to it.

Some will say we bring it along in this incarnation as the result(s) of the past, like a burden we can’t escape and yet, karma assumes responsibility for what we do and did, like free will. Then how can we be responsible for our past, if we have no choice?

Karma, if I take the word positively, is not a burden, but a challenge, a call to battle the inner programming and neuroplasticity suggests that it is possible.

Meditation, concentration, exercising the body or specific mental capabilities, we learn and develop. In fact playing, the process of making mistakes and experimenting with different approaches is a good way to train the brain. We learn better from what goes wrong than from just following a beaten path.

For the spiritually inclined the notion of neuroplasticity has validated their belief, that by changing the way we think (meditate, pray, practice) we can change our mind, behavior and functioning.

People like the Dalai Lama are eager to point at what their tradition has always claimed, mind is more important than matter, change your beliefs, your thinking and you change your life.

Ritual can be a change process

Change is often the goal of ritual and changing one’s karma (or fate, or the causality) is not the least of ritual objectives.

Questions that find new answers as new tools evolve and our understanding of the way the brain functions and perception works grows.

Newer approaches describe how neuroplasticity is related to how we think, act, and change like cognitive modifiability. There are also new ways (drugs, therapies) how to make it happen, help us change.

But what's really new? I believe that ritual is one of the essential ways to do so and has always been, we just need to understand or map the more modern insights and terminology on the ritual matrix. In other words, recognize in ritual approaches that can lead to change, help us overcome our resistance to change. We like to cling to the old, the familiar, the seemingly safe and yet we know we need transformation to grow.

The three conventionally accepted limits of (personal) change are: etiology (the genetic, hereditary, and chromosomal causes of who we are, nature, genotype), critical periods (indicating that there are developmental deadlines after which change is impossible), and severity of the condition (indicating that extreme conditions cannot be improved, like losing a limb).

Science and technology are now breaking down these traditional constraints and limitations, and more and more we see that we have a lot more freedom to change, and that the psychological limitations, the way our mind perceives and interpret or even creates reality is what really matters.

Change your mind (whatever that is); that will change your brains (or wherever it is you think and process) and this will change your functioning.

Take the belief, that meditation brings increased focus, decreased day-dreaming, and better self monitoring. Substantial claims that now have been correlated with changes in the brain, not only the actual brain state (activity levels) but with differences in cortical thickness or density of gray matter.

Applications of this new (or rediscovered by the materialists) change (growth) potential have implications for dealing with a diverse range of physical and mental needs and disabling conditions.

There are, apart from the wish for self realization and spiritual growth many obvious fields like chromosomal conditions (Down's syndrome, Fragile X, Williams syndrome), traumatic brain injury, developmental delays, autism and the autistic spectrum, cultural and environmental deprivation, problems of aging, cancer, etc. These and other, traditionally considered immutable, conditions are now, in the broad context of neuroplasticity amenable to modifiability, and there is "scientific" interest in the discovery of ways of bringing them to manifestation.

The potential for modifiability is no longer confined to the "hard" and biologically based aspects of neural functioning, it is slowly implemented in psychotherapeutic applications, social policy formulations, novel research designs, and the like. What was considered miraculous or magical is now at least considered to be the result of changes in the way the mind (psyche) influences the brain influences the physicality.

Here the notion of mirror neurons may be mentioned. Some see them as just a mechanical way to explain resonance phenomena, what we see we duplicate. I think this is just the superficial effect of more complicated resonance mechanism and point at mechanism beyond embodied cognition. This is grounded in the observation, that some people (including myself) can pick up signals from others not only in close vicinity from us (like feeling the headache or ailment of someone) but at a distance. The normal senses don't have this reach, but the primes do, they are not or less vulnerable to time and space separation..

The argument, that there is less mirror neuron activity in the brains of autistic people is mentioned to support the materialistic view of us as our brains (Dick Swaab). But maybe the brain is just nicely obeying the psychical or soul impulse to be autistic. Cause and effect reversed, the material results from the immaterial intention.

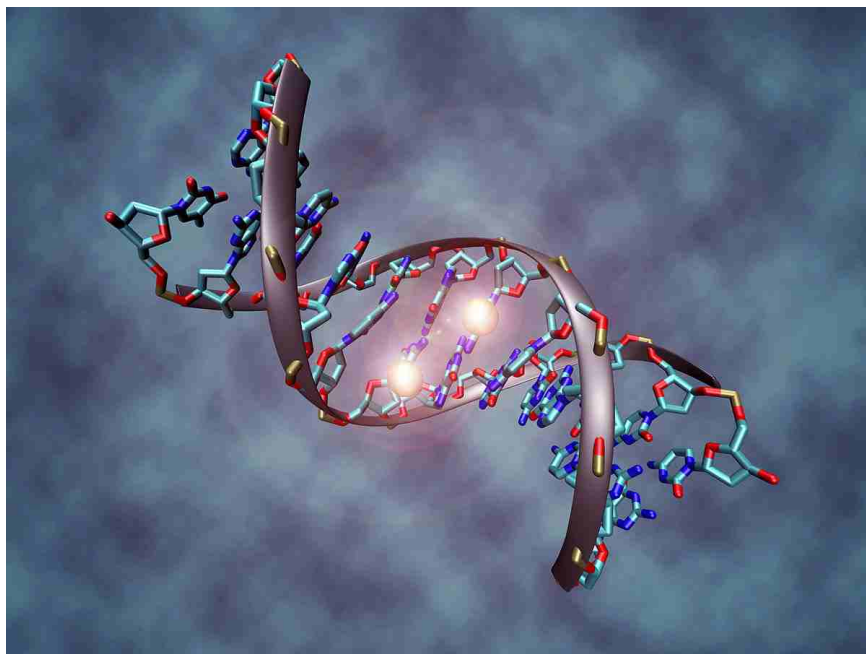
Mind over matter, in this sense neuroplasticity and neurogenetic modifiability are holes in the defense line of the materialists. I believe that apart from but also in cooperation with the great new scanning technologies and neurological research we should look at what ritual in its many forms achieves and does. Far beyond putting electrodes on meditating monks or testing psychedelics in cold and unfriendly laboratory conditions I feel that studying ritual and the underlying magic is where we will find the roots of change, in ourselves and in the world.

A non-reductionist framework of what ritual is needs to be developed and this is of course very much related to the mind-over-matter debate, and this again has a lot to do with psychology, perception and how and what subjective reality is and how our mind or psyche uses (or creates) the hardware and physical/chemical/electrical network of brain and body.

Here it is maybe a good point to state how I see all this study and theories about how our neurological system (and that's more than the brain proper) works. I strongly believe that mind or even better soul comes first, that whatever physical characteristics we have or develop, are the result of pre-, unconscious or conscious choices.

In a way we have chosen our incarnation, our parents, our DNA and even the challenges that these will bring. Our personality, the defense and coping system we developed is what it is, not by chance, but because it offers us the best learning opportunity for what we came to do here.

We (or soul) incarnate by choice with a vision for this life - what we come to do and to be here. Our life is a lesson, and not an easy one to that. We are not here because God plays dice, but because there is direction and purpose.



DNA Methylation (picture: Max Planck Institute)

We do have free will, but only in the magical time dimension, explained elsewhere.

Bruce Lipton and the Butterfly gen

Epigenetics is another fashionable and yet relevant concept, a hip way to indicate we can escape from what nature gave us as genetic blueprint, that we can choose to change the conditions that influence the genetic development, changing the expression of our genetic constellations (not fundamentally changing them, so it's not really Lamarckian or soft inheritance evolution). It seems that human DNA is more vulnerable (less stable in expression) than the DNA of chimpanzees, human are thus more modifiable.

Epigenetics is formally the study of heritable (lasting) changes in gene expression caused by mechanisms other than changes in the underlying DNA sequence. It refers to functionally relevant modifications to the genome (influencing the behavior or expression of the gene, like activating or not) that do not involve a change in the nucleotide sequence.

People like Bruce Lipton interpret epigenetics in a rather positive way, as offering us a choice for Spontaneous Evolution, he sees evolution, as I do, as driven by consciousness, as a process with a purpose and direction.

Choices we can make for instance in lifestyle, in environment, in food, that can help us to bypass and potentially defuse predestined genetic codes. He uses the example of the butterfly gene in caterpillar transformation, that is activated in only a very few cells of the pupa that then develop into the butterfly, in a way similar to the stem cell development in an embryo. These cells are the change agents, the ones that make the transformation happen. He believes that among humans there are also butterfly change agents, people who make a difference, people able to change the developmental code of humanity.

I met Bruce in the Abbey of Melk in Austria in September 2008 and was impressed by his vision and daring stance, here was a scientist willing to look beyond. He stimulates people to think out of the box, seek new options and find solutions for pressing global problems. He is definitely an engaged and even radical thinker.

I do disagree with him about blaming the system, the banks, insurance companies etc. I think they are not the conspiratorial cause of the financial and ecological crisis, they just provide what we, the people, were asking for, out of greed, materialism and fear. If we change, they will change, we do get the banks, the government, the corporations we deserve.

Why epigenetics in ritual theory?

You can ask why I wander off into epigenetics in the context of a study of ritual? The reason is the notion that the sins of the fathers are passed on for seven generations, part of the belief of many traditions. This smells after some epigenetic process, it has been observed that specific adaptations (notably results of adverse conditions) wear off. There have not influenced the gene pool, but their activation (methylation in chemical terms) lasts for some generations. Could it be, that one of the effects (and thus hidden intuitive purposes) of ritual is to either hasten the removal of adverse activations and/or instill and sustain positive ones? Now apart from physical environmental facts (like smoking, exercise) there is the idea that non-physical factors like we encounter in ritual (and in meditation, yoga, etc.) might be an epigenetic factor.

The notion of epigenetics has changed the thinking about evolution and brought back some appreciation of the evolution by adaptation of Lamarck. Early work of Marilyn Monk, who wanted to look into ways to do genetic research without having to use or kill animals, led to methods to identify genes and gene modifications. The idea came up, that certain parts of the genome were activated or not and this could be detected with certain laboratory techniques. This was not the genome itself, but has to do with the specialized state of the genome, hence epi-genetics. According to Monk, in

the development process of already the egg cell there are certain moments where deprogramming of this epigenetic state happens.

I also like to point to the idea, that according to Marilyn Monk the highly dynamic role of epigenetic mechanism is the brain is related to regulating memory and behavior like fear conditioning. Marilyn Monk also says:

The genome could be seen as the hardware and the epigenome (epigenetic programming of gene function) as the software. The old idea of Nature (genes) versus Nurture (environment) is outdated and now replaced by a more realistic view of a continual interplay between the environment (inner and outer) and our genes through epigenetic programming, thus monitoring and changing our interactions with our environment, again changing feedback to our genes, and so on. Our ever-changing epigenome constantly monitors our environment to determine who we are, our responses to external and internal stimuli, and the state of our health and well being.

So this indicates that DNA is a far more dynamic part of our being and (re)acting than just a reservoir of genetic code. Does this play a role in my model of subpersonalities, meaning that changes in personality are epigenetic processes, we just switch on different parts of the DNA operating our neurons? Are reprogramming or desensitizing mechanism like Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) ways to influence epigenetic brain mechanism?

Modern genetic technology brings serious ethical questions. It's increasingly easy to look at DNA sequences and epigenetic activation, and genetic modification is becoming easier and easier. In the hands of big corporations this is already a cause for worry, but what if this becomes so easy that kitchen table equipment becomes available. Apart from the risks of dangerous modifications, there is the question of how much do we need or want to know. Marilyn Monk explained to me, that a human body normally contains quite a number of still very small, one could say infant tumor cells, that may or may not develop into cancer in maybe 40 or 50 years. Do we want to know this, or not? Knowing this may affect our life insurance policy, but also our lives, living in fear about something may be a factor in manifesting. Not knowing and living a happy life may be a better and more effective way to deal with the potential, with in the end at least statistically less chance these potentials manifest.

Organizational karma

Societies and organizations and even countries also have karma, a past (or perceived past) that influenced the present. It's their history, but not always the history that is recorded or remembered.

It is interesting to look at rituals as a way to influence that karma. Large scale rituals do have this purpose, having the Olympic Games in Berlin was clearly a way to influence the image of Nazi-Germany. Hitler was very aware of the function of rituals and staged impressive large scale events, like what Albert Speer did in Nuremberg.

Modern public relations in a way has learned a lot from older magical techniques and setups. It is remarkable, that these insights have not led to rituals beyond the usual large parties and receptions around events like mergers, acquisitions, anniversaries. The old religions knew better, no large enterprise or building would start without adequate rituals, blessing, clearing et cetera.

Will and virtue

Now assuming free will exist, can we act virtuous at all? Whether an act is a vice or a virtue (good or bad) is a question that so pervades all models of society and notions of legality that thinkers of all ages have pondered upon it. Will and acting are related, when we act deliberately, but also when we refrain from action deliberately.

I will follow the notion of what is good and bad, as it emerges and is upheld in very old cultures, turned into law, and has become more of a rational and legal issue in modern times.

Rationalistic Aristotle saw three categories of acts, voluntary, involuntary and nonvoluntary, and assumes that people have an innate notion of good and bad and that this is the same for all. The question is of course where do we get this innate notion and how do we translate this in practical terms, in rules, regulations and law?

Honor

Karma, law, ethics, in many cultures this all is intimately connected with the concept of honor (Latin=Honor). There are cultures where one's behavior is more dependent on being honorable than conforming to the law. The term 'code of honor' has some deeper roots than a code of law, it refers to the moral roots, is more binding, more personal.

Honor is very basic concept and sentiment, to feel honorable or to be regarded as honorable has to do with being real, true to oneself, worthy, respected. In one's mind, honor and love are both essential in one's life. Honor, as related to ranking, is not particularly human, animals display behavior related to their position in the group.

Honor is a social obligation that is perceived as part of one's personality. It had to do, in most older cultures, with personal integrity, with belonging and obeying the norms of the group, nation or family.

There are many rituals concerned with honor. Think about knighting or ennobling a respected citizen or soldier, awarding medals, but initiation ritual thus lead to a new social ranking and subsequent rules and things related to honor.

Not all cultures have the same understanding of honor. The German word 'Ehre' has roots in the old Germanic culture and is less abstract, less connected to power and more to what is proper in moral and social context. Voluntary work in German is called 'Ehrenamt', honor-work.

The medieval code of chivalry and defending one's honor was more important than bodily harm or even murder. The idea of duels had much to do with honor in that sense, such an arranged combat followed specific rules, as in a ritual and the outcome was seen as divinatory, God decided who was right or wrong.

In Islam, honor is also more about the family, about decency, proper behavior. Not following the rules, especially for women, can lead to honor killings. The woman is seen as the carrier of the honor of the family, she is principally the one to dress and behave proper.

In the Anglo-Saxon world, since Thomas Hobbes, honor has become more concerned with respect, levels, differences in status (social standing) and power, less with deeply felt morality and personal worthiness. It has become an external qualification, not something private, personal. The content has been replaced by the form, and there is less appreciation for peoples abiding a more personal and karmic notion of honor.

Ritual in the process of law

Ritual and law are entangled. In preliterate cultures rituals were ways to disseminate the law, the ritual was the law. These days the law, slowly separated from natural law and more based on positive law and thus written text, prior court decisions and what remains of an ethical base, common law, is still a ritual process.



Traditionally our moral laws comes from assorted holy men in contact with the otherworld.and interpreting their visions, dreams as coming from the heavens.

The whole law system, think about the way judges, attorneys and prosecution are placed and dressed, is still very ritual. Not only in court, this goes from the level of those making the laws, through the legal system of prosecution and judges down to the policeman upholding the law. He is symbolically holding the fasces, in a uniform and with nearly magical powers to establish order, he is the symbol of 'The Law' held to be fair and just.

Court cases are rituals, not only because the system of judges, prosecutors and defenders that deal with the case, but because there is the belief, that somehow the system, the liturgy of a court case will yield justice, beyond the capacity of the officers involved. They are not masked, but like in England wear wigs, they are supposed to let go of their personal interest, be impartial and just.

In ritual terms, they are supposed to let go of their masks, their persona, entering a higher order of impartiality, in line with the 'original position' of John Rawls (see appendix IV).

We don't leave the outcome of a dispute to a duel or some sorts or divination, but the supernatural is still honored and called for. The judge is addressed as 'Your Honor' expressing that we see his role as above the parties, as worthy of esteem. There is some supernatural deity or at least Lady Justice (Justitia/Fortuna) present, as a statue or painting. We still swear on the Bible or a holy book, a fairly ritual act. The outcome of a court case is or was considered a judgment from above, supposed to be wiser than what normal negotiation or mediation would bring.

The will to do and be good: natural law

The notion of natural law has been a important theme in the history of law and civic order. The Stoics, Cicero, but notably the Roman or rather Byzantine Corpus Iuris Civilis of Justinian (534 CE) made it part of the legal tradition, the Scholastics and Canonist of the Church gave it a somewhat Christian setting by adding scriptural roots, rationality gnawed at those root, but in the Universal Rights of Mankind there is more than a taste of it. There is positive law, written law, civil law, jurisprudence, common law, convention and custom, but there arise questions of an ethical nature that require new answers, new understanding of justice and order. Developments like cyberspace, genetic manipulation and robotics require new laws, rules and an understanding of what justice is. Ecology affects us all, but there we might just consider studying and honoring what some older tradition have to offer.

Is there a natural law, as the root of our sense of justice, or is justice and rightfulness the rational result of reasonable compromise (Kant's 'Reinen Vernunft')? Natural law is an important concept in thinking about ritual, for rituals have been the carrier of morality, long before there were written

laws. Did the rituals of old took that morality from eternal principles (balances) , were they received from divine sources or were they just emulating the behavior and assumed perfection of earlier heros, kings or prophets.

How do we live 'good', how do we know what virtuous living is? We can take Kant's Categorical Imperative, look at Rousseau's Contrat Social or assume, as I do, that we have access to the core of morality via our 'primes'. We intuitively know what is good or bad, this is no doubt culturally colored and adapted to local circumstances like environmental factors, but there is a core set of truths we could call natural law.

My general idea of these questions, beyond the interpretation of actual situations like my suggestion to separate copyright law into a clip and a click part, is not in line with the traditional notions in our Western (Roman/Rhineland and Anglo-Saxon traditions) or Judeo-Christian (Canonist) traditions.

For once, the responsibility for the future, so prevalent in many older concepts of law, I see more or less lacking in the Ten Commandments and the Bible. There is just some mention in Genesis about taking care of the land but ecology didn't make it into being a cornerstone of Law. Quite understandably, some would say, the Jews in Moses' days were nomads. But then the oldest parts of the Jewish Bible were compiled in Babylon, a place where the memory of the Great Flood (sometime around 4000 BCE) was still alive and agriculture and civic life was way beyond that of a nomad tribe in the Sinai.

In the context of my three worlds model (which is, I agree, a simplification anyway) I believe justice or maybe I should call it eternal justice or even the essential thermodynamical homeostasis, resides in the extradimensional, not in the rational netherworlds or in our psyche. This thus supernatural (divine if you like) idea or principle exists and has to exist, it is the law of the supernatural all (and includes the real laws of nature). In our limited view, we are flatlander with a limited and mostly imaginary view of the wider reality of the multidimensional, we can only perceive part of the whole deal.

We do so by way of our primes and some of us are better in connecting to the eternal truth or the eternal justice part of it. This is how I believe revelation is to be interpreted. We all have a feeling of what is right, our conscience, but some of us have or have had better contact than others. Moses, inebriated or just a great mystic, came down with an understanding obviously based on what he knew before (his commandment were much like the essential Egyptian rules in their Book of the Dead) but with a new inspiration. To see this as direct transmission of divine truth is fine with me, the wisdom of what Moses, Mohammed and the great prophets understood cannot be denied.

So natural law, as I see it, is and can be only part of the whole eternal justice we will never be able to comprehend fully. The eternal justice (as part of eternal truth) is way beyond rationality or any label we can imagine, I side with Spinoza here.

However, and this is important in regard to upcoming questions of the new ethics or law in cyberspace etc. it is possible to obtain or find newer or relevant parts of the eternal justice if we connect to the extradimensional. How to do that is an interesting question, handing out some LSD to Congress or Parliament or a UN-gathering and having an old time ritual to decide on cyberspace regulation doesn't feel like a feasible path. Neither is waiting for a Soma inspired rishi or groups of rishis (wise men) to come up with some new Vedas or hoping for a new prophet or Messiah.

I can only point at what happened in the past, when urgent matters came up, one did turn to ritual means to find or receive new ways to deal with it.

The answers we can find by rational thinking, the route the jurists of our time take, are fine, but not all-encompassing. There is something out there, in extradimensional, supernatural or whatever one likes to call it, where the answers are, even to new questions. The law or justice is, in that sense, a priestly, sacerdotal task (*merito quis nos sacerdotes appellet*, following emperor Justinian in the Digest of the Corpus Iuris Civilis). And let's not forget that he had Ulpianus quoted as saying that natural law is not peculiar to the human race, but belongs to all animals.

Natural law and rituals

Rituals, certainly the old ones, were the main vehicle in transferring the law, the natural law and the specific laws of a people. Not so much by words, but by actions, responses, judgments and punishments.

The concept of natural law has changed over time, and in an appendix nr. IV, I will sketch this development. But I think it is important to look into some of the notions about the relationship between nature, law and society in older traditions.

In the theory of natural law, there are different theories like a legal and a moral theory of natural law, subscribe to the Overlap Thesis, which is that there is a necessary relation between the concepts of law and morality.

The term natural law is derived from the Roman term *Ius (jus) Naturale*, the laws common to all beings. All laws which would make sense to a normal person were called *Ius Naturale*. The Roman *Ius Naturale* is not the same as implied by the modern sense of natural law as something derived from pure reason. Part of Roman *Ius Naturale* was the concept of justice (*iustitia*), the notion that each and all were equal and had a right to what was theirs, as in

Ulpianus ‘constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuendi’. Judges were supposed to be good and fair (*bonum et aequum*).

I already mentioned that Emperor Justinian I codified much of the *Ius Naturale* of the Stoics and earlier Greeks into the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (civil right), making it written, positive law (*ratio scripta*).

Naturalists, the adherents to natural law philosophy, see natural law principles as an inherent part of nature, existing regardless of legal recognition or enforcing.

There is secular natural law, the system of rational principles derived from the physical, biological, and behavioral laws of nature. Historical natural law is what has evolved over time through custom, tradition, and experience.

Divine natural law is the system of principles believed to have been revealed or inspired by some supreme and supernatural being, typically passed on by way of Scripture. Most religions believe the notion of good, the will of God is given to us in the form of divine commandments.

Divine law and commandments

One can thus believe the Law is handed down to us from above. Moses is the archetypical receiver of the Law, but the prophet Mohammed did a good job at coming up with practical laws and rules too. Not that there is no dispute, interpretation of the Divine Laws has never ceased.

The Ten Commandments can be traced back to the Egyptian explicit morality as laid down in the Book of the Dead, notably in Spell 125, the “Weighing of the Heart”. This contains a negative confession of a list of 42 sins.

The will of God in Judaism as given in the Ten Commandments and in the *Mitzvah* (the 613 commandments given in the Torah and the seven rabbinic commandments for a total of 620) is rather complex and not always very clear, the seven Noahide laws in the Talmud are more concise and universal:

- . 1.The prohibition of Idolatry.
- . 2.The prohibition of Murder.
- . 3.The prohibition of Theft.
- . 4.The prohibition of Sexual immorality.
- . 5.The prohibition of Blasphemy.
- . 6.The prohibition of eating flesh taken from an animal while it is still alive.
- . 7.The requirement of maintaining courts to provide legal recourse.

Aboriginal roots of law

Looking at the roots of the law, of karma and why we do follow certain rules it makes sense to look at what has survived as rule of law in older cultures. They often are based on fairly logical goals of preservation, but in a more ecological setting than in Judaic, Islamic and Western law.

Seemingly the peoples of old, like the North American indigenous nations, were more aware of their responsibility for future generations and for nature and the earth as a whole. One of the oldest surviving cultures is that of the Aboriginals in Australia, they may have had a stable tradition for more than 40.000 years, maybe even longer. Their tradition is mostly concerned with preservation, with balance, the future, with keeping the world in order.

An example is that it is illegal to take all the eggs out of a nest, as this would close off a potential future.

The original Great Ancestral Spirits arranged the earth by creating people, animals, plants and birds and these were all put in their respective places according to the land forms and spirits surrounding them. The rules and the law governing the land, its people, animals and plants were given by these Ancestral Spirits and they were necessary to ensure the continuity of life on earth. There are many rituals in Aboriginal society, all have a firm place with The Dreaming, the otherworldly existence of all and everything also called the Dreamtime. The rituals ensure that the law stays intact and aligned with the Dreamtime stories and imagery. All the people work together to help keep the Dreamtime, but there are individuals responsible for specific stories and beliefs, they are the carriers of the tradition and supposed to be in touch with their specific part of it in their individual dreamtime existence.

Most rituals and ceremonies practiced in Aboriginal communities are gender-specific (men and women have their own rites, to be kept secret from the other sex) and cannot be discussed fully due to their sensitive and sacred nature. Specific rituals, Dreamtime songs, spiritual places and objects (Tjurunga) are to be kept away from outsiders, transgression by the opposite sex is punishable by death. Aboriginal rituals act out The Dreaming, its laws and stories. Often men were the guardians of a special spiritual site where a ceremony was performed, meaning the site would need to be cared for so that the particular spirit would continue to live there. Some rituals were for men only, others for women only. Men and women had their own particular sacred objects. Sometimes this is talked about as men's business and women's business.

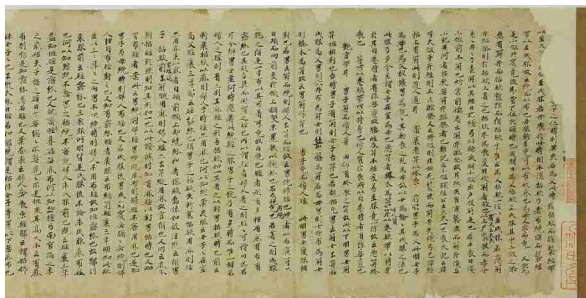
Ngarra Law

The law-men in the tribes were responsible for enforcing their laws and although these were harsh, it's not an easy environment, they have a very long history. Preservation of the tradition was rooted in the Dream-time stories. It were the stories that demarcated the tribal boundaries, and so preservation of the stories, in their ritual context, was most important. Their law system is called Ngarra in the Northern Territory (the Yolngu nations) and was used by the nomadic ancestors – proclaimed and enforced long before European colonization – and is still in use today to prosecute Yolngu people according to Ngarra law.

Criminal activity is not tolerated by the Ngarra law, and is prosecuted by 'Jungays'. The Indigenous court procedure is similar to court procedure in other cultures and not very different from Western, but it is informal. The jungay is the one to speak on behalf of the victim and his or her family. People of different clans can come to express their opinions, feelings and pain until the accused is proven guilty or not guilty and clans can come to hear the verdict openly in the community. Sometimes the families of the victim are not satisfied with the court order, they may take the case to the "Galka" for further investigation and possibly additional law enforcement and this may mean spearing or killing the guilty. Galka is a Yolngu language term that roughly indicates "sorcerer" or "sorcery".

Some punishments under Ngarra law may be considered harsh. Most settlements under Ngarra law, including punishments for what Balanda ("white" people) call criminal matters, however, are negotiated between the parties, according to Danial Kelly (An introduction to the Ngarra law of Arnhem Land, 2011). Most of the time the offender will, after going through negotiations, agree to the punishment. Kelly list a few important aspects of the until recently not written down Ngarra Law.

- » 1. There was pay-back practiced in some tribes, meaning if someone did you wrong, you could get them back. Usually, soon as blood was drawn, the dispute was quashed.
- » 2. You did not trespass on another tribe's land without permission.
- » 3. Punishment for the breaking of most of the tribe's laws was handed down by the elders, the law givers, and you were banished forever, to wander



The Chines Book of Rites (Li)

aimlessly, without contact with your family. If you broke the marriage laws, punishment was death!

- » 4. Kinship network was law! Aboriginal man was a social father to all the children of the clan, and Aboriginal woman was a social mother to all the children of the clan. Everyone had a place, no one was excluded or left out: this was our democracy at work.

5. There were harsh laws for elopement. If a man eloped with another woman, he was brought back to the tribe by the men, and had to face spears thrown at him by every male member of the tribe. If he survived, he would be forced to be in the forefront at the next inter-tribal fight,

There are also numerous offences which are not covered by European law, such as insulting an elder, singing sacred songs in public, and showing sacred objects to women.

Niyama

Another old source of what could be called ‘Natural Law’ can be found in the Vedic and Hindu traditions. Living the proper, spiritual life means following some rules and obeying restrictions, which the Sanskrit/Pali word *niyama* denotes.

In Hinduism and Buddhism the concept of *niyama* points at a morality closely related to karma, a “moral universe” in which actions lead to just consequences according to a natural moral order. In Patanjali’s (Raya) *Yoga Sutas* the *niyamas* are listed as:

- . *Shaucha*: cleanliness of thought, mind and body. Traditionally, this item is listed under *Yama*; this word means purity.
- . *Santosha*: happy satisfaction; good contentment.
- . *Tapas*: spiritual effort; austerity.
- . *Sva-dhya-ya*: self study, study to know more about God and the soul, which leads to introspection on a greater awakening to the soul and God within.
- . *Ishvarapranidhana*: surrender to God.

In Buddhism there is more of an emphasis on natural law rather than theism in the notion of *niyama*. According to Mrs Rhys Davids the Buddhist *niyamas* can be summarized as:

- . *kamma niyama*: (“action”) consequences of one’s actions
- . *utu niyama*: (“time, season”) seasonal changes and climate, law of non-living matter
- . *bi-ja niyama*: (“seed”) laws of heredity
- . *citta niyama*: (“mind”) will of mind
- . *dhmma niyama*: (“law”) nature’s tendency to perfect

The notion of a God is absent here.

Li: the Chinese way of being virtuous

The old Chinese had their way of ensuring stability. Li is a classical Chinese concept, sometimes translated as ritual, but it can be interpreted as more like the abstract idea of how things should be, how one should behave, how virtuous living is supposed to be, what is proper behavior, in other words something close to morality and natural law.

It was used extensively in Confucian times by people like Xunzi, but dates back to the Zhou Dynasty, 6th century BCE. It was a whole system of mostly ritual behavior concerning ritual order, civic duty, social hierarchy, ethics, and regulation concerning material life; it formed the root of the Confucian and Imperial ideology.

Confucius described Li as all traditional forms that provided a standard of conduct, Li should emphasize the spirit of piety and respect for others through rules of conduct and rituals. These rules were not derived from divine inspiration or the natural way of things (the Taoist approach) but were emulating the traditional ways the Ancients (Kings) behaved. Li was action oriented, stimulated learning and self cultivation, but also conservative, protecting the status quo. Its interpretation of The Way (Tao) differs markedly from the Taoist idea of non-action, let it be.

The wording of Li in the ‘Principal Teachings’, a central part of the Book of Rites that otherwise gives a lot of detailed instructions about ritual performance is clear and has been part of Chinese culture and policy ever since. The essence is:

- . Achieving a state of balance and refining one’s moral self such that it is a reflection of the Way (Tao).
- . Ample rest and reflection such that one achieves peace of mind. When one is calm and reflected, the Way will be revealed to them.
- . Setting priorities and knowing what is important is essential in one’s quest for moral refinement, for it allows one to focus on that which is of the greatest importance and that which is in line with the Way as outlined in Confucian teachings.
- . One must bring his affairs and relationships into order and harmony. If one hopes to attain order in the state, he must first bring his own family and personal life into order through self-cultivation and the expansion of one’s knowledge and the “investigation of things.”
- . Each and every man is capable of learning and self-cultivation regardless of social, economic or political status. This, in turn, means that success in learning is the result of the effort of the individual as opposed to an inability to learn.

- . One must treat education as an intricate and interrelated system where one must strive for balance. No one aspect of learning is isolated from the other and failure to cultivate a single aspect of one's learning will lead to the failure of learning as a whole.

What the Great Learning teaches is: to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence. The Great Learning presents Confucianism as being this-worldly rather than other-worldly, there is no divine root, but a lot of wisdom in the suggestions for a virtuous way of being:.

- . The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined; and, that being determined, a calm unperturbedness may be attained to.
- . To that calmness there will succeed a tranquil repose. In that repose there may be careful deliberation, and that deliberation will be followed by the attainment of the desired end.
- . Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in the Great Learning.
- . The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the world, first ordered well their own States.
- . Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families.
- . Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons.
- . Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts.
- . Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts.
- . Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost of their knowledge.
- . Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.
- . Things being investigated, knowledge became complete.
- . Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere.
- . Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified.
- . Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated.
- . Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated.
- . Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed.
- . Their States being rightly governed, the entire world was at peace.
- . From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides.
- . It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well ordered.

- . It never has been the case that what was of great importance has been slightly cared for, and, at the same time, that what was of slight importance has been greatly cared for.

The Li investigation of things is not pointing at physical or scientific research and investigation, but at introspection, at achieving a state of contemplation that allows to see the isness. This, I believe, is the same ritual state of consciousness and egolessness which is the aim of all true ritual.

There have been many notions and theories about natural law, but I believe the old traditions in many ways were the wisest, the most rooted and seasoned, modern thinking and the practice of law is too rational and obviously lacking in honoring the balance with nature, the earth and our responsibility for the future.

Ethics: Plato's Phaedrus horses extended

The image of the two horses in Plato's Phaedrus offers a far better image to deal with ethical questions than the juxtaposition of security and freedom we see these days, especially concerning privacy and cyberspace.

The psyche is, in Plato's view, the charioteer who has to control the brave and the wild horse, making sure they go in the right direction. This model is great starting point for looking at why we have the wild and the tame anyway. The tame, the obedient horse is the conforming one, based on the ethics of the "contrat social", the status quo, the static being. The wild horse is becoming, moving, progress, creativity.



Justitia, by Luca Giordano

It is in essence the combination of the social and the individual gain, for that is what the horses represent, and not seeing them as on the same axis. It means not choosing to curb freedom with security as an excuse, a trend we see so clearly since 9/11, taking away civil liberties more and more.

The communal goals are declared sacred and security is a handy excuse to go further and further. But this is often at the expense of freedom, of allowing to be different, to be unique, special, deviant, not politically correct. If

only the social, adapted horse is allowed there will be no progress, the example of the communist system is clear, it leads to stagnation.

Without individual gain slowly the common goal is forgotten, an idealistic dream that sinks away in laziness and grayness. The leaning too much toward the other side, the neo-liberalism approach or better the libertarian model with total freedom for the entrepreneur (and that includes the criminal) doesn't work either, the liberty for individual gains has made many super rich, but left the economy and the world in an economic and environmental crisis. True ethics therefore is a balancing act need careful steering, allowing both horses to pull their weight but keeping in mind what the goal is.

We need both, and the charioteer, more reason and mind than psyche, in an individual case or in society or business, must make the best of the team, while listening to what the folks behind in the chariot, the stakeholders want. It is not enough to move, the direction also matters, it's not only about balance but also about guidance toward some goal.

Both sides are present in the Phaedrus model system, in a way the horses can be seen as the adapted personality or mask conforming and polite, and on the other side the creative inner child full with ideas and initiatives on the other side. Adding the stakeholders behind the charioteer gives a more social perspective, about the role of a judge, politician or leader as the steersman of the chariot. The job is not only to make the two horses cooperate, but also guide them toward the goal that emerges from the stakeholders in the back.

Questions about security versus safety should be considered in this perspective, not as antagonists. It's not a question of balance, but of recognizing the common goals of both.

Nietzsche had a similar idea to describe the human mind, using the Greek mythological deities Apollo as the civilized, disciplined aspect and Dionysus as the natural, emotional and wild, untamed aspect.

Nietzsche sees the tension between these powerful forces as a characteristic of human life and points at the limited understanding of the world as we only project our Apollonian desires to discipline and control our environment, not looking to what is hidden underneath.

Innovation, the wild horse, change, crime, we have to accept some freedom to divert,



otherwise things become stagnant. Here I find support in Durkheim's views on crime. He believed that crime is:

"bound up with the fundamental conditions of all social life"

and serves a social function. Crime ensures,

"not only that the way remains open to necessary changes but that in certain cases it directly prepares these changes."

And:

"To make progress, individual originality must be able to express itself... "

So we are allowed to be different, but at the same time there is the notion that we have equal rights.

The development of natural law is sketched in a separate appendix (IV).

Guilty or not guilty, a change in the starting point

These days, under the pretense of increasing security, we are stripped of many civil or human rights. Our privacy is invaded, our conversations monitored, our emails and web behavior screened and used by government and commercial organizations. The main shift is that we are no longer considered innocent until proven guilty, we are now guilty (of being hackers, terrorists, drug users, etc.) until proven innocent. Not only our acts, but our talking and slowly even our thinking are scrutinized, our identities externalized and our rights annulled. In the chapter about the cyberfuture I go into what this means and how the lack of proper law (and rituals to communicate them) in cyberspace creates a vacuum in what is right or wrong.

Equality and the cost of law, and ritual

We are all equal under the law, but this mostly an illusion, The rituals of law are not open to everyone, they are limited to those with money, awareness of their right and even then, not all cases make it to the Supreme Courts. Now we have to accept that there inequalities between people, as a practical fact, but this should not



Pieter Breughel - Pestilence - Plague

be beneficial to the upper class, the haves. This applies to the process of law as well as to ritual.

The cost of the law is not insignificant, not for the individual, not for society. One can say that those costs have to be borne by the parties, but then the ones without resources are kept out of the system. Upholding the law is a necessity and a shared interest for all, so should be financed by the state. For rituals a similar argument can be made, some rituals like burials are individual (unless the deceased has no means), some like regular events are a common interest.

Ritual, Law, Games

There is an interesting resonance between the fields of ritual, of law and games. They all have to do with rules, with fairness, with hope and ambition (for justice, winning, stability), there are many common elements and even roots in animal behavior. In the playing of a group of monkeys the ambitions, the ranking, the rules, the leadership within the group becomes manifest, the border between play and ritual behavior is often very thin. I think the overlap between these three fields is obvious and warrant more work in understanding the similarities. Creating games, and in these days we can (re) create whole worlds with their own rules, laws and mechanisms to balance interactions and positions, offers a way to understand the basics of law and ritual and vice versa.

Playability and gamification

One of the aspects of law I feel is undervalued is playability, the practicality of making and upholding law. We cannot deal with all details in the law, we cannot prosecute everything, there has to be some leeway, some discretion.

To make my point, I like to use the concept of gamification. It is a definite trend in society; we are using game concepts including competition in many ways now, in marketing, entertainment and internet commerce.

Now the resonance between games and ritual is clear, a good game is like a ritual, it brings psychological, social and magical dimensions together. There is however also a resonance between games and the law.

Just imagine you have to design a game and a game world. There are certain rules, certain conditions, certain goals that define the game. But defining them requires a lot of balancing and this is comparable with making laws, constituting the checks and balances, the game play, all to make it fair and at the same time challenging. Again the two horses of the Phaedrus come to mind, the wild and the tamed horse, the creativity and the decency, the competition and the cooperation.

Modern multi-player games are very complex and require much contemplation about things like fairness, justice and yet have to be exciting and above all, playable. There must be room for mistakes, for learning, for punishment and praise, for being the best and accepting not being the winner, but progressing.

Law and games have more in common than most people think, applying game theory and game design to law is an interesting approach.

Armageddon Law

I will end this chapter about karma and law pointing at another root mechanism, that which I call the Armageddon principle. In order to prevent major disaster the Law (or the government or an individual tyrant) can issue rules and act in such a way that normal rights and justice are put aside. Martial law, a more stringent code of conduct and limitation of freedom makes sense in the case of war, revolution, contagious diseases and epidemics, natural disasters, and serves to prevent general disorder.

In recent times, however, the dangers of terrorism, nuclear disasters, and notably overturning the proper working of cyberspace and internet are used to impose ever more stringent rules and regulations on the people, take away their liberties and limit constitutional rights.

Since 9/11 the governments, notably the USA, have moved away from Kant's Rechtsstaat doctrine (Legal state, State of right, Constitutional state, Constitutional government), openly or in secret like with the monitoring of the world's telecommunications by the NSA. The focus has shifted from Al Qaeda to lone wolf terrorism, but mostly cyberwar is the issue now.

The argument is that this is necessary in the light of the grave consequences, society would collapse if the internet would be corrupted on a grand scale. There is some truth to this, our economies are so dependent on modern cyberspace services, that an enormous panic would break out in the case of serious corruption of the internet. Society would break down rather quickly, and an Armageddon scenario is not unlikely. This is used to defend the measures taken by governments, rationalizing the limitations of human rights in ways we only can guess as we are not told much, only occasionally the extent of the snooping and emergency mechanisms leaks out.

I am not arguing this all is unnecessary, just pointing out that this is a direction in Law that becomes more and more prominent and all pervading. While in the past severe restrictions were measured against risks, like in fighting the Plague, the scale of it was limited. These days the Armageddon principle constitutes a realistic part of the landscape of human rights, law and ethics.

There is little defense against this, the situation is serious in the sense that I (or the average citizen) cannot really judge the level of the threats, and the idea that we can democratically do something about it is an illusion. Voting is, or has become since we moved away from the Athenian way of only voting in person about persons, a ritual.

Apart from being a media circus, it is a ritual act, mostly because we believe our vote makes a difference. This is an irrational idea, a magical notion we are happy to believe as it gives us some feeling of power over fate. Once in a while it turns out, that a few votes made the difference or could have made a difference as in the Bush-Gore case. It turns out however that most if not all important decisions, including wars, were not made by the people but for the people, in the name of the people and often not in the interest of the people.

But democracy is our new religion and voting is its main ritual.

Content and form

In law and in ritual there is the issue of form and content. What matters most, or do we follow the engineer's creed: Form Follows Function.

Not an easy balance and again there is this resonance with the two horses from the Phaedrus. I like this image you may have noticed because it points at the task for the judge, the ruler and us mere humans to make sure both horses not only work together, but in the same direction. Form and content both matter, and the balance is derived from the goal.

In matters of law or rights, honor and ethics we face the same dilemma as the charioteer of Plato, and there is no general answer, each situation needs a specific answer, in line with Kant's 'reasonability'.

This is also valid, when judging people. We can only look at the mask, the behavior, the external, or we can focus on the inside, the higher self. Here we can assume that the higher self usually is a lot better, more mature, spiritual or easygoing than the mask or masks, but it's not easy to look beyond the outside, the form. Accepting that there are masks, also in ourselves, covering what we really are, is a first step.

Both our mask(s) and inner child are necessary, how else would we learn? Both are valid, have or had a function in one's life, both deserve respect, but it takes wisdom and magnanimity to bring this in practice.

I will therefore end this chapter with a small poem about the play of the clouds, the form we show to the world, and the blue sky in all of us.

*The clouds, so full with rain
play joyful with the sun*

*their game of light is not for me
but for itself
and thus for all of us
I watch and feel
the tyranny of change
so far away, so utterly beyond.
Those clouds
are maybe just the hands of God
his game of light
for them and thus for all of me
The blue sky is in all of us
These clouds of separation
are they so different?*

Plato's Phaedrus in a broad perspective



**The driver not only has to balance and guide the horses
but also has to listen to what the stakeholders want**

30 The future of ritual: games, flash mobs & cyberspace

Before I will go into the obvious futuristic things like cyberspace rituals, robotic distributed intelligence and why games offer a new path to ritual and the understanding of law, I think there is an important question to be answered.

Is there a future for ritual? My answer obviously is positive. I have argued that ritual has roots in deeper layers of consciousness and nervous system, is the most common way to access the extradimensional realm and offers sociological and psychological advantages.

We cannot do without ritual, and as soon as the one ritual disappears, other pop up, the communists loved parades and pomp as much as the Nazis, royalty and the Church before them. Much of today's sports events are ritualistic and if you ask the supporters about their belief in the efficacy of mascots and the effect of their singing and cheering, most of them will agree it works. Doesn't the home team wins more often?

The next question could be, will the importance of ritual grow? Here I would answer in the positive again, but this requires a more elaborate answer.

We can assume that technology will advance even more and that a future with more robotics, more embedded computer power, an internet of things and a cloud technology as container for big and small data will happen.

It will not take long, before robots, embedded circuitry or automated devices have taken over most menial work, not only in manufacturing, but in logistics, care, agriculture and even in teaching and medical machines can take over a lot of human work. Modern robot science is developing fast, by using distributed intelligence, linking perception to immediate (reflex) action not unlike the embodied cognition now recognized in our human functioning. I have stated before that ritual is dis-



Neddy Ludd: Rage against the machine
May 1812 by. Walker and Knight.

tributed cultural intelligence, very essential in how a society, company or even family functions.

In designing autonomously acting robots similar mechanisms and principles apply.

The advent of robotics and cyberspace externalization of memory (storage) has therefore philosophical aspects, but it will also have an enormous impact on our daily lives. It will make many things easier, and of course saves money, but at a price.

Persona Shown Gratis

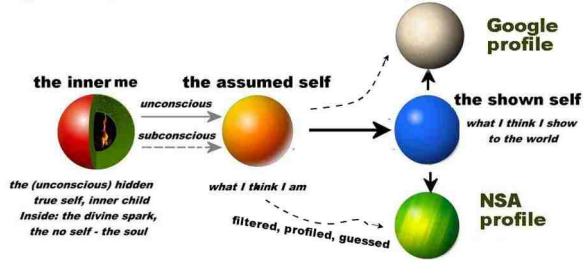
Our identity is up for grabs, as Joel Farb makes clear with his play on the words Persona Non Grata. Privacy, for many, is a thing of the past, even if this has severe negative consequences for our well being and for progress, as I have argued in the context of ethics and karma using the two horses of Plato's Phaedrus.

There will be serious attacks on our freedom and liberties, the 'brave new world' is not far away, big brother comes as many little brothers, each justified in a limited perspective, but together eliminating our freedom. The default power of the new superpowers like Facebook or Google to change the rules, formats, rights and profiling methods without consent of their mass audience constitutes cyberslavery, users are both customer and producer of their own data.

Things are moving fast, our digital identities take over from our selves, we have to add a digital self to our line of subjective selves, even as we have little control over it. Our digital self is not free, it is made up of bits and bytes we provided willingly and unwillingly. These are turned in profiles and search filters we cannot alter or even perceive, but we do delegate our (re)search options, influence on our credit status, our job opportunities and our social life. We think social networks and search engines are "open", but in reality they are only public to those who have backdoor access. In 2006 the Ippolita Collective published "'Open' doesn't mean 'free'."

"With other words, open source and free software are not the same thing: freedom carries a cost, whereas opening up to the market can bring in rich monetary rewards."

Cyberspace adds self-images



They were witnessing:

“a major paradigm shift: from the era of epistemology into that of ontology in digital worlds. The ‘who’ (what you are) was fast being replaced by the ‘what’ (what you know). Put differently, the management of knowledge was morphing into the management (and creation) of identity.”

In other words, what Google and Facebook make of me (describe of me) is what in cyberspace and increasingly in the real world is what I am.

Our interface options are, in reality, limited, even as we can now touch screens or speak rather than type. We are prisoners of the homogenized monoculture of internet, as Rasmus Fleischer noted at the 2014 Berlin Transmediale:

“Today’s undead internet has a universal interface based on only two functions: the search and the feed.”

You have to be on internet, otherwise you are out of the game, a cognitive dissonance message constantly heralded by government, industry and science.

There is a parallel with the way the Catholic Church monopolized and homogenized the information flow to the faithful in the Middle Ages, using ritual and limiting access to texts. Using Facebook and Google is slowly becoming a ritual, our email chores replacing the Agnihotra or Angelus prayer of old. How long will it take before a new Luther stands up and declares it empty and advocates a new religious stance of “back to reality”?

People like Jaron Lanier are pointing in that direction, telling us to take back our rights to our own information. But maybe Hakim Bey (P.L. Wilson) with his TAZ (temporary autonomous zone) did see a new perspective, but do we have to extend his space-time concept to a virtual autonomous zone in cyberspace?

And the French situationist and marxist Debord also pointed at the need to create ‘free’ and autonomous events and places.

The proletarian revolution is that critique of human geography through which individuals and communities will begin constructing places and events suitable for the re-appropriation not only of their labour, but also of their total history. By virtue of the resulting mobile spaces of play, and by virtue of freely chosen variations in the rules of the game, the autonomy of place and the authenticity of life will be discovered.

Guy Debord, The Society of the Spectacle.

Freedom in the Cyberspace sea of meaning

Even as he didn’t believe in miracles, prophets, hope and free will in his Cartesian and panentheistic idea of God in Nature, Spinoza’s notion that

freedom is the essential task of the state was and is an important observation. It has, however, been replaced by the paradigm of angst: the state is the terror machine, the force that protects the status quo by way of seeding and breeding anxiety and fear, promising fake liberation if one conforms. Cyberspace has, certainly with social media, replaced the heavens and the afterlife as a source of meaning these days, but there really is no state or sovereign there, so what about freedom.

Cyberspace as the sea of meaning or rather of the hope for meaning is an interesting image. Meaning has many levels, the needs model of Maslow is also a hierarchy of meaning, and cyberspace is like a sea of data and connections, with parties at the shore looking for profit, power and indeed meaning and entertainment. Then who are the fishers, the sharks, the deep sea miners and the Greenpeace activists, and who pollutes this sea with malware, profiles and privacy attacks? Hugo Grotius and his Law of the Open and Free Sea (*Mare Liberum*) notions might apply, but historically this was something written mostly in the interest of the Dutch merchants.

Digital supervision will help the state (or the NSA and the likes of Google) in this respect, but will also foster more resentment against cyberspace as the new heavens.

Things like an extended and faster digital infrastructure is not only a positive force on our way toward a future, it forces us to rethink what humanity stands for, what meaning we can find in existence, in creating and in play, and here a new perspective for ritual opens up. Ritual gives structure and order before there is positive law.

The reality of (materialistic and not holistic) progress has other effects, more computers and robotics will eliminate jobs. We can all predict driver-less logistics, farmer-less agriculture, robot soldiers and watchmen, automated care, but what do you see as a future for the people?

Fun and games, gamification, travel, self-realization, drugs, massive pilgrimages, or will boredom and easy euthanasia take over. As happened before, some new war might be a solution too and why not call every hacker or (wiki-) leaker a terrorist, and yes, you probably fit into that profile too.

The signs are there, more digital services, more internet of things, more apps, more remotely controlled robots, more bandwidth will no doubt mean less manual labor, less work. The vista about what this tangent could and probably will lead to, is less enchanting.

Work has been a major factor in a meaningful existence for a long time, a life without it requires serious consideration of the consequences. Here the movement of the neo-Luddites, protesting against irresponsible use of technology comes into play.

The Luddites were 19th-century English textile artisans who actively protested against and attacked labor-saving machinery from 1811 to 1817.

Neo-luddites, deep ecologists, anti-globalists and the Occupy movement share a common concern about what technology does to the earth and its occupants. They are worried about the long term effects, and have a point, think about like the long term damage of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

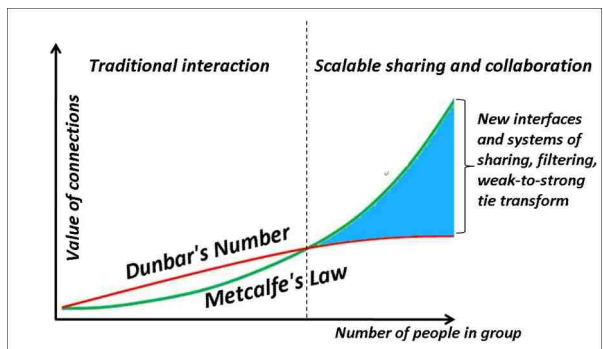
The Gaia-aware and the ecologists are not the only ones worried. According to more materialistic trend-watchers like ICT-market research firm Gartner the elimination of work for many will lead to growing discontent and the possibility of neo-Luddites upheavals in the 2020 time frame.

Another factor needs to be considered here. The world is aging, not enough children are born to carry the burden of the elderly both in the West and in Asia, notably in China. An aging, costly but powerful pensioned (retirement) generation will require young people with jobs and income to both care and pay for them. In the West the babyboomer generation took some care, individually or by collective means, to save and invest or burden the working people with unfunded Pay-as-you-go pension schemes.

The saved money has been a major factor in investing in stocks and bonds, according to Sander Boelens 80% of all investments (individual and of funds) are pension-related. This has created an inflated value of stocks and investment vehicles, as the need to invest has created an illusionary value, not based on underlying real values. It has become a balloon, a bubble that will burst sometimes, but will refill as the pension funds need a harbor.

The real problem is that there is no way a realistic return on investment can come from financial constructions or speculation. It can only come from future savings on energy, raw materials and labor. Investments in more digital miracles and ICT will save money, but mostly they mean less work and oligopolistic power structures.

What is lacking in our cyberspace worldview is ethics, laws, rituals and structure beyond what Google, Facebook, Amazon, NSA etc. force upon us. The game of life is beyond efficiency, unless you buy into the notion that we will soon transfer our humanness to a



cloud presence and digital identity, to live forever in Kurzweil's AI Paradise.

So what will the people do, if there is no work? Will they be gaming and chatting, Facebooking with people they will never meet, going to the gym with Google Glasses to watch super hi-res 3D entertainment, using 3D food printers for new recipes, or having remote sex via iSex devices?

Some, like connectivity expert Jaap van Till believe new formats of inter-connectivity will emerge, where volunteers, the ruling class and entrepreneurs work together to create a brave new world of games, apps, entertainment and challenging pastimes and will find new and innovative ways to "work".

Science fiction writers have written up interesting views of future societies, and movies like Mad Max have shown what could happen. Not all of the movies and book describe utopias, most are distinct dystopian scenarios. There are interesting suggestions.

Aldous Huxley's escape drug Soma (in Island) as a kind of happiness drug might be a solution, and I can accept that electronic drugs and virtual reality are one avenue to pursue here, but do we want to live a fake life like in the movie "the Matrix".

I hope miraculous new technologies or methods will emerge, but do you see a sense of meaning and happiness growing in a world with less and less work? The divide between the one with work (probably the smarter ones) and those dependent on benefits or a pension will deepen.

"Bread and games", the Roman way to keep the plebs happy, only go so far. The technological development we can foresee is not likely to offer a purposeful life, meaning and individuation for all. More likely it will bring poverty, homelessness, depression, suicide or revolt.

This is the real question facing an interconnected world, where will the digital rat race bring us? It's a sociological, psychological and maybe ethical and theological question that needs to be answered!!

My suggestion, and yes I am pointing at the role ritual can play, is to look how societies of old with limited needs to gather food and few enemies would deal with much free time. Indigenous people in many cultures didn't have to work very hard, conditions weren't always so negative. Some had lots of free time, lots of easy resources and wide open spaces to explore.

The Australian Aboriginals liked to go walkabout, but mostly wandered in their ritualized and very pre-digital dreamtime world, an extradimensional construct (reality) with some resemblance to what we now call cyberspace.

I think it will pay to start looking at how they and other indigenous people dealt with less survival issues, less work-pressure and more time to think, act, dance, relate pray and why not, do rituals.

Rituals offer not only psychological and social benefits, they connect us to what is out there, the extradimensional otherworld, that has kept humans busy for a long time before there were machines, computers and materialistic rationality. The importance of studying ritual and what it stands for and offers is thus not merely an academic hobby, it might be a doorway to provide meaning and direction for generations to come.

New media in ritual, ritual in new media

One of the important cultural developments has been the emergence of new contact modes and new media, these days mostly related to cyberspace and digital virtuality.

Computer games breed new forms of expression and thus of ritual, I come to that. What else do social media, internet, the cloud and the digital and semiconductor processes, so close to the quantum-mechanical uncertainty, bring to ritual? What new ritual procedures and processes have sprung up or will evolve?

I actually don't see much new ritual forms, not even in social media. So far there is some facsimile copying of real time rituals, with similar acts and liturgy in cyberspace but not much true innovation, not much beyond extending the communication sphere of a person. That however is something print, the telegraph and telephone already achieved.

Gamification, using the greed of people to lure them into participation or buying, is not new, our parents would buy lottery tickets and collected bonus vouchers and coupons, but these days is becoming a major trend. It's rather materialistic, smartly using human psychology to create fan-groups, followers, likers and of course buyers.

To extend the connectivity between people is interesting in improving the set and setting, but this the hallmark of all media. Our normal senses are amplified, Marshall McLuhan talked about extensions of the senses, but what about the magical?

I accept that new media have resulted in somewhat different ways of participation in older ritual forms. Watching a religious service on television is now quite common and there are prayer circles and massive cyber-events or cyber-circles where people share an intention, but does this qualify as a new ritual form?

We have new ways of communicating, but is the Skype, Facebook, Twitter and chat-culture fundamentally different from old-time physical communication? Maybe they are, but not many see these new media and networks as ways to connect to the otherworld, CyberPagans like Mark Pesce are still a very small minority.

We are speeding up, accelerating the number of contacts we have, with more people at more times and this has all kinds of effects on how we live and function. Not all are positive, many people report Facebook and internet addiction, the increased feedback leads to more stress, less contemplation and probably somatic problems, our body has to cope with all this multitasking, always-on, acceleration. It even feels as if we could use some new rituals to deal with this. Why not have a day every week without telecommunication, a wifi-free location or a day out of time like the ancient Mayas had?

Computer games

My sons run a computer game company, the Little Chicken Game Company and their thinking about the future of their industry resonates in many respect with how I see ritual. Tomas (Sala) is the head designer and also teaches game-design, he is very much on top of what the technology offers, but acknowledges that things like the entering of the sacred (virtual) space, liminality (threshold situation) and identity transformation in games are psychological and ritual issues.

A good computer game, much beyond the shoot-outs and violence games, has many similarities with a ritual, including the belief that participation and immersion will bring magical results. Gaming and playing is of all times, is present in animals and seeing all of creation as God's game is as good an explanation of reality as any.

Without play, life would be pretty boring and games are not only entertaining, but great learning tools. More and more games are used in education, a new teaching paradigm is emerging, the old school approach is being overtaken by kids learning by interaction with a program, a game or others on the internet.

This is the positive side of gamification, the negative being further commercialization of all our public activities, including those in cyberspace.

Learning by doing means learning by making mistakes and this is one of the problems with internet and the death of privacy. Whatever you do on Facebook, your smartphone or surfing is up for grabs by commercial parties of the NSA, games offer a relatively safe stomping ground.

The game companies like Sony could theoretically monitor all behavior there too, but there is more anonymity in games. This means the gamer can experiment with identities (avatars), strategies, personalities of his heroes and try out different modalities. One can make mistakes and this is essential in learning, but harder and harder in public or cyberspace life, as everything is recorded and stored somewhere.

The virtual worlds of game can be strange, but they are safe and by many players considered sacred. It's their secret hideout, their halfway inner world, where they are not hampered by their past, their position or status in life, and fight or play a level play field. Everybody has a chance to play, exercise and become better, whether you are living in a poor village in India or in downtown New York, a new equality and social freedom is offered to the player.



Maslow's pyramid of needs and drives

This in itself makes games worthwhile and valuable, self confidence acquired in the virtual worlds is as good as that acquired in the ratrace out there.

Playing computer games is the new way to grow, in experience, expertise and understanding, much beyond the dexterity and multitasking it seems to bring. The right computer games can make up for what our society lost in rites of passage and challenges. In this way they can be seen as the new rituals and the question here is how much magical and otherworld access they offer?

Obviously the imaginary worlds are already halfway between the tangible reality and the extradimensional, with lots of archetypes, symbolism and correspondences. The test is the efficacy beyond the psychological and social, the diehard gamers do believe that their achievements in virtual do have effects the material world, maybe here is the real future of ritual?

More selves

By playing computer games, using social media, like Facebook, but also by using Google or Google service (and the same goes for Microsoft, Amazon or Apple) we are adding self images, sometimes intentionally like creating a game avatar, but often not realizing some service is actually creating a cyber-self profile.

Maybe we think we represent ourself in a honest way and the cyber-image is more or less a true representation, that we are our avatar or the avatar we intend to be.

In reality our cyber-identity or profile is much more than what we see on our personal pages.

The meta-data accumulated in our track-history, in our purchases, web-searches and much more, has created an extensive profile of us.

Most of the time we cannot even access this profile, check it or change it, it is the result of algorithms accessing data from our past. This cyber-me or cyber-self exists in the cloud, somewhere out there in big data land. It's owned by Google or Facebook, the can and do use it to sell individual or aggregated data to marketeers, while the NSA or other government agencies scan the same data and maybe a lot more, your location data, telephone calls and what not without informing you.

Slowly we mix our traditional selves (assumed and shown) with what exists in the cloud. This process goes mostly unnoticed, but we become the pictures, videos and data that exists out there.

We tend to think we remember things from memory, which we only learned from websites. More and more we identify with this cloud profile and cyber-image, when we have learned something by using a search engine we tend to classify this later as something we have known all along. Our cyber identity has value and is a commercial asset, but we are not the ones who benefit.

Jaron Lanier is one of the cyber-philosophers who noted we are becoming a gadget, merchandise in the hands of the big data enterprises. He suggests a different model, where companies pay for using your personal data, but this seems a bit utopian. He is right in pointing at the flaws of the present data ownership models, but will Google and Facebook really start paying for your personal data and profile any time soon?

Who are we in Cyberspace?

Are you what you are or want to be, on the screens and in the statistics about you? Hardly, but how would you know? Privacy has become a major concern for some, but dissolves ever more.

We ourselves and our behavior and preferences have become merchandise, something with a market value. Our identity has become a commodity, we give it away freely by participating in social networks and by using all kinds of services that monitor our behavior. We face our own cyber-identity in the way the "big data" companies and agencies manipulate what we are offered in advertising, search results and entertainment.

The differentiation between what we truly are and what the 'cloud' of cyber-profiles makes of us and distributes as true becomes harder and harder. We externalize our memories and mementos, place them in the cloud where they become property of or at least accessible by organizations outside our control or knowledge. Our assumed identity, anyway the result of interaction with the other, becomes blurred because the other is no longer identifiable, less human, more algorithmic and more materialistic.

Cyberspace, in the context of this book, offers us a potential, a new realm for rituals, new forms of contacting the other and the otherworld. However, the great cyberspace magus model has yet to evolve or can I see the hacker, the lonesome electronic frontier explorer as the cyber-chemist looking for eternal digital life? Has a silicon brotherhood emerged, worthy of our appreciation, beyond labeling them as digital hoods, malware criminals and wikileaksers?

In August 1989, in the days of the Hamburg Chaos Computer Club, The Amsterdam Galactic Hacker Conference, Hacktic and the early virus attacks, when the digital idealism was in its infancy and we only could guess about where things were heading concerning privacy and crowd control with digital means. I wrote then, with Allan Lundell, the Silicon Path Creed:

We acknowledge the Silicon Path

The computer and information technology, with the word Silicon as its main symbol, is one of the identifiers of the 20th century. This has challenged some to explore its possibilities beyond the mere superficial, utilitarian aspects of it. In arts, media, psychology, artificial intelligence, consciousness projects, religion and creative crime, new applications are discovered and new interactions mapped. As has happened in the history of mathematics, the Kabbalah, martial arts, building technology etc., such powerful new knowledge is first applied to the relatively mundane fields of economics, warfare and the suppression of people before one acknowledges and then explores the transcendental possibilities.

All through the ages people have concentrated on parts of the reality to gain access to the greater or even ultimate reality in themselves and the perennial wisdom of our species and the earth, our Silicon Mother Goddess. The computer offers us new, and at the same time, age-old possibilities of concentration and expansion, of communication and isolation, ego-discovery and letting go, that are largely untapped. Those who are now so deeply involved in the computer are, even unconsciously, part of a new tradition, the Silicon Path.

Now we, the initiators, explorers, guardians and even exploiters of the Silicon awareness revolution are concerned about its uses and abuses, and above all, ac-

knowledge its potential for growing awareness and human transcendence. We owe today's hackers and whiz-kids, and ourselves, the opportunity to follow the Silicon Path, becoming the magi(cians) and mystics of our times. If the computer is nothing but another way to get in touch with the ultimate reality (and what else could it be), it needs some 'small' br/ others to safeguard that path.

Those were the days of computer hobbyists, but the message still rings true. Apart from the word silicon, these days the term cyber would be more appropriate, this was a view amazingly consistent with how I see things now, some 25 years later.

Apart from the transfer of existing rituals to cyberspace, the facsimile transformation of ritual formats, the main question for me is whether there are new possibilities, new access modes to the extradimensional with cyberspace communication. Do social media offer a new and higher level of psychological, social and magical or do they just copy existing ritual formats?

What new access to our primes, or even new prime communication modes have emerged or could emerge. Will cyberspace really widen our contact-sphere in a real sense, broaden the possibilities to grow in new directions or will we face the connectivity limits of Dunbar's number, even in an always on, always connected environment? Here the new possibilities of networks come into play.

There is the dream of the network believers and technology faithful, that more connections will bring more benefits as expressed in Metcalfe's Law (more nodes, more value). This looks great on paper, but does true value or happiness increase with more Facebook friends and what about spirituality?

Here the curve of Tom Allen, indicating that there is a decay in the use of all communication media with distance, also points at limitations of network value. The cross-over of media, the use of different media and omnimedia trends in advertizing might suggest our basic mode of communication has changed, but Tom Allen argued that we do not keep separate sets of people. The more often we see someone face-to-face, the more likely it is we will meet them through other media.

It feels that more digital connectivity breeds more superficiality, more unreal contacts and more loneliness, rather than more depth and collectivity. Social media can be very asocial and even anti-social!

Now superficial contacts are not to be ignored, they connect one to different fields and worlds, and the weak cyberspace ties (Morten Hansen) can easily be upgraded to strong ties, but we are in need of better ways and interfaces to facilitate such transform.

As the digital realm is closer to the quantum-level and thus to the magic of manifestation, we should be able to see more magical effects in cyberspace, and there are experiments that point in that direction, using random number generators and such. Mind over matter in semiconductor devices might be easier than teleporting, bending spoons or elevating objects, but I have not heard about specific rituals to achieve this.

Noosphere

Cyberspace, the virtual world where we manifest ourselves as mostly bodiless minds, is offering us extended connectivity and collectivity, the global village at our fingertips, but also access to mountains of data, historical records, wiki's and personal details.

It is a relative new extension of the noosphere, the "sphere of human thought", a notion we owe to Vladimir Vernadsky and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The noosphere is the planetary sphere of mind or thinking layer of planet Earth and was considered as a layer over the biosphere (life) and the inanimate geosphere. It is the way we change our world and seen as something developing into a new consciousness, toward some teleological unity (the Omega point), a higher state of (united/collective) consciousness of all mental life in the future. This could take a form of collective telepathy, a somewhat utopian perspective.

The internet can be seen as a reflection of the noosphere, offering more collectivity and is seen as form of proto-telepathy. I wouldn't limit the noosphere to the human mental and self-conscious thinking, the relation between life, mind and consciousness is more complex and multidimensional.

Identity

The transparency of internet is another step toward exchanging an inner identity (and authority) for external (including virtual internet presence) manifestation. We externalize or self or selves more and more, our memory (pictures, text, profiles, life history) is on hard discs, stored, in the cloud, not in our hearts and minds. The concept of identity, identity change, playing with identity, changing masks or avatars, privacy is one of the aspects of cyberspace that makes it interesting.

We can use internet, the cloud, social media to play with identity, change identity, hide identity, we can be anybody we want to be, assume any avatar personality. Externalizing our inner thoughts and feelings is a process all through the development of expression, ritual, speech, songs, writing, art and media. Self consciousness in that sense is an externalizing process, tearing apart our wholeness, looking no longer at a holistic self image but at

parts and aspects of what we think we are. We are conscious of our masks, our assumed selves and less in touch with what we truly are.

Home is where the heart is, but the heart is more and more outside, our memories, individual history and persona are out there, in the cloud and thus in the hands of Google, Facebook and the invisible powers of the internet. We are becoming the prisoners of that image, identify ourselves with what is out there. In many respects a dangerous path, with effects for our well being and connectedness to the “real” all that are as yet uncharted or ignored as we wave the flag of progress.

Internet has made the identity crisis of notably the West visible, as individuals not only put their whole life and social sphere there, but tend to exchange their identity with the virtual one created there. Who am I but my Facebook page, who does the government or Google or a blind cyberdate contact think or deduct I am, even beyond what they have as facts in the databases and on their screen?

My identity is externalized, out there, out of control and I wonder what this means in the long term for things like happiness and feeling real. Living the fake life, with fake friends, fake contacts and fake activities, isn't this the next stage in subjectivity, illusion, becoming the mask, adapting to what we think we should be. I wonder whether Freud would have added a cyber-ego to his id-ego-superego model if he had lived now?

Profiling

An issue that has much to do with our identity is the shrinking privacy we have concerning our messages, our phone conversations, our location and assorted cyberspace activities. Companies, but also governments are building enormous databases with whatever they can find out about us. Then they use (secret) filtering and profiling techniques to figure out who we are, what we intend to do and how we can be influenced (to buy, to travel, to sign up or to engage in activities, including subversive or dangerous ones). For most practical purposes, our cyber-identity is now what we are, and this is a dangerous thing.

We become our Facebook profile, we are the prisoners of our past, our freedom to change is limited. This is psychologically like a straightjacket. Now most of us already live a mask, the ego structure we developed to deal with parents and upbringing, but now this mask becomes a separate reality in cyberspace. Changing it is nearly impossible, as we don't know what data are used, where they are stored and what profiling techniques are used. We only notice that we receive certain kinds of ads and spam, that our search engine generates different links or that we are refused credit, a mortgage or visa to travel abroad.

I have pursued the new edge and esoteric spiritual traditions, while interviewing hundreds of spiritual and artistic luminaries, traveling extensively and being part of the cybertribe, using email since the early eighties. Quite a broad array of influences, where my interest in what information really is has led me to explore and experience a world that is by many seen as non-scientific, weird and not relevant. But as this unusual life-path has led to a fascination for ritual, maybe I am somewhat qualified to project a future, a vision about where ritual could go.

Most important is that I hope that ritual, the true ritual that has a magical component, will outgrow the limitations of the rational. It's great to talk about ritual as an expression of inner technologies (Foucault's Technology of the Self), to point out how they have psychological effects, bring self-insights and how they can be used in a social perspective to protect the status-quo (Xunzi) , for controlling the crowds by command obeisance (Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (1960)) or organize communities (Alain de Botton 2012), but that's all too rational, too mechanistic. It's great that de Botton outlines (in *Religion for Atheists*, 2012) how religious ritual offers structure, a meeting point and an opportunity for compassion, and should be appreciated more, but he is not a believer, neither in God or magic.

Rituals (as distinguished from ceremonies) also have a magical (irrational) component and that's where I am looking for in the cyberspace context.

Contacts with people like Sarah Reeder and Mark Pesce, who have seen and incorporated the cyber-perspective in their pagan and magickal views early on, made me aware of the subculture possibilities of the global communication networks as they evolved. These were people with a deep understanding of the possibilities, with roots both in the technology (Pesce: VRML, Sarah: games) and the esoteric who opened my eyes for what sacred space and virtual space have in common.

Cyber Me

There are techniques like Voice Dialogue where I can have parts of my psyche or even body express themselves, even get into discussions and this allows to separate sub-personalities, identities related to specific traumas , influential people in our lives, etc.

In cyberspace I also have an identity, a Cyber Me and this is different again from the personality and identity I show in "real life". This Cyber Me acts in cyberspace, exchanges with others and at some time, begins to take over, the cyber-identity gains a life of its own, mirrored back to these other me of me's at home, work, in relationships. This becomes manifest in internet-dating, the real encounter is often quite different from what one expected.

Modern views: Chaos magic and Quantum Magic

A fairly recent trend in magic is the Chaos Magic(k) movement. Referring to new insights in mathematics and physics, everything is possible and chaos adherents believe that any concept of magic works. Belief is a tool, and anything goes. Change your belief system and that might require a very fundamental change and is referred to as a paradigm shift and you can do anything, borrowing from any tradition and mix and match what one likes. The practitioner can and does use whatever tools and techniques with a preference for new and fresh rituals and methods and in practice quite a bit of psychedelic help. This manipulation of belief however is a very individual process, and requires to let go of existing beliefs, aiming at being different, a discordian, revolutionary, anarchistic.

One can switch from paradigm, helper deities into agnostic belief and back. The source of magic is believed to be inside and spirits, symbols and energies are just tools. An important concept in Chaos Magic, attributed to Peter Carroll is that one recognizes a Gnostic State (gnosis). This is similar to what I have described as the ritual state, the inner child state, the altered (but original) state of consciousness where there is access to effective magic. Chaos Magic is picked up in the music world in Black Metal, where the symbolic imagery called sigils shows up a lot.

Quantum magic is another fashionable way or word to bridge modern insight, magical practice and understanding and is dealt with in a separate chapter.

Then there is cyberspace, which is not the ultimate information medium as many believe, but in my view the ultimate externalization of data, both private and public, a library now so vast and cumbersome, that we must find new ways to navigate it and mine it for what really matters, for meaning. Although I have witnessed and participated the development of computers from mainframe via home computers to PC's, networks to internet and the opening and exploration of digital cyberspace, I myself have moved in another direction, going inwards rather than outwards.

In doing so, and the process is not at all finished, I became more and more aware of how the psyche works (as in brains and mind) and then how intuition and contact with the intangible fashions us, much more than how many Gigabits we exchange.

And yet, the old hermetic "as above, so below" must also apply to cyberspace. What is in the depth of our souls is not only reflected in the cosmos around and above, but must have a mirror in cyberspace, our new parallel universe. Let's have a look!

Cybermagic in the future

Where will cybermagic lead us? Will we learn to use the power of the internet, the power of a networked World to do greater, more effective magic? Will the present flood of apps, most of them of a fairly trivial nature and geared toward personalization of the data-mountains we face in this information age, lead to a philosophical or psychological breakthrough?

Such a question seems not very relevant for the hundreds of thousands developers, companies and users of social networks and apps of today. They'd rather talk about monetization, business models, and viral marketing than where apps sit in the development tree of our sense-extensions, as M. McLuhan described media and consciousness development. Yet they have potential beyond the rational, and the cyberpagans like Mark Pesce have noted this all along: the sci-fi books usually describe spiritual or magical dimensions in future or offworldly civilizations.

Cyberchurch

With cyberspace and social media of course new ceremonies emerge and it is relevant to see whether these have a magical aspect and thus would develop into true rituals.

With this I don't mean the cyber-rituals that are mere virtualization of existing rituals like in cyberpagan setting. There we see the basic matrix of pagan and craft rituals translated into cyberspace dimensionality and those would certainly qualify as ritual.

Is the chat-race magical?

What interest me here is how the basic needs to connect to the magical would influence the ceremonial of introduction, stratification and caste that we see in cyberspace in "normal" social networks. Our interaction in digital social media looks functional, but it is clear we are influenced by all kinds of deeper motives like FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), the need to belong and the need to be different (an individual) and be recognized. Are we also expecting some magical outcome from participating in the 24/7 always-on craze, texting everywhere, anxious not to miss out? Do we feel that this nearly obsessive devotion to what in most cases is little more than a tribal group and their dealings and musings makes us more likely to receive the happiness, honors, respect and love we seek? Or are we just imitating, like in empty ritual, what we believe works. In practical terms, does belonging to a network makes 1+1 more than 2 (this is what network engineers have claimed all along). Is there magical efficacy in our habitual, I hesitate to call

it ritualized, participation in social media? To answer this question we have to look at what the (ritual) matrix in cyberspace interaction entails.

The status of cyberdenizens (we are all aliens in virtuality) depends on how many Facebook friends they have, how many twitter followers, how their blog or personal website ranks etc. Those are the chevrons of cyberspace and as in any meritocracy there are subtle limitations, too many Facebook friends isn't considered cool.

Also our status might be limited to the group of friend's friends (the digitribe) as we are, by the secret algorithms of the platforms, limited in our exposure to whomever or what falls outside our "profiled" identity. John Perry Barlow's:

"You will only find on Internet what you are looking for, not what you need"

has slowly evolved (or degraded) to what the platform allows you to see. This also has to do with confirmation bias, we are biased to information which affirms our prior beliefs, thinking or searching "out of the box" has, alas, become unscientific.

To acquire (digital) identity and status in the modern world, one has to perform (digitally) in such a way, that those chevrons are awarded both by people in the private as well as the more public sphere. The two tend to become one.

We used to having real friends and now we are part of a like-economy with subscribers, sharers, likers, befriended and followers, they all become Facebook equals, we have flattened our social world as Zadie Smith indicated. And as 'autocomplete' and geolocation in Google servers (most of us don't know or use the /ncr option) only display what Google deems relevant, globality is an illusion too. Goodbye to complex relationships, the great transparency of an entropic greyness and middle class simplicity wins, Wikipedia rules.

Conform or unfriend!

Pagerank censored subsets of reality

So we are kind of cut off from the total, imprisoned by an environment we have created ourselves by all those nearly automatic acts and routines we feed to the cyberplatforms. Personalization is a double-edged sword, it serves us more efficient what we need, but gives us only a very limited slice.

But here comes the problem, we want to be special too. Michel Foucault, in a way obsessed with what our self is and what technologies one can use on the self, gives as the purpose of "The art of living" to be like no one else. Much of what we do in social media is, beyond the belonging, really about getting respect, identity, being different. This requires an strange split as

one has to have both a social (conforming performance and behavior) and a deviant, original stance. This split is not unique to cyberspace presence, already Plato points at the tedious task of the psyche to control both the tame and the wild horse (Phaedrus).

In psychological terms one can see this as the social, adapted (mask) personality and the free, childlike inner self where originality and intuition reside. To be a noted cyberdenizen both are necessary, but the question arises whether the freedom, flexibility and democratic access of cyberspace helps people to show more of their inner child originality, of their true self.

In normal society, education, work, school we already are forced to give up most of that inner self, we become the (fake) egos that know (hopefully) to deal with that world, but is cyberspace immersion making this worse or not?

Rituals 2.0: mechanized sociality

Here I like to refer to the ideas of Karlessi, a partner in the Italian Ippolita collective who published “Open is not Free” (2007), who talks about social control through technologically mediated media and interactions. The Google etc. platforms mediate sociality or pretend to do this to hide their true purposes of selling identity for profit. According to him any act of sociality is becoming mechanized and what started as a functional thing develops into unconscious rites or rituals, in a sense that I would call ceremonial. The performative nature of constructing an online identity can supersede one’s identity in other “real” spheres. The digital self takes over, the mask one wears in cyberspace becomes the perceived self. In extreme cases one become the avatar one plays or created.

Now Karlessi states that the public and private spheres are converging in part by the evermore frequent and probing collection and analysis of data relations (metrics). We become what we do in cyberspace and how we do it, there are meta-layers that lead to “profiles” because of how we created the data. He states that this kind of performance measurement discards adequacy for a pervasive mantra of “more”, instilling the wisdom that bigger and more is better, but also brings more possibility of external control and “guidance” which can be positive (caretaking) or negative.

He sees the participation in supplying these data, often not very conscious as we habitually put pictures, comments, tales, personal notes etc. in cyberspace, as “micro-unconscious rituals”. The private sphere becomes more porous, the personal communications become more and more public, we become transparent (to others, the profiling engines, the system) in line with the Radical Transparency cyberspace demands.

These rituals are addictive by design and as they are unconscious, hard to escape. The transformation of these rites from habits to addictions prompts Ippolita to produce a re-definition of ritual: Rituals 2.0.

Corroboration with these social networks as religious figures, followership of them, as “obedient sheep” only feeds the “algocracy” of Big Data. Algocracy – the suffix from Greek: “to govern, to rule” is the idea of existing under the authority of algorithms.

Participation in what is considered “Freedom of Expression” thus not only requires time and training, but also draws one into the web of data and profiling that is less and less free and demands more and more. As Kimberly Waldbillig describes: “These unconscious algorithmic rituals practiced en masse become the form and function of online liturgy, or public worship, to the unconscious – presumably leading to “Minds Without Bodies”.

In the “post-secular” society there are no more priests, but there is Facebook to confess who you are or what you would like to be, a powerful part of the communist and catholic ritual matrix. Ippolita even produced a new set of ‘Commandments’ for the post-laic performance society of social network users :

- . Control – compulsively. Micro-unconscious actions on social networks occur to avoid Fear-Of-Missing-Out
- . Share – compulsively. ‘Things’, bits of data, acquire new meanings through sharing.
- . Participate – compulsively. Through this, any contributor becomes part of something larger than himself, like being a member of the army, or perhaps more adroitly like being part of a church. Contribution, consciously or unconsciously, is positively reinforcing to the act of contribution.
- . Verify – compulsively. Querying the digital oracle rather than relying on sensory data from the body

Infotheism

I notice that Karlessi’s approach seems to converge with what I called the “Infotheism” trend, where we see information (as experienced through the all-embracing internet, the warm and seemingly personal environment that seems to know who we are and what we need, the clever profiling makes us feel at home) as the new deity. I agree that much of it is subconscious, but there is a conscious effort to explain reality (in physical terms) as based on a meta-dimensional framework or paradigm; information is what connects everything. From God to Love to Quantum entanglement to Consciousness and why not Information as the root of reality.

Karlessi sees the danger of this mechanization of sociality, which leads to commodification of self, but I think this applies only to our projected self, a cybereco that is not real anyway. That fighting this trend, fighting it on its own turf (in Cyberspace) by developing new and original true rituals in cyberspace is needed, I wholeheartedly agree with.

There is the wider context of externalization of our identity, a phenomenon Terence McKenna so aptly described. From the first cave paintings, language and myth via virtual reality to today's virtual identity in the cloud, we are more and more projecting the image who we are or would like to be or fear to be, beyond ourselves. We leave the body (and our internal memory) to become a virtual mind, in practical terms a bunch of data in the cloud. Not even our own as we have given away the right to the likes of Facebook or made it public in many forms (copyleft rather than copyright). Even worse, we are "profiled" and stored in unknown archives of agencies and corporations.

Our mask and personality in cyberspace are more unreal and perverted than the mask(s) Freud called our ego, we are developing a semi-public cybereco that, like our ego, holds us imprisoned in a subset of reality (or the dataspace we consider reality). We are a hostage to our Facebook image and Google profile, the true identity theft is not that we lose our bank accounts, but we become estranged from our core, our soul.

Cyberspace ritual, yet to come

The question about magical effects of cyberspace habits is still open. I would qualify what has evolved as habits with sometimes the smell of a compulsive obsession, and not as a conscious or unconscious ritual. However, slowly the belief grows, that by being (over)-active in cyberspace we are being part of the "digerati" and acquire the magical power of reality we ascribe to them. It may be that in the mere repetition of contact-acts a true ritual component is quietly emerging. The prayer mills of bcc emails and postings do accidentally hit home, a new and interesting contact happens, LinkedIn generates a new job.

Fake it till you make it, communicate till the spark flashes and indeed a magical contact emerges, between people or between people and the mountain of data, when the fire inflames and "the bit becomes information because it bytes".

Here the true question arises. Is cyberspace a true information medium, giving better access to what we need as it operates in the extra-dimensional space (the otherworld) or does it makes us grow away from our core (magical) access to that otherworld, that resides deep in us, hidden behind the ego and masks and accessible through ritual. It feels that some of us have indeed

found a way to use internet as a means to go beyond the mask, even beyond the cybermask and allow the wild, untamed and creative horse in the Platonic sense to roam the vistas of cybermagic, focus attention rather than disperse it as Bernard Stiegler says it, but they run the risk of becoming the priests of a new religion.

Here it makes sense to look at the development of cyberspace myths, rituals and religion in the same way as I did for how they developed in the non-virtual past, using the chakra model (or Maslow's hierarchy).

Identifying the growing from basic survival, through sex and creative toward power is not very hard, but have we reached the true *communitas* (Turner) or *Philia* (Plato) or the heart chakra in cyberspace communication yet and what about the more esoteric higher chakras or Maslow's self-actualization? Effective magic works in all chakras and we can see a dating site as a cyberspace ritual, but it would be interesting to see how many people have, after subscribing to a dating site (with the ritual description of oneself, which is a psychologically important procedure) found a new partner in the "normal" world.

Cyberspace offers interesting option to study and experiment with ritual (as a form of communal practical magic). One way is to harness the energy and feedback of many. The Maya 2012 craze and its fast demise could not have happened without internet.

People like Lynne McTaggart have staged physical and non-physical prayer circles via the internet. The study of divination might benefit from twitter analysis and just as Apple anchored the Tree of Knowledge logo in our minds, certain images and logos might have unsuspected effect on public opinion and reality.

The Meta-App

I wonder, will there emerge new ritual forms using cyberspace? Just as printing books has yielded valuable tools for ritual (psalm-books etc.) so eventually digital technology will expand our ritual toolset. I could point at a further development of cyberpaganism or quantum-magic but I hope for innovation beyond that. Now truly different software (in the psychological or spiritual direction, beyond the digitized but facsimile tarot and astrology) did pop up at times (Bruce Eisner's *Mindware*, Joseph Weizenbaum's *Eliza*, Timothy Leary's *Mind Mirror*) but has as yet failed to become a popular category.

Let me speculate a bit. I think that more computer, profiling and identification power will eventually bring about software that has tangible value and will help us psychologically, socially, and even spiritually.

Most likely this will be an app, a piece of software that uses the computing power and resources of the cloud to help us understand ourselves and others better. Such an app might even have capabilities beyond the rational, helping us to contact the extradimensional in new ways. Imagine a Meta-App that divines, consults, raises our consciousness and guides us in our prayers.

Apps or applications are pieces of software that cater to a real or perceived need in bringing together resources (content, links, data, sub-apps). One can look at all technology as eventually bringing some real progress in terms of growing connectivity, contact and awareness. Apps are the fashion of the decade, together with social media, but can they bring back the dialogue and interactive quality that already Socrates (via Plato, Phaedrus 245-250) noted as lacking in the written world?

Do they promise to ultimately yield such a Meta-App that will bring happiness, connectedness and consciousness to us, the brave new app-worlders? Will cybermagic apps help us to cut the isolated asocial cyber-hermit loose from his virtual worlds and addictive games?

Looking through the list of apps, one sees a jungle that has grown so fast it's hard to see the trees from the forest. They are ways of customizing the access to what we call information, but in fact is no more than the massive mountain of digital noise. We all the time try to isolate that what matters to us, to find out what hits us, as in

"a bit is only information if it bytes".

I am not saying most apps aren't handy: you can get practical location based indication of what is happening, what to do, you can get the distraction that fits you anytime, anywhere, you can have your life and experiences fit the "fashionable" model of the day.

It looks as if apps aim at more contact, more connectedness, but we know also it is somehow providing empty data. What looks like individuation or customizing is in fact nothing but compliance; you will find what you (or your search engine, that is nothing but a common denominator agglutinator) are looking for, not what you really need, it also lacks true novelty.

The Google-isation of search, i.e., of tacitly limiting our search to what the system accepts and allows, and by geo-localization and personalization serves you, is like looking for the lost keys there where the lamp's light is shining, as in the Sufi tale.

The complexity of our needs is not mirrored in the search and archiving methodology of the present internet, even as it is evolving fast toward multimedia metadata and AI (Artificial Intelligence) techniques to help you find what you search for. Alas all this within the commercial confines of what the search engine really aims at, making money out of your input.

What you really need is different, a hand on your shoulder, a stimulating remark or a kind smile is yet beyond the touch-interface of our pads.

Apps are, in their present form, and in the context of the quasi-freedom mobile technology provides just quest-killers, they take away the adventure of finding out for yourself. Mobile connectivity, the always on-always connected-always quasi-safe sedation and numbing of the underlying fears, is an anti-depressant that flattens our experience of reality. It focuses us on the good, white, obedient one of Plato's twin horses in the *Phaedrus*, and denies the wild, black, creative one, that wants to go its own way. Jaron Lanier's serious warning against Digital Maoism (i.e., the omnipresent access to free and publicly created information like in Wikipedia will foster the mediocre and status-quo codification and canonization of knowledge) should be paid due attention. The "bad" horse of Plato is necessary to have progress, to prevent the ossification we have noticed in societies that tried to limit individuality in order to promote the collective.

Dangers of computers

They are smaller, embedded and everywhere, without computers we couldn't survive anymore, but they are not only positive.

The negative physiological effects of extended computer use, especially in concentrated applications like gaming, are recognized as leading to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (RSI).

Most of us have some doubts about the electromagnetic radiation of all this new technology, even as the health authorities stipulate there is no danger of frying your brains.

Radiation is only one of the potential hazards. More recently the effects on the brain and the psyche as a whole are being studied. Nicholas Carr in "The Shallows" indicates that potentially our brain is influenced and negative effects like addiction (mostly to gaming) might result in physical changes.

Games however, as I argue elsewhere, are also the modern way to play and may offer the only possibility to learn by mistake. They are often set up similar to old-time rituals, offer a safe space, often perceived as sacred, and a challenge to perform, transform and grow.

Social media and externalized data storage threaten our sense of privacy, everything about you is or will be somewhere in a data base.

The dark side of the cloud and app movement is that we yield control of our data, our communications and our privacy to large corporations with sometimes close ties to government organizations of countries like the USA that feel free to do whatever with it.

The system takes over, or rather we let it take over, as it is more convenient, cheaper, gives us bonuses or point, we go along with the game. We happily

put our most private and precious moments on YouTube, Facebook and are surprised that marketers and government is looking over our shoulder.

It is not by accident, that it was Apple that made apps the significant trend of data-processing in recent years; it has been a company that valued more the form (the appearance, the mask) — in contrast to an older ICT-giant like IBM, where content was more the focus. Apple was and is different, it appealed to the ‘cultural creatives’, the individualists, and has led them into the new land of the western frontier, into mobile digital Autarkia. Providing applications to personalize that content, they made the app the new snake oil of the Cyber-exploitation movement, the neo-capitalistic, neo-individualistic ego-trip business.

Apple exploited the Us-Them divide paradigm brilliantly, although there are ethical questions related to that approach. By offering a shiny, fashionable, friendly and noticeable “superiority environment” to those in need of covering their inferiority feelings, it has had a phenomenal success.

However, since the Third Reich we know that this approach is also the hallmark of the fascist mindset, and it has less than favorable side-effects toward those not willing to jump on the bandwagon. By now, having an iPhone or iPad on you makes you a badge-carrying member of the digital party, the bitten-off Apple a clever subliminal hypnotic symbol referring to the Tree of Knowledge in Paradise.

Will Internet use, and potentially, with the help of apps and AI, grow more away from the unknown, the “unseen” and the irrational?

Will the new generation of digerati develop new senses, habits, capacities or tools to get what they need out of the data mountain, with aids not unlike those what ritual tools like the Tarot, the I-Ching or age-old Magic have offered us? There are signs that this is happening; cyber-paganism does use the internet for rituals, the cyber-coven an easy meeting place for virtual rituals.

Apps are an interesting new kid on the block, but distributed processing, dumb terminals, thin clients, central databases, mainframes, agents, bots and Software as a Service have been around for a long time, and so has cloud computing.

Apps did bring all this together, the mobile (digital) device giving the needed push to accelerate it, and by now, apps are infiltrating our worldview like rodents, multiplying and sneaking in everywhere. The “app in the browser” trend, allowing an app to be started and used from within the browser environment and thus on all platforms and devices will widen the scope of the app even more.

Most normal activities, like shopping, buying-and-selling, content-access, navigation, dating, payments, medical monitoring, art and even military actions have or will become apps.

Participating in cyber-wars via malware is already app-oriented, soon you'll be able to be a for-hire soldier guiding tanks or drone-planes in real-life wars thousands of miles away. Augmented reality is the new keyword, but is the lack of real contact between the cyber-soldier guiding unmanned aircraft bombing targets in Mali, Afghanistan or Libya a step forward or backward in evolution?

The horizon

This call for a philosophic assessment: where are we heading? Where is this new movement going, is it just a practical digital tool, or can we discern an impact that surpasses that of the invention of the knife, the wheel, alphabet, space travel and atomic bomb and will lead us to new forms of cooperation, communication and happiness? Like those technologies have given us symbols and archetypical images (the atomic mushroom cloud, the earth seen from outer space) what symbol will indicate the new possibilities of internet?

We have exteriorized our world to the extent that now our history, our personal identifiers and our archives are online. Some will say we have put our soul online and why not, computers can better deal with many practical aspects of life than we, mere humans, the believers in AI (artificial intelligence) and computer conscience will state. But then there is the other side, the fear we will lose control'. We are giving power over our selves and our identity away to an anonymous and maybe less benevolent system with a different agenda than spreading happiness.

The rise of the app in this respect is quite a step, as apps are like the Swiss army knife in cyberspace, handy, fast, comfortable, our passport to cyber-happiness! Should we welcome this development or just see it as another step toward a materialist, atomized, reductionist elimination of true connectedness, a rationalization of information, and thus a far cry from the integration of the consciousness dimension in our lives?

It is possible that apps offer more than either view, they are a stepping stone to much wider use of digital technology, as their integration of new senses, notably that of touch and movement, really opens a new vista, a megajump.

The ritual apps, the meta-apps that will give us or help us develop magic power, will or have been developed. So where are we heading, what can we expect from this development?

Is there a map toward the ultimate app, the meta-app that satisfies not only our cognitive, intellectual needs, desire for beauty (art) and our emotio-

nal/physical ones (dating-eating-sports) but also our needs for finding meaning and purpose?

In the nineties, the New Edge movement of Mondo2000, bridging the gap between the different New Age communities and the digital Frontier, Virtual Reality exploration, les Virtualistes, Extropians, and psychonauts, was heading toward a truly holistic approach.

For a short period, a creative confrontation of the rational and the irrational, the “seen” and the “unseen”, seemed possible; Virtual Reality was (not in public or the scientific world, of course) compared to the psychedelic experience (the Avatar movie illustrated this beautifully), and cognitive scientists like Francesco Varela came close to the position of quantum physicists like Nick Herbert, but this movement has more or less died out.

VR is now a commercial moneymaker and technical tool, like 3D, no longer a psychological stepping stone for understanding the psyche. Sound and audio-technology, at that time seen as a major inroad into the sub and unconscious via binaural and hypnotic techniques, are now mostly used as forms of escapism, not as tools for mind exploration and spiritual quest.

And yet, cyber magic is there, we all know that some of us get more, better, faster results out of computers than others, that mind over matter works in cyberspace too. The short lived rise of what Bruce Eisner coined Mindware in the late 80’s will have a revival in the apps-age, I expect.

Understanding the deep realities, the gnosis that encompasses the real and the virtual, all the dimensions, is what life is all about, at least for those that venture beyond the purely material. We have used technology to explore this before, writing letters, books and now emails to discuss and interiorize this, what is the next step? Maybe a device that plugs into our brain directly, integrated artificial memory, or is Ray Kurzweil right and will we be computers or software apps ourselves soon.

We will, I hope, get bored with the data-oriented apps, the filters, aggregators, agents that take over the adventuring, the psychological rewarding process of trying, failing and learning we need to experience in the real world in order to grow and develop. We will have magical apps, tools to help visualize, spells, digital auguries, random generators intended to render a connection to the unseen, the future, the subconscious. Far beyond the I-Ching looms the ultimate future engine, not only interpreting the present, extending the past trends, following telltale signs and extended scenarios in a mechanical way, but really connect us to the manic and divine connection, that Plato ascribed to prophets.

Artificiality, now so prevalent in the social networks, not yielding the happiness results we expect and seek, will give way to a new interest in the Other, the unknown dimensions beyond and within.

Understanding the connections between the seen and the unseen worlds, knowing and using what the old mages called correspondences, what is in the Vedas is indicated in the phrase “*ya evam veda*” is the challenge ahead.

People like Lynne McTaggart and movies like “The Secret” are showing us that “intention” is at least part of the mind over matter issue, and this idea is now resonating with the “cultural creatives” who look beyond the obvious and material. They don’t want a “cool” computer, they want it to be their friend, companion, guide and confidant, stimulating and sometimes confronting, ultimately the pocket-guru if not their cyber-lover.

This sounds like far out projection, but it is how media and tools in general usually evolve. As a means of communication and access medium to what is known, written, said or imaged about this broad concept, computers are a great tool. They seem limited to the very “hard” digital, but just as the stones of a church establish a safe and sacred place where one can address the otherworldly, now we see applications that go beyond the purely digital realm and make the computer into a sacred object of some sort.

The concept of the computer or smart phone as a magical tool, comparable to the wand of the sorcerer, seems a bit weird, but observe how much psychological attachment the average user has to these new magical possessions! If we see the apps as the oil that fluidizes digital connectivity and pervades our social lives, how long before it crosses the borders of the tangible? No doubt with a lot of snake-oil, quasi wizardry, but the initial outlines of an info-theistic trend can already be traced, the church of the digital is emerging.

Are apps a major step in this tech-gnosis development, offering us themes (tech memes) equal to the genes and memes that now anchor our lives? Is there a map toward the ultimate app, the Meta-App that satisfies not only our cognitive, intellectual needs and our emotional/physical ones, but also our needs for finding meaning and purpose?

Such a cyber-magical app, the use of it will be a cyber-ritual in itself, will probably be a combination of many apps and maybe lead to yet another and new paradigm, more powerful than the Conscious Computer dreams of Ray Kurzweil. It has the potential to bridge the now separate worlds of religion/belief and science, using psychological understanding and AI modeling, but we have to watch out for its dangerous counterpart.

The Big Brother surveillance, control mechanisms and tendencies loom in the back. Tools always have two sides, and the dark one is easily overlooked.

The emerging technology now brings a new dimension of connectivity and interface modalities to the user with touch, feel, move, a three-dimensional workspace with far more intuitive appeal than this vertical screen we have associated with information work for a few decades. To use this in a ritual context makes sense, let's hope it's just a matter of time till we will have cyberspace ritual, cyberspace healing and cybermagic that works.

The New Magic

Technology, the New Physics, Cyberspace, Biofeedback and the development of ancient techniques like dowsing into modern forms like Radionics are part of what can be described as the New Magic. Beyond the actual use as a communication medium, especially Internet has been a boon to the contacts between the magically inclined, there are many new forms of magic related to Cyberspace, from web-shrines to group e-rituals.

There is as yet not a good model (beyond facsimile similarity) linking these new forms of magical action to the older models and modes, beyond the comfort and accessibility it provides. And yet they all fit within the general idea that magic is the technology of power, accepting that the real power lies in the higher dimensions.



The otherworld realm has traditionally been addressed by religions, shamans, priests and the mages. It has, since the emergence of the printed book, been invaded by the lay people, and with modern media they have even more access to texts, songs, music, liturgies and source material for their own exploration.

The New Magic is more democratic, but there is the risk that mediocrity will rule, the same as with Wikipedia where participation of all has not yielded the hoped for quality improvement, but made it flat and untrustworthy.

Although some in the field of magic deny that a convergence between the New and the Old magic is unlikely, I believe this is the way we will go.

Referring to my work with Timothy Leary and J.P. Barlow in the New-Edge movement of the early nineties, where we embraced technology, especially VR, as the logical complement of the New Age and Transpersonal movement, with a little help from the psychedelic experience, I make a case for a unified Magic awareness, encompassing the old and the new.

The old traditions fit very well in the general concept and formulas of the New Magic, where quantum physics, virtuality, cyberspace and the eternal laws of harmonics, sympathy, oscillation and the creative imagination as the essence of magic come together. And as virtual divination with Tarot, runes, astrology and readings and healings via internet are commonplace and many covens, nests, Wicca and Craft groups already use the internet for cyber-rituals, the emergence of the New Magic is already under way and in fact converging with what is there.

Combining the magical energy of people in cyberspace rituals or linking physical events via internet connections is one of the new trends, worldwide prayer sessions or linked focus groups are supposed to generate magical energy to help change or transform things.

Cyberspace as a concept is not new, media from books to television have created artificial realities, only with the advent of computer-technology the sensory impact has increased. From words to images, from images to movies, from 2D to 3D, from screens to Google Glasses, and we are not yet fully there.

Technology that allows smells, tastes, more tactile experiences and better visual and auditory input will emerge, the virtual reality immersion will become even more 'real' and yet totally unreal and virtual.

The separation of real and virtual can be looked at differently. Nevill Drury, in his "Magic and Cyberspace" article summarizing some of the modern trends and manifestations of magic activity in cyberspace states that

"a distinct polarity is now emerging - requiring us to make a choice which takes us potentially in two quite different directions. And although techno-paganism seeks to embrace both of these dimensions, it seems to me that the main pathways within western magic will begin increasingly to diverge. Increasingly, I believe, a choice will be made between Nature and the new technology."

He accepts that some practitioners will go the cyberspace way:

"The magical explorers entering these doorways will then engage ever more completely in virtual worlds, blending technological motifs with mythic archetypes to produce fusions we can only begin to envisage at the present time." but that others will turn "toward the esoteric traditions of former cultures and will choose instead to identify only with the mythic archetypes of the past - but those which have a sense of resonance and meaning for the present."

In his view the magical revival of the archaic past

"also brings with it a thirst for authentic simplicity - for rituals which embrace the earth, sun, moon and sky as they are found in the real world, not in the virtual realms of cyberspace."

So one can look at cyberspace ritual as very different from traditional forms and that there will be people, making a choice there. It is likely that for a while a certain diversion will occur, like it happened in the new age movement, where many people (with the best intentions) rejected the more modern technology and believed the old and proven methods would be enough.

However, the main thrust for the new magic will come from integration of the old and the new, of applying and using cyberspace and quantum-physics in ritual too as we learn that the real power is not in tangible world, but lies in the other dimension, the spiritual, the magical realm.

Modern ritual: Flash Mobs & Coyote Mind

Modern media and notably the ubiquity of camera devices like smartphones has already led to a new ritual forms, like the flash mob. These are unexpected, unannounced, semi-spontaneous performances or happenings, sometimes by professional musicians, theater people or PR people (smart mobs), in public places. A group of people assemble suddenly in a more or less public place, perform an unusual and surprising act for a brief time, then quickly disperse.

This can be seen as a practical joke, but essentially it means trickster energy, coyote mind manifested. The notion of such coyote, disturbing actions is known in many traditions, it adds an element of chaos, of imperfection. Don't assume a ritual is perfect, allow for imperfection and thereby bow to the divine perfection. In some cultures specific mistakes in for in-

stance buildings are an expression of this sentiment, don't assume being perfect.

The general idea of the flash mobs resembles the happenings of the sixties, but they are faster, unexpected and modern media coverage by the public and media distribution gives it a new vigor. The first flash mob was organized by Bill Wasik, senior editor of Harper's Magazine in 2003 in Manhattan.

The participants use places like a big railway station, a large market, a public place and locations where a lot of people are around. The performers are initially not recognizable as such. When the performance starts, it usually is with only a few people, and then the surprised audience, the passers-by, turn toward them. Then more and more performers join, from different corners or they use staircases or different levels in the building to add their part. The surprise and often the message of the musical piece or performance makes for growing enthusiasm, the flash mob becomes a highly emotional and moving performance. The group mind skyrockets, there is effervescence, the interaction between audience and performers can be enormous.

As there are always people with cameras, such flash mob performances will hit Youtube in minutes and the message will quickly reach the world. This turns out to work very well when there is a deeper message, a magical intention. This like when in March 2015 the European Anthem (Beethoven's 9th, Ode to Joy) was played in an Odessa market in Ukraine. Starting with just a few musicians, the whole place is then filled with musician and singers, seemingly appearing out of thin air, bursting out in total commitment to the underlying message; we want to be part of Europe.

The magical energy of such events can be impressive. As I have been part of some happenings, organized by the mage Robert Jasper Grootveld, at the Spui square location central in Amsterdam. I know how effective this can be. Seemingly silly acts can have an enormous effect, on the media, the police and the general audience and achieve clear jumps in awareness. As such, they are rituals and in the case of Grootveld's happenings, they were designed as such.

A different new ritual: the final exit party

Now there are also new rituals of a different kind on the horizon. Asking for otherworld support when starting a new website or cyberspace venture is a logical development, the cyberpagans already have done this and developed formats for it. But let's look in another direction.

There are certain rituals that have survived the onslaught of rationalism like funerals. But as the medical knowledge and capability to predict the out-

come of certain diseases grows there is a growing tendency to wilfully end one's life if the pain or general situation become too much.

Euthanasia is there, no denial this is a growing practice. In many countries there are legal constructions allowing it, safeguarding against abuse and protecting the doctors involved. Now as this increasing, many people will realize that if the moment of death can more or less be chosen, one may want close friends and relatives around. This seems to be a good way to say goodbye and share some precious last moments. However, then having a funeral a few days later doesn't make much sense, the same people attend and in such a case the two events are resonating, also emotionally.

So it's not such a strange idea to combine them. Now maybe the notion of an exit-event with friends or family may seem absurd. But think again.

In Europe, where for instance in Switzerland there are now special clinics for people with such a death-wish, their family and friends do travel there anyway. As the funeral business is always looking for ways to expand, they might just offer what, excuse the verb, could be seen as a package deal. Saying goodbye, exit and funeral in whatever form combined, this calls for new ritual forms. Hotels and sorry again, tour-operators might see a market here.

I find this perspective also interesting, because I have noticed and heard from many people that the moment of death for the people present can be very special. One of my speculations about human sacrifice is that there is the possibility of time travel at the transfer moment. There is little research in this direction, but there are many personal accounts. Now to create an atmosphere where both the person dying and those around can benefit from what this moment offers, we need to think about how to stage such terminal and ultimate care.

The work of people like prof. Charles Grob who conducts legal research concerning administering psychedelic substances to terminal patients, with the help of spiritual teachers like Ram Dass (R. Alpert), comes to mind.

In more mature cultures like in Tibetan Lamaism and the ancient Egyptian belief system, preparation for dying and going over like in the Bardo Thodol was considered an essential element of the spiritual life. It seems reasonable to expect that as voluntary euthanasia will increase, people will see the need for appropriate rituals to accompany this. The very rational process in a way begs for a spiritual set and setting, but not thought seems to be given to this, apart from what individual people arrange privately now. And as today many people, even without wilful euthanasia, know when their end is near, more consideration for how to stage the last step seems appropriate. Creating a ritual beyond the classic Roman Catholic Church prayers and ministrations given at the Last Rites makes sense. Here Aldous Huxley, asking for some LSD in his last hours, set an example.

31 Sanctity or Subtle Energy level

Holy places, holy objects, holy people, all are important in a ritual, but how do we define or if possible, measure sanctity.

Holiness, or sanctity, is in general the state of being holy, often associated with divine qualities or sacredness. It indicates being worthy of spiritual respect or devotion; inspiring awe or reverence within a belief system or religion.

This notion of holy applies to behavior, people, objects, places, times like Christmas, rituals, etc. Our holidays were once holy days.



In religions there are often rankings of holiness.

Even in the Catholic Church holy or saintly can mean different things, from indicating a mystical state to being a great healer or very pious person.

The moniker is applied not very consistently, what about being a martyr, they are often made saints or blessed ones, but did they live holy lives?

Status is also part of the equation. Church officials have varying degrees of status, like the Pope and the Dalai Lama are addressed as ‘Your Holiness’.

The need for holiness and taboo

It’s quite natural to look for holiness, for something special, something rising above the normal, as we need role models, structure, difference. Diversity is what makes us do things, it’s part of how we perceive beauty and inner beauty is another way to describe holy. Having holy places, times, etc. give us a structure, going to church on Sunday or visiting a pilgrimage shrine or the remain of a saint makes us feel good, purposeful and a bit holier ourselves.

Religions provide this, they offer places, acts, and rituals to help us live a better life, feel good and believe in promises of supernatural support.

In the Catholic Church we have, for the noteworthy dead, a holiness status and even due process for beatification and sanctification. In Judaism there are also degrees of holiness. The Holy of Holies refers to the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle and Temple in Jerusalem, a place which could only be entered by the High Priest on Yom Kippur. In the temple even circles of varying degrees of holiness and thus access were indicated. This is quite

common in places of worship (and ceremonial locations) all over the world, there are certain areas where only elected, initiated or anointed official can go. Here holiness, status and secretness kind of overlap.

Holiness is relational

In general holiness is a relational thing, it's about the relation of a certain thing to something else. This can be the common standard of 'normal people, the divine, a relation to a specific deity, to the earth, to the spirit world, for some even to the devil.

This relation doesn't imply closeness, as in some religions closeness to God is seen as identification with God and that as presumptuous or even heretic. ‘

The “holy” relation can be seen as a resonance, a similarity, but equating this resonance to love or devotion is quite common. The qualifications of holiness are many, and again culturally differently defined, and can be expressed in terms of purity, perfection, following the rules (halal/kosher), commitment, beauty, magical qualities, mystical energy, looks, behavior, dress, appearance, and even age or size. Unholy can also have many expressions, often related to unclean, not acceptable, blasphemy, taboo, bad, evil etc.

For some cultures, certain mountains, trees or animals are holy or taboo, for others they mean nothing. A taboo is often closely related to sanctity, not doing something because it is considered too holy, beyond the normal. Taboos also give structure to life, have a practical and social function, but also a magical meaning. Breaking a taboo in special places, at special times and by special people can be seen as a magical and powerful act.

Holiness or sanctity often has to do with the correspondence quality of something. A special link with the supernatural is assumed or perceived, here similarity or contagion plays a distinct role.

Religions can assign holiness to certain things, but then sometimes a reformatory movement opposes this. The Protestants didn't accept the holiness of many Roman Catholic practices, sacraments and imagery. The appreciation of magical ritual which became unholy and abused in their eyes played a distinct role then.

Ranking of sanctity

Holiness is related to something we could call spiritual energy or spiritual resonance, but this again has roots in correspondences and rationally intangible qualities. Holiness as a feeling that something is special normally has no numbers or ranking, it's not normally measured by any standard.

Most people however have like an internal ranking, a quantitative notion of the holiness of a place, a person, a ritual object etc.

They have some notion about how holy the Pope is compared to the Dalai Lama, how sacred Stonehenge is compared with NYC Times Square.

When asked about it, they can usually in some way rank places, saints, etc. It's subjective, not all come up with the same order or hierarchy of holiness, but there is some general ranking. Much of course depends on the tradition, religion or culture. For Muslims for instance Mecca scores better than Medina or Jerusalem.

Ranking means qualification, and as this concerns normally immeasurable qualities, the primes I see as connections with the extradimensional come into play. We feel the energy, the quality, the specialness or beauty and this is why we can qualify, subjectively but with some common ground.

I do believe, that holiness is thus not only a subjective qualification, but that there is an underlying common quality we can measure.

For a person, reaching some state of holiness, glorification or salvation is usually related to how one behaves or is supposed to behave after receiving initiations or participating in sacramental rituals or purification. Stepping away from worldly desires and attachments and dissolving the ego personality are usually what designates a "holy" person.

The Buddha described four grades of 'noble person' or ariyapuggala called Sotapanna, Sakadagami, Anagami and Arahant, the most holy) depending on their level of purity, how much one has released the ten fetters (samyojana) and overcome the klesha (the poisons of ignorance, attachment, and aversion). It is interesting that one of the three main samyojana to overcome is the attachment to rites and rituals and infatuation with good works, next to more logical fetters of a belief in a self (ego) and doubt (of the path). The rest of the fetters more or less resemble the sins of Christian faiths.

Hierology is the study of sacredness, but as indicated above, has no standardized method of classification and ranking holiness. Here I propose to use a method similar to the Bovis methodology, using a divined and basically subjective method to do this and by comparing and cross referencing the result to come to a ranking scheme. I have done this for a number of sacred places as an example.

Sacred sites and Bovis scale measurements

There are obviously places in the world, that have a special energy. Many people visit places like Stonehenge or the pyramids, and would like to know how they would influence perception, mystical experiences and

dreaming. There are many anecdotal stories about how individuals experience such places, tales of transformation and insights happening there.

However there is no clear or even esoteric classification of sacred sites beyond the numbers of visitors or such mundane statistics. On the internet there are some rankings, where people voted and there is some ranking, but this has little value, unless it is done on a truly grand scale.

The question is whether a ranking can be made, using divination or other esoteric ways to gauge the qualities of the various holy places. I believe there is, by dowsing in a structured way and comparing and classifying the result, there overcoming the obvious objection that dowsing data are subjective. They are, but they are reproducible within a small margin, as such are true measurements, albeit of esoteric or extra-dimensional qualities, that only have an indirect effect in our physical reality.

Now for the quality of water and places there is a standard methodology and scale, called Bovis scale, established by controlled dowsing.

The Bovis scale is named after French radiesthesist A. Bovis (1871–1947), it is a concept originally applied to water (see the chapter about water) and used by dowsers and adherents of geomancy to quantify the strength of a postulated “cosmo-telluric energy” inherent in a location.

This method can be applied to other things, I used it to analyze rituals, like fires in a ritual context (www.lucsala.nl/fire.htm) but it can be easily applied to sacred sites. Of course the personal experience there can differ; time of the year, celestial condition, gender, age etc. will yield a range of values, but just to illustrate that it can be done, see some data below, these are very general and to make a serious ranking system, many more). I think this approach would be helpful in doing research about these places, also a Bovis scale result could be found for the water in those places.

I found a general sacredness value (subjective, might not exactly align with the Bovis scale used by others) at some main power spots as follows.

Lourdes	250.000
Jerusalem	150.000
Stonehenge	100.000
Sedona	150.000
Chartres	150.000
Avesbury	300.000
Rome St.Peter	80.000
Grand canyon	120.000
Mt Tamalpais	130.000
Mt Shasta	130.000
Mt Fuji	40.000
Glastonbury Tor	180.000
Glastonbury Cathedral high Altar	110.000
Chichen Itza	110.000
Machu Pichu	260.000
Palenque Pacal Votan Shrine	110.000
Gizeh Pyramid	350.000
Mekka Kaabah	90.000
Verdun fortresses	5
Auschwitz	10

This could of course be differentiated in and specified in aspects like geomantic (leylines etc.), human holy, nature diversity, healing effect, dream influence etc. aspects. In fact this method, which yields repeatable results, could be applied in a lot more studies about art, minerals, art, and many esoteric subjects..

32 Dreams, trance, altered states, immersion

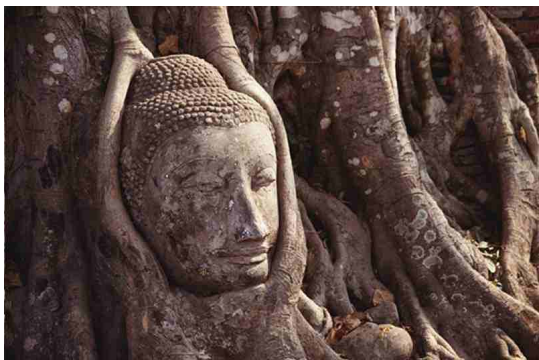
Altered states of consciousness, and especially states like trance, tripping or deep meditation are fascinating, they are part of many rituals. These states are however less specifically human than we think.

Let me start with a rather unusual idea. I think plants and notably trees communicate through some kind of dream-state mode, and we inherited our dreaming capabilities from our plant roots. This idea developed from a conversation with LSD-discoverer Albert Hofmann in his home. He explained to me his fascination with light and how plants seem to compensate for a dip in the visible spectrum of the sun (the green part of sunlight) by refusing green, bouncing it back for use by animals and humans. We are after all their relatives who decided to move and take the earth with us in our stomachs. This green-effect can be an explanation why we feel so good in a forest and why green walls in a hospital make us feel at ease.

Based on personal experiences with plant substances (teacher plants), mystical contacts with trees and a general connection with nature I got the notion that plants communicate with each other and their surroundings in ways that are much closer to our dream state or expanded consciousness states than we think. Just as I argue that ritual comes to us from an animal level of relating, I have the idea that dreaming (or a similar semi-conscious state) is a plant thing and the dream-state is the mode plants communicate with us.

We owe, in this perspective, this capability to dream (and lucid dream) to a much older life form. It's then part of the evolutionary heritage of the plants rather than something that came to us as part of self consciousness.

The suggestion that there is a resonance between dreaming and trees or plants is maybe surprising, but who doesn't feel different and more quiet in a forest? Do trees (and plants) indeed shield us from thought waves or other energetic radiation, is this why we keep them around the house and like to have gardens and trees around a dwelling, a palace or a graveyard?



Buddha in a tree (Photodisc)

I am amazed that I could not find much about medical or parapsychology experiments in nature, no reports about medical efficacy of operations or treatment under trees, and how tree energy affects creativity, dreaming and journeying. We like to be in nature, but don't seriously research why that is so good for us.

That plant communication and conscience is much more refined than we think was argued in the book "The Secret Life of Plants" by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird (1973). They mentioned all kinds of contacts between humans, animals and plants and among plants.

The book is criticized as pseudo-science, but offers much understanding and suggests methods and lines of reasoning I find convincing. Some I use in my work, like dowsing. They mention that the idea that plants have senses and respond with electrical signals in a way similar to animal tissue reaction and have some kind of internal 'nerve-system' had been demonstrated before. There were experiments by Jagadis Bose in 1902 and even earlier by George Washington Carver. They also wrote about the work of Cleve Backster, who illustrated to them that plants have memory and sense all kinds of events. He was using polygraphs and later encephalographs attached to the plants. These events included the deaths of animals and the behavior of humans.

The reactions of the plants were fascinating, they turned out to be supersensitive to acts directed against them but also responded to human thoughts. Backster noted that a special bond of affinity appeared to be created between a plant and its keeper, unaffected by distance. Emotions of the keeper would affect the plants, even across the United States and when the plants were placed in a Faraday cage or lead container. Plants also turned out to react to the death of some living tissue like a shrimp and even bacteria. Backster worded the implications of this research as:

"Sentience does not seem to stop at the cellular level. It may go down to the molecular, the atomic and even the subatomic."

Repeating the Backster experiment by other scientists turned out to be difficult, a phenomenon we see in many EPS-like experiments. He was however able to prove in a laboratory that:

"there exists as yet undefined primary perception in plant life, that animal life termination can serve as a remotely located stimulus to demonstrate this perception capability, and that this perception facility in plants can be shown to function independently of human involvement."

Publication of his research in a scientific journal and later in 'National Wildlife' attracted worldwide attention to these findings in 1969. The Tompkins & Bird book also links the chakras to real body parts -the seven endocrine centers - and explains why these "hot spots" are so important.

Many gardeners or farmers communicate with their plants and notice similar phenomena, but it was the Scottish Findhorn community that awoke the world to how effective communication with plants could be.

The idea that plants have some kind of telepathic capabilities might surprise many. Human arrogance usually assumes we are superior to plants and animals, but science is nibbling at this anthropocentric view.

It is known that plants have some kind of through-the-air communication, they communicate through UV-photon emission, but there is much more. Researchers in the UK (Univ. of Aberdeen) have discovered an extensive underground network connecting plants by their roots, serving as a complex interplant communication system.

They refer to it as a kind of "Plant Internet". This happens by means of a type of fungus called mycorrhizae that can transmit warning of threats from pathogens, herbivores, and parasitic plants. This mycorrhizae-induced resistance is part of plants' systemic "immune response". The communication modes of trees by way of such symbiotic mycelium networks are believed to connect large numbers of trees over large distances.

There seem to be even more ways in which plants communicate and in the light of their alleged sacredness and the psychoactive substances they contain plant life might be active in the extradimensional too. Dreaming is one way to access this realm, but as plants are much older than animals I speculate that both animals and humans have inherited this dream-state or something similar to it from the plants and trees.

The notion that animals dream is based upon their motor movements, twitches etc. when sleeping, similar to the waking state, indicating a phenomenon similar to dreaming. Moreover animals often show up in human dreams with sometimes very realistic and important messages. Animal dreaming occurs without the REM-eye movement we humans display, but then animals probably couldn't afford the paralysis and low muscle tone associated with that human state.

Proposing that plants are dreaming sounds like a very speculative guess, but dreaming and trees have a resonance in many cultures. There are trees where dreaming seems to be more intense or even lucid. There are many herbs that help to dream. The use of plants to induce special dream states or enhance dreaming is well known. Specific plants, often classified as oneirogens, have been used to induce states of lucid dreaming by shamans throughout the world. As an example the *Silene Capensis* (African Dream Root) is a South African plant regarded by the Xhosa people as sacred, and used to enhance lucid dreaming. The *Calea Zacatechichi* plant labeled "The Dream Herb" is used by the Chontal Indian tribe of Oaxaca, Mexico.

Our ‘human’ dreaming of course has developed, and changed to adapt to our tempo and psyche, becoming a kind of link to the unconscious and inner child state. Moreover as we developed other means of communication it has lost, certainly in the West, its edge and importance. This doesn’t mean there is not a residue of communication with plants in our dreaming. To my amazement, at a Gateway conference about Lucid Dreaming in November 2013 in London a number of the speakers took my suggestion seriously. Stan Krippner and other noted practitioners of OBE (out-of-body experiences), lucid dreaming and shamanic journeying came up with insights, personal tales and experiences corroborating this view.

The tree as an element in myth and ritual

The notion that plants and trees affect our state of consciousness is not surprising. We see the tree theme in many rituals. Many trees or groves are considered holy and worth special attention. They can help us in reaching the otherworld. Farmers, shamans and priests of old knew this all along, holy trees show up in many cultures, the axial world tree is part of many cosmological landscapes. The world tree as the combined consciousness of all the plant life together and linking the worlds is a powerful image.

In the Bible we encounter the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life in Paradise. I tend to see the Biblical serpent not as the devil but as an animal showing early humans the psychedelic quality of certain fruits, thereby opening their minds up to self-consciousness, they lost their innocence. So that Biblical tree could as well be called the Tree of Self-Consciousness.

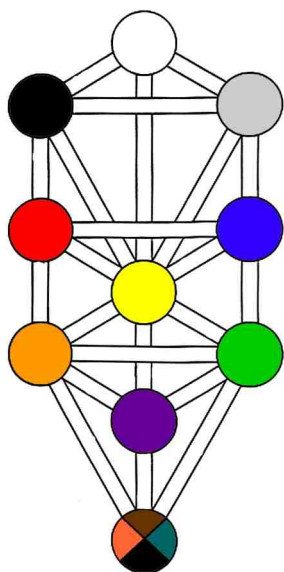
The Tree of Life we also see in the Jewish Kabbalah, combining many steps of the divine plan into one image.

There are numerous stories about how sleeping under certain trees influences your dreaming. Dreaming and trees have an archetypical connection and as is so often the case there is a reality grounding to this. The dream of King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) about how he was a mighty tree that would be cut down, symbolizing his downfall as ruler, exemplifies the understanding that humans have to let go of the grandeur and material power (letting go of the ego) in order to find the true God.

Non-Western cultures use plants and trees and their spiritual qualities in many ways. I know of Surinam shamans (Obia-man) who use the tree- and plant-spirits in their Winti-tradition which originated in West-Africa.

Dream technology, lucid dreams

There are more dream states than just what most of us experience and sometimes remember as a visit to a mysterious and fascinating world, where the



Kabbalah: Tree of life

rules of normal reality do not apply. In a dream we can transcend the limitations of time, place and logic, but we still wander in a world with people and situations that are strangely familiar, somehow related to deeper memories and our inner child state, but using the imagery and events of what happened during the day.

Lucid dreaming is awareness in the dream of the fact that you are dreaming. This awareness can range from very faint recognition of it to something as momentous as a broadening of awareness beyond what has ever been experienced even while awake. In the middle of a regular dream one can realize that one is dreaming. Then there is the ability to control the dreams, which is the most interesting part of lucid dreaming.

In the context of ritual, influencing the psyche and notably inducing different states of consciousness is a common practice. The results go by many names, but the question

is how much different a shamanic trance really is from a hypnotic induction or a lucid dream. There are differences in the way we get there, in the level of self consciousness, the physical abilities or in the dreamscapes one visits. Are these however not all visits to an otherworld we are pressed to color with personal projections as it is so utterly alien to us?

Are the differences in (phenomenological) content and imagery not what we filter based on the archetypal or learned patterns in our memory? Content and state have to be separated, as A. Rock and S. Krippner in 'Demystifying Shamans and their world' (2011) argue. They warn that shamanism tends to blur boundaries that investigators previously took pride in constructing. I am inspired by the title of their book, this very book can be seen as an attempt to demystify ritual.

Dreaming and the more conscious variations like lucid dreaming are well known tools of shamanic cultures, but were part of the Sumerian and Egyptian culture and prophetic dreams in Judaism and Islam are accepted as divine communications.

Dreaming and dream interpretation have been part of most of the magical and religious traditions, many cultures don't even separate the dreamtime from the 'normal' time. They see the dreaming life as more 'real' and important than the waking life, integrating their dream experiences into it.

They don't see it as an imaginative cognitive process or the elimination of "waste products" of mental information processing, like many Westerners. The Australian Aboriginals are well known, but also in cultures like the Mapuche in Chile dreaming is very much part of the everyday life. Krippner states the purpose of the Mapuche dream as :

"A dream provides the Mapuche with information about present or future actions of others on the dreamer, guides decision-making and provides a rationale for one's actions, and/or serves as a channel of communication between the dreamer and other people, and between the dreamer and the spirit world."

He compares their dream integration with a synthesis of 16 Native American dream systems, where the purpose is:

"Dreams are sources of power (e.g., healing, hunting, war), cultural knowledge (e.g., myths, rituals, songs, omens) and/or of personal information (e.g., occupations, social roles, future events, guardian spirits).

According to Krippner North and South American tribes do not require systematic interpretation of their dreams, their message is direct and undisguised. Some tribal dreamworkers use techniques similar to those used by their Western colleagues like psychodrama, dream sharing and role-playing.

Divinatory dreams show up in many of the holy books and dream interpretation was an art probably long before there was scripture. Deities dreaming up worlds and the universe are part of many cosmologies. The Zhuangzi (369 BCE) question:

"Who is the dreamer who dreamed he was a butterfly? Maybe it is the butterfly dreaming he was a man."

indicated that dreaming a reality or reality as a dream is not a very new concept.

After a long period of ignoring dreams and their meaning Freud, Jung and others gave a new impetus to dream interpretation and how these messages from our unconscious have meaning for our well-being. In his first book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud postulated that dreams are wish-fulfillment, enabling the mind to resolve internal conflicts (in accordance with his will to pleasure principle). This seems to be contradicted by the experiences of those with traumatic neuroses, their dreams frequently bring them back to the traumatic event. According to Freud this has little to do with their minds being occupied with the traumatic events. He noted that instead trauma patients tend to avoid thinking about their trauma during their waking hours and that the function of dreaming itself is disrupted by traumatic experiences.

Jung looked a bit different at dreams and actually split with Freud due to their differing views on the subject. Jung saw dreams as a way of communicating and acquainting oneself with the unconscious. Dreams are not attempts to conceal one's true feelings from the waking mind, but rather they are a window, a link to the unconscious. They serve to guide the waking self to achieve wholeness and may offer solutions to a problem one is encountering in normal waking life.

The understanding concerning lucid dreaming, OBE experiences, near death experiences and such has improved much since with people like Hans Beger (EEG), Keith Hearne (lucid dreaming), Robert Monroe (OBE-Hemisync), Michael Hutchinson (brain machines), Stephen LaBerge (lucid dreaming) and modern brain scanning has expanded this work even more. Experiments with sensory deprivation (John Lilly), psychedelic states, smart drugs and much more have garnered much interest and insights, although materialist academics seems to ignore these findings.

Personally, I got interested in all these technologies and possibilities to expand consciousness around them in the 1980s. I even had a shop called Egosoft in Amsterdam for some twenty years, specializing in products like hypnotic tapes, Monroe, Hemisync music, isolation tanks, brain machines and smart drugs. Not only my own experiences with the products and techniques, but feedback from customers has been an inspiration for me and provided me with a network of contacts concerning this at a time these were esoteric and certainly not mainstream techniques.

Doubling

One of the stranger theories about how the universe works comes from the French physicist J.P. Garnier-Malet. His Doubling Theory centers around the idea, that we (and everything exist) in three different time dimensions and that we have 'doubles' in those dimensions and we can exchange information concerning our possible futures with them in our deep REM-sleep state. He is one of the few that accept more time dimensions, in line with my own approach.

This 'doubling' should allow for dealing with unwell-



come and negative futures and the sleep/dreaming technique he advocates should help to secure the best possible futures. This because our double has access to different time-scales and can scout both past and future at a different (faster pace). He claims this is in line with modern physics, but has roots in the understanding of the old Greek and Egyptian sages and constitutes a fundamental but forgotten aspect of existence.

There is some resonance of his idea of a double with the Egyptian Ka and with the notion of angels in many cultures. He notes that time goes through certain phases, related to solar events (precession etc.) and that this effects our grasp of the future and how the various future options are played out. In that vein he predicted major changes in 2012, but also claims we can influence our destiny through what is essentially guided or controlled dream states. His somewhat obscure notions seem to relate to what J.W. Dunne observed; in our dreams we can overcome the limitations of normal time. His book (with his wife Lucile) called “Change your future through time openings” makes all kinds of claims about his method and miracle cures, but is chaotic and hardly convincing.

It is however interesting that he does acknowledge we can influence the future, and that animals are maybe even better at it than humans and he comes up with interesting correlations. One of them is that he indicates that a group of twelve (or their doubles) can allow a thirteenth to reach special levels of healing and consciousness, he relates this to the 12 zodiac signs, optimally such a group should consist of 12 people with different zodiac signs. in his view an effective healer actualizes his healing potential in the present, bringing a potential future to manifestation, with the limitation that this future is an available one.

I see this as another way to say that healing is a kind of time-magic.

Dream enhancing technology

In many temples and holy places of old there were both dream interpreters and special places for dreaming. In the East lucid dreaming practice is called yoga nidra. Aristotle talked about lucid dreaming, so can assume that in many traditions dreaming was not limited to ordinary dreamscapes. Induced and lucid dreaming, OBE and probably hypnotic and various sound techniques were used, with or without the help of special substances. The procedures followed were likely ritualized, embedded in a cosmology and belief system and the results analyzed for prophetic and divinatory relevance.

Present day dream and sleep labs use electrodes and other scanning devices, but today’s basic steps to achieve lucid dreams or OBE’s can hardly be much different from the techniques used through the ages. Maybe peo-

ple exploring such experiences don't see them as ritual techniques, but the intent, planning, and aims are not casual. The procedures used to achieve these dream states and the aim of obtaining information about the past or the future do qualify these techniques as ritual.

Looking at the range of special (dreamlike) states and notably OBE and Lucid dreaming, they share so much in perspective, general landscape and that they can be placed on a continuum if not under one 'state' umbrella. By physicality I mean less than normal gravitation, reaching through walls but not through glass, more or less normal time. Lucid dreaming and OBE differ in initiation procedure and initial perspective, but become much the same once beyond the initial stages.

The levels of dream control and dream awareness vary. Practice brings progress, and obviously there are levels of achievement concerning vividness, color, clear memory recall, recalling waking objectives, etc.. Phenomenological content and state have to be differentiated here, as I mentioned before.

Altered states of consciousness

Beyond the dream states most of us know and sleeping and waking states, there are other states, usually referred to as altered states of consciousness, like the hypnotic state, trance, anesthesia, tripping. Altered states of consciousness and ritual touch in many ways. One could even say that ritual is always aiming at reaching a non-normal state of consciousness.

The old notion of a limited set of states has expanded and now people talk about shamanic states of consciousness and psychedelic states. I even tend to think in terms of a spiritual or inner child state different from normal waking consciousness.

Also the notions of awareness and consciousness are not very well separated. Awareness is more related to physical conditions, consciousness to mental phenomena.

It might be better to talk about the level of self-consciousness and accept a sliding scale there, and then look at the content (or landscape) to differentiate. The content of a shamanic journey might be very different from a lucid dream but the level of awareness of self, body and volition might well be in the same range. In other words, (shamanistic) trance might be an appropriate label designating a wider range of apparent altered states of consciousness, as Krippner stated.

Trance

There are strange paradoxes concerning altered states. We can dream lucid, move around in the dreamscape and yet are being immobilized, our mus-

cles (apart from the eyes) limp, we can drive a car while on LSD, we can be super-conscious and unconscious of our physical body at the same time.

In rituals, we explore altered states and this not necessarily involves drinking strange concoctions or being hypnotized. Dancing and drumming around a fire, especially all night long, will bring most people in a special

state. The rhythms and the movement, exhaustion and group-mind bring about a deep sense of belonging, of being one with the group and the fire, and often a trance-like state will arise.

In many rituals the priests, the shaman, or the attendants will get into a trance, a very special and very personal state, an altered, often ecstatic state of consciousness. This is brought about by various means like dancing, drumming, fasting, isolation, circular breathing, ingesting substances, meditation, pain and other hardship, etc. More people can get into this state at the same time, but it remains a very personal experience, even if one accepts guidance of another entity that might have general or tribal significance.

There are many ways to get out of your mind, meaning out of the normal consciousness, letting go of normality, the mask, pretension. We all know the effects of alcohol, but were not wine and tobacco once sacred substances too. We see trance states in many indigenous cultures, in cults like Voodoo, in ecstatic religions, but in modern times also in the Techno and House parties (with the help of amphetamines, etc). The frenzied clubbing parties and festivals of today are seen by people like Hans Cousto as a modern ritual, attempting to reach another level of being and community through music, dancing, and drugs.

These otherworldly states, induced trances or other expanded conscious states are often used in healing, sorcery, and prophecy. In Antiquity, there were many oracles such as the one in Delphi where contact with the gods was achieved through people in trance, usually women called sibyls.

Virgil describes the Delphian priestess (Pythia) in the Aeneid, as prophesying in a frenzied state :



“...neither her face nor hue went untransformed; Her breast heaved; Her wild heart grew large with passion. Taller to their eyes. sounding no longer mortal, she prophesied what was inspired from The God breathing near, uttering words not to be ignored”

This state for many has negative connotations, we see it as something from “primitive” cultures. At the same time in Christianity there are many saints who displayed such states. But then, approved by the Church, it is usually described as spiritual union or mystical experience.

There is, in the literature, little differentiation as to where the energy is focused. Very general indications are used like calling it a trance. This lacks specifying whether it might be a sexual, mental, physical aggressive, coyote-like or playful state. Better indication of what is the source of the energy, the focal point, might help to understand the differences in outcome and efficacy. One of the problems is that the true connections with the otherworld in such a state is obscured because there is also theatrical performance, there is a show aspect. Not irrational, fake it till you make it is a sound approach, but for the outsider or observer confusing. The chakra model is useful here; others methods like psychological typing might work as well.

In trance one lets go of the normal constraints of morality, time, and place, but I think making it more specific helps to differentiate. So there is a sex-chakra trance, a third chakra trance of willpower (sorcery), a heart-chakra trance of union, a third eye chakra trance of total knowing (lucidity-state), etc. Here I see the same problems as in discussing mystical states.

When one talks about spiritual mysticism, usually in a Christian context, in literature and media there is this focus on Being God or part of God, the union, the oceanic oneness. This is what one finds in the poems and tales, even as one often admits this being essentially indescribable in words. I however consider this as only a special state specifically relating to third chakra trance; there are other and quite different mystical states. They are all different, but do share the same root intention of otherworld connection. Letting go of one’s identity and mask in speaking in tongues (Glossolalia) in a fifth chakra trance may look different from the tantric sex act, but both are about letting go of one’s ego.

Trance modes are often accompanied with feelings of omnipotence and power of and over time and associated with the third chakra. In Hinduism power and truth are central issues and clearly third chakra energies. No wonder that Crowley, the Golden Dawn and Blavatsky) looked at the Hindu practices and were inspired by the siddhis (magical achievements

like levitation) of Eastern ascetic sâdhus; they considered the will as most important.

As I have noticed in the trance states resulting from different psychedelics, different substances address different energy points and produce a different “mystical” or “magical” focus. It’s a pity that for instance in the Catholic church one mostly has focused on the oceanic oneness or unitive state (love-heart chakra), the Unio Mystica as being the only acceptable mystical experience. Sexual, mental, or prophetic trances were ignored, seen as devilish, and would not lead to sainthood. Of course the Christian faith is in essence a heart chakra religion, other religions are related to other chakras like Judaism and Islam to the fifth chakra, regulating the interaction with the world and the deity. While the Unio Mystica state associated with the Christian focus has received much study, literature, and canonization, the other states are ignored. It is a bit strange that as soon as one is accepted as mystic or holy (in the church), all other more or less ecstatic experiences are labeled religious experiences no matter what it is or what the trigger is, whether it is possession or inebriation. Sexual ecstasies are accepted given the right bearing, like being united or married to Christ. The lucid trance state of knowing or seeing (6th chakra), which not only transcends time as in prophecy but knows beyond the known, is often considered dangerous and heretical.

Mystical experience is often repressed by institutional religion. Personal experience, and especially those who result in denying dogma or Church authority are seen as a threat to these structures, but often lead to alternative structures and religions. History is full of struggles between people and organizations concerning the issue of the personal versus dogmatic ethics.

There are religious teachings and traditions that do distinguish several stages or forms of ecstasy. In Buddhism there are more trance states recognized: the eight states of trance together called absorption. The first four states are Rupa, or materially-oriented, and the next four are Arupa, or non-material, the whole leading to a final saturation state.

Yoga aims at attaining an ecstasy state called Samadhi. According to practitioners, there however are various stages of ecstasy, the highest being Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In Dionysian Mysteries, the initiates used alcohol and intoxicants and trance-inducing dance and music to get into a state of community, remove inhibitions and social constraints, thus liberating the individual to return to a natural state with some orgiastic aspects.

Sufism sees spiritual ecstasy as a state of connection with Allah. Sufis rituals (dhikr, sema) use bodily movement and music to achieve the mystical state. This is not generally accepted in Sunni Islam, but they do allow dream interpretation as one of the few esoteric (magical) practices in Islam.

Trance and mysticism are the pursuit of communion and even identification with an ultimate reality, divinity, spiritual truth, or God through direct experience, intuition, or insight. One can describe the mystical or trance state as trans-ego (transcending) or pre-ego, going back to the state we had before the ego developed. This is how Freud described it- he saw mystical experiences as regressive. In the general model I use in this book where the mask(s) or ego is a defense around the deeper layers of inner child, higher self, etc., both trans-ego and pre-ego are applicable, both point to a deeper layer of the psyche.

The higher up the Chakras the more mystical: we move from the very earthly to the very mental but this is a matter of convention. The shaman who gets into an animistic, first chakra trance is as much in contact with the otherworld as a Christian mystic in a state of quiet union or a Zen Buddhist in a samadhi state. Letting go of the ego, the constraints of normalcy, a kind of paradoxical control and yet detachment of body and mind is what's essential. The critical faculties that keep us tied to rational reality have to be switched off to allow entrancement.

Letting go of all worries and attachment, switching off the control and connecting to the otherworld is what is experienced as "Rapture", "Euphoria", "Ecstasy", or "Bliss". This can happen intentionally as in a ritual context or just accidentally, in nature or because some kind of inner "key" is turned. From practical experience I can say that both ways can bring insights and growth in consciousness.

Cultures have developed sometimes very complex ways to arrive at such a state, like in the mystery schools in Greece (Eleusis). There are many initiation rites aiming at an altered state.

In very general terms, a real ritual with a magical intent needs and aims at such a state of altered consciousness as the way to address the otherworld effectively. It's part of the liturgic matrix, whether this involves the whole congregation or just some officiators. It doesn't matter if it lasts for a long period or is just a supreme moment like the Consecration in Catholic Mass.

How to get there

Achieving ecstatic trances is traditionally seen as shamanic activity. It aims at such magical purposes as traveling to heaven or the underworld, consulting and interacting with spirits, clairvoyance, prophecy, and healing. The triggers can be psychotropic drugs like ayahuasca, magic mushrooms, peyote, datura, and cannabis in combination with ritual, music, dance, ascetic practices (pain, sweating), and art, spatial placing (choreography) and visual designs to help concentration and mental discipline. In fact the ways and means to achieve an altered state are many, it also depends on the inten-

tion and the mindset. Buddhist meditation for instance is more solemn and dispenses with the paraphernalia.

And many have such a trance or mystical experience seemingly accidental, as in nature.

I believe however that careful investigation will reveal there were clear factors facilitating such an entry into the otherworld.

In recent times many of these practices, often related to the psychedelic substances and rituals using them, have come to the West. The Santo Daime church, ayahuasca, magic mushrooms, and the discovery of LSD and substances like XTC has spawned a whole new strand of rituals, often with psychotherapeutic aspects. Some of these became street drugs used in clearly non-ritual circumstances.

The positive side of this is that psychology and especially psychotherapy evolved through understanding the processes involved and using the substances in effective ways. Therapy sessions are not called rituals, but often follow a similar structure. In sports, much of the understanding of ritual, visualization and programming has been used to prepare athletes for competition.

Ecstatic experience is usually interpreted within the context of one's world view and traditions. This 'prior imprint' is then projected onto contact with otherworldly, supernatural or spiritual beings. We know of seeing Maria or Jesus, revelations, UFO abductions, angel-contact, access to the Akashic records; the tales differ. They are culturally colored, people see what they know.

It is usually tough to retain the insights gathered there, although this capability grows with experience. It happens that one comes back with practical information, discoveries, practical insights, but these are then usually colored, filtered and adapted. Most of the time however the experience brings some insight in one's own behavior and programming. This might, for some, lead to conversions and fundamental lifestyle decisions.

The weight of what one discovers in this unusual state can be too much to swallow, too far away from what the person knows or understands or dares to reveal in their 'normal' state. Then one can resort to a 'channeled' or medium mode, stepping away from the responsibility of the message. I noted that many 'channelers' have (mask) personalities that are very different from what they experience in the otherworld state, using the medium mode is protecting the assumed self.

Mystical; higher or lower

Is the mystical state lower or higher than our "normal consciousness"? Freud and many materialists see it as falling back, regressing to a more

primitive state, but usually one talks about attaining a higher consciousness. This implies that in our normal state we are only partially conscious, our mind is preoccupied with practical, material things, 'lower' impulses. It operates in an automatic and often neurotic mode most of the time. We are not "free." The Russian mystical teacher Gurdjieff called this ordinary condition "waking sleep". Our potential is not used, but by training we can achieve higher states; he recognized five. To become aware of this and progress toward higher levels one can study, read and train, but one usually needs the help or the tutelage of a teacher of a higher level (Guru, Rabbi, Sheikh, etc.) who would oversee the progress.

Higher consciousness has many names, like Super consciousness (Yoga), objective consciousness (Gurdjieff), Buddhist consciousness (Theosophy), Cosmic consciousness, God-consciousness (Islam, Hinduism), and Christ consciousness. It comes with virtues such as tolerance, lucidity, patience, kindness, truthfulness, humility, and forgiveness. It is often believed that rigorous practice and training, discipline, vegetarianism, and abstinence is necessary to get there, kind of forcing the inner from the outside.

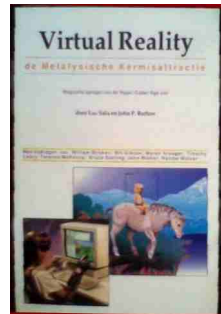
I however believe that this "holy" behavior is the natural result of a higher level of awareness. Most really "saintly" people in history didn't get there by training and following some doctrine. It just happened to them, often through rather heavy experiences, by accident (or Divine Grace) rather than intention. Mimicking that what they then naturally display concerning food, behavior, etc. in a discipline for their adepts in a practice, training situation, ashram or monastery is an interesting way to build a following and keep them in line, but doesn't seem to generate great numbers of truly independently and newly "holy" individuals.

Immersion, ritual and Virtual Reality

Entering another world, immersing oneself in what is a virtual realm is not limited to ritual. Many art forms aim at bringing one into a different state, even books often make one feel to be in another environment, one enters a virtual world. Imagery, movies, theater, music, computer games, they all achieve some level of immersion and are thus used in ritual contexts. Cyberspace these days is also another world, nearly another state of consciousness in the connection with others and the web. In the late 1980s a technology was developed that allowed even further immersion, by using special headsets and software that would provide some feedback between motions of the user and the virtual world. Jaron Lanier, one of the pioneers of this technology, coined the word Virtual Reality (VR). I was, as software entrepreneur and writer, quite involved in those days with the VR-scene,

organized events and wrote a book about it (in Dutch) with the help of John Perry Barlow and contributions of Leary and many of the VR-cognoscenti. We all were, in the early 1990s, part of the Californian Mondo2000 scene, where many then leading writers and researchers came together, interacting and influencing each other's field with a clear link to psychology and the psychedelic world. We believed that VR would be the psychotherapeutic tool of the future. Psychedelics and VR had some interesting parallels and overlaps. Many researchers were inspired by their experiences with psychotropic substances and wanted to create virtual realities that would have a similar effect. VR was seen as potentially an electronic drug.

Due to some side effects (epileptic fits in young children) the anticipated general acceptance of VR as a new medium with high immersion qualities didn't happen. The technology remained a tool for scientists, designer and architects. The idea was great, and maybe still has a future as there is a new wave of interest in what is now called augmented reality with special glasses. However, when 3D (on a flat screen, not in a 3D interactive environment) became a consumer electronics issue around 2010, it turned out that the same problems as with VR helmets hampered widespread acceptance. 3D is nice for a short while, has appeal in cinema, but for home use it's too tiring for most people and there is the slight risk of triggering epileptic fits.



Immersion as part of ritual has always been used. The Mystery School initiations like in Eleusis were often a theatrical immersion experience, enhancing the psychedelic effects of a still not known drink that was given to the "Mystes". The setting of a ritual, with special garb, tools, decoration and choreography had immersive effects, amplifying the imagery and otherworldly state initiated by the drink. In many other cultures this immersion, intended as a pathway to giving up identity, is accompanied by hardship, even torture and terrifying circumstances. Pushing attendants over the limen, the threshold into another state, obviously requires more than just a simple suggestion.

33 Ritual Tools: Gold, Prayer

Beyond water there are very few substances, things or acts that are not in some way used in ritual, symbolically or in tangible form and are thus part of the ritual matrix. It would require more space and volumes to describe all possible tools and implements used in ritual, so in this chapter I will deal with a few important tools and substances.

There are tools and elements of the ritual matrix that are more or less standard. There are the material things, like having some kind of an altar, the general layout involving a fire place, magical circles, but also implements and tools like the cup, the wand and the sword. They show up in many traditions, think about tools like drums, musical instruments, candles, pentacles in many forms, knives, feathers, incense burners, and of course many materials and tools with a symbolic correspondence. In any book on witchcraft or magic these tools are described, often in great detail and suggestions are given how to incorporate them in rituals. Also the anthropologists have covered the use of tools in all kinds of cultures and there would be little new insights I could contribute.

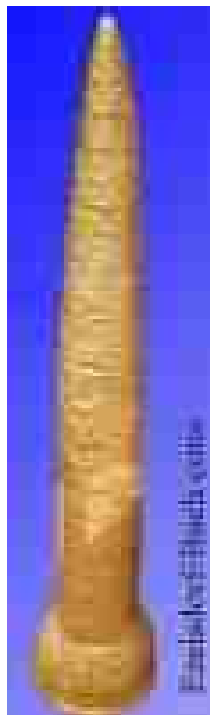
There are also less visible elements, that we encounter in rituals, like meditation, silence and prayer. They are hard to isolate, but it is clear that silence at the right moment can be very powerful. Again a lot has been written about meditation techniques, so I will concentrate on sharing my notions about a few tools only, being gold and prayer.

I will share some unusual ideas about a material quite often used in ritual context and with a history in alchemy that indicates there is more to it than just some chemical qualities and metallurgical qualities and rareness.



Gold; the secret qualities of more than a noble element

I am for a long time fascinated by gold, as it has qualities that are not commonly recognized but play a distinct role in rituals. Of course gold is an easy metal to handle, it is rather heavy, it doesn't normally decay or oxidize and it's both rare



enough and not rare enough to serve for minting. It is soft, shiny, malleable, and ductile metal, with the symbol Au and atomic number 79 and very dense, 70% heavier than lead. It has always had value, although the present price per troy ounce far exceeds the value it had in history, due to speculation, hoarding, use as security investment and increased usefulness as a stable conductor in electrical devices.



However, there are other rare and noble materials with similar qualities, like platinum, that are also valuable, shine and resemble the sun, but are less the subject of speculation and greed.

Gold has always had this magical aura, beyond the rational qualities. True, it shines and looks like the central life giver, the sun, when polished, and can be found in a fairly pure forms, different from most met-

als one can find a “native” nugget of gold in a river bed and pick it up without tools and melt it on a open fire, but what is the magic of gold? I believe there is a true secret side of gold, that there are qualities of this metal that modern science has ignored and have been lost over time, but were once recognized and this awareness still lingers on.

Qualities that have much to do with accessing the extra-dimensional realm, where magic and the spiritual reigns. I have discovered these qualities through a series of synchronistic experiences and meetings, it feels like I have a karmic connection with gold.

Just to start off with some archeological facts. The wizards or priests of early Europe (800-1500 BCE) wore hats of gold intricately embellished with astrological symbols that helped them to predict the movement of the sun and stars, this according to an article in the Telegraph in 2002.

This solved the mystery behind a series of strange yet beautiful golden cone- shaped objects discovered at Bronze Age sites across Europe. Historians at Berlin’s Museum for Pre- and Early History claim to have established with near certainty that the mysterious cones were originally worn as ceremonial hats by Bronze Age oracles (king-priests).

The researchers discovered that the 1,739 sun and half-moon symbols decorating the Berlin cone’s surface make up a scientific code (logarithmic table) which corresponds almost exactly to the “Metonic cycle” which explains the relationship between moon and sun years and gives the ability to predict accurately the correct time for sowing, planting and harvesting crops, an impressive piece of astronomy. This kind of indicates that the late Bronze Age was a far more sophisticated period in Europe than assumed. Monuments, recent excavations, artifact dating and results from DNA trac-

ing also indicate that Europe in those days was a far more connected place than we thought, there was a lot of cultural exchange. Places like Stonehenge were not only ritual monuments but served more like healing places and were visited by people seeking help from all over Europe, and this from 2500 BCE and maybe earlier. A new perspective emerges on how culture has spread from a core in Mesopotamia or Northern India across the Eurasian continent, with far more traffic and exchange than was assumed. It is amazing to discover, how the people of the second and third millennium BCE shared so many words (language), technologies, astronomical insights and philosophical and religious practices. The correlations between building styles, ritual practices and initiation rites are indicating this was maybe not such a primitive era at all. Amazing similarities in construction techniques even point at exchange with the Americas, and recent finding of coins in Australia indicate that there were visitors there long before the Dutch discovered the continent in 1606. The Phoenicians (Canaanites) were known to travel extensively over sea, the Egyptian got Cedars from Lebanon in the third Millennium, and sick people traveled to Stonehenge from all over Europe.

One of the amazing sciences of those times was the astronomy, they knew a lot about the celestial movements, more than they could normally find out with the limited observational tools we think they had. The accuracy of their calendars is amazing, the Maya one is now widely known, but there are old Indian scriptures like the Bhagavata Purana (5th book) that show insight in distances, relations and even knowledge of things unknown in the West till recently. How did they know? I will not go into speculations about this like those of Zecharia Sitchin, but maybe the old folks had a better link with the all and could access information in a different way than we now with our rational equipment.

These cold cone hats mentioned before thus were ritual implements of some sort, but within a context of astronomical and maybe even astrological understanding. Now astrology is considered a pseudo-science, but isn't there also a relation with those extra-dimensional senses? I have known for some time, based on (subjective) observations during grand conjunctions, that each planet gives off distinct and recognizable energetic rays/ waves.

I could feel the difference between the planets as they moved in and out of the line of sight. I for a long time suspected that wizards hats were one means of isolating specific planetary or stellar energies, a kind of energy telescope. The gold cones and the interpretation of the symbolism on them bolsters my view. The shaman, priest or wizard, knowing where the star/object was on the sky, could with such a gold cone hat as now have been iden-

tified isolate that energy from the other rays/waves reaching him and thus concentrate on what message could be deducted or received from that. But walking around with a gold hat would be too obvious, so I therefore think, that such a gold cone was inside the more well known black hats we traditionally see in pictures.

Back to the gold, these artifacts that show that gold was used in magical implements in a special way. Now I knew, even before these finds, that gold was special, based on experiences in gold plated underground rooms and the special feeling of raw gold nuggets I possessed. I had written and made television programs about the idea, that gold had something to do with access to other dimensions and notably thought waves since the early nineties. This finding of these golden wizard's hats offered some more "solid" proof of my theory/postulate about magician's hats, that these are devices to channel specific radiation like stellar or planetary energies to the magician.

But gold is used in many ways, is it possible that gold shields or conduits something we can indicate as thought waves or brain fields? The use of gold to shield or direct certain energy patterns and notably (chi or zero point or other dimensional or neutrino/quark) thought fields is the only reasonable explanation for things like crowns, gold embroidered garments, gold woven into underwear (the pope has some, especially made for him from fine hemp by nuns in Germany, they would not sell me any of that except with authorization of a high ranking cardinal, which later became pope Benedict), and gold used in jewelry. Shielding, focusing, protecting or enhancing, the form would be a factor, the same as in antenna's. In general, the form, number of points and construction of a hat, crown or tiara in this perspective then decides its



Prayer and devotion (PhotoDisc image)

The magical efficacy of tools and conditions as used in a ritual context

		level of participant/officiators			
		relative importance	low effect	medium effect	high
Message					
	Use of Magical Phrases/Words	25	25	50	105
	Use of Standard Texts	50	10	30	50
	Voiced Mantra	10	5	10	10
	Internal Use of Mantra	25	10	20	30
Procedure - tools					
	Shielding with material	40	40	50	500
	Use of symbols/magic numbers	110	50	150	400
	immaterial shielding	80	40	120	300
	Invoking spirits/entities	25	5	10	175
	Use of psychedelics	75	5	10	150
	Use of sacred space/altar/circle	5	2	30	50
	Sacrifice -offering	45	30	35	40
	Use of material tools/implements	5	10	30	35
	Use of virtual tools	20	10	15	20
Timing					
	Repetition with intervals betw sess.	70	50	60	80
	Repetition within session	0	0	5	5
	Distance space	0	0	0	1
	Distance time	0	0	0	0
Conditions					
	m/fem joining in pairs	140	140	70	600
	skyclad	60	60	80	500
	gender separation	40	40	50	60
	gender alternation	40	30	50	60
	weather	5			
	ionization -/- (lightning)	-30		50	90
	Solar activity (space weather storms)-/-	-10	-10	20	35
	earth magnetism -/-	-25	-25	25	-25
	electr/magn >100 Hz	-20	-10	20	-30
	electr/magn 10,72 hz	25	25	50	120
	electr/magnet Schuman Fre 7	5	5	20	60
	electr/magn < 100 Hz	10	10	10	10
	radiation -/-	-25			-100
	radiation receiver location	-20	-10	40	-50
	radiation at sender location	-20	-10	30	-50
	crystals (7 points/directions)	400			1000

obtained by divination

Intention Efficacy of Sender

what matters in making prayer (or magic) work

Condition of sender	relative importance	Level of sender		
		low/beginner	medium	high
Brainwave Frequency 10,72 in 9-11 Hz Range	95	10	90	200
Inner Child Connection	95	25	70	120
Awareness of Correspondences	10	20	60	175
Belief in Power Sender	95	20	50	125
Inner Child State	60	10	50	90
Chakra Focus	5	10	50	80
Intensity of Intention	50	10	30	60
Visualisation Talent	40	30	40	45
Sensualisation Talent	55	45	50	55
Meditation Experience	40	45	48	50
Healing Experience	60	20	50	70
Ritual Experience	10	0	3	5
Spiritual Development	50	40	50	60
Sexual Abstinence	0	0	0	70
Psychological Health Sender -/-	10	10	5	0
Physiological Health Sender -/-	60	60	30	10
Emotional Connection with Subject	30	15	25	30
Awareness of Distance Space Sender	10	12	14	16
Awareness of Distance Time Sender	10	20	25	25
Gender of Sender	0	0	0	0
Kundalini Opening Sender	0	0	0	0

Receiver

Belief in Power Receiver	20	5	50	75
Subject Awareness of Prayer	40	20	30	50
Subject Awareness of Distance -/-	25	25	40	50

function and effect upon radiation (thought energy etc.) and so a king's crown would have a different effect than the one of an emperor. A jester's hat is an interesting variation. If it has gold or maybe other precious metal

weaving or lining inside it, in the right hands and with proper training and sensitizing, could be used to pick up on the thought energies of others.

So why would gold be special, and in such a way that even modern scientific methods would not reveal this? In fact science does know about transmutation of lesser metals in gold, there are processes that happen in atomic reactors, but as these are radioactive process, nobody seriously considered producing radioactive gold, let alone start parapsychological experiments with such material. There are some medicinal uses of gold (salts and nuclear medicine, radio-isotopes) but in the past gold was used more broadly

in healing and many still praise it's effect in things like colloidal suspensions. Gold is known as a good reflector (shield) of heat and electromagnetic radiation such as light and all kinds of radio waves, it is often used as a protective coating.

I argue that the specific quality of gold as a bridge to extra-dimensional "radiation" like thoughts lies in its (radio-)isotopes, there are some 17 of them and they are not very stable.

The most stable ^{195}Au isotope has a halftime of 168 days. I suspect that the whole alchemical purification process of gold (similar to what is suggested in the Vedic traditions) has to do with the isolation of isotopes, maybe in combination with the

110	^{186}Os	^{187}Ir	^{188}Pt	^{189}Au	^{190}Hg	^{191}Tl	^{192}Pb	^{193}Bi
111	^{187}Os	^{188}Ir	^{189}Pt	^{190}Au	^{191}Hg	^{192}Tl	^{193}Pb	^{194}Bi
112	^{188}Os	^{189}Ir	^{190}Pt	^{191}Au	^{192}Hg	^{193}Tl	^{194}Pb	^{195}Bi
113	^{189}Os	^{190}Ir	^{191}Pt	^{192}Au	^{193}Hg	^{194}Tl	^{195}Pb	^{196}Bi
114	^{190}Os	^{191}Ir	^{192}Pt	^{193}Au	^{194}Hg	^{195}Tl	^{196}Pb	^{197}Bi
115	^{191}Os	^{192}Ir	^{193}Pt	^{194}Au	^{195}Hg	^{196}Tl	^{197}Pb	^{198}Bi
116	^{192}Os	^{193}Ir	^{194}Pt	^{195}Au	^{196}Hg	^{197}Tl	^{198}Pb	^{199}Bi
117	^{193}Os	^{194}Ir	^{195}Pt	^{196}Au	^{197}Hg	^{198}Tl	^{199}Pb	^{200}Bi
118	^{194}Os	^{195}Ir	^{196}Pt	^{197}Au	^{198}Hg	^{199}Tl	^{200}Pb	^{201}Bi
119	^{195}Os	^{196}Ir	^{197}Pt	^{198}Au	^{199}Hg	^{200}Tl	^{201}Pb	^{202}Bi
120	^{196}Os	^{197}Ir	^{198}Pt	^{199}Au	^{200}Hg	^{201}Tl	^{202}Pb	^{203}Bi
121		^{198}Ir	^{199}Pt	^{200}Au	^{201}Hg	^{202}Tl	^{203}Pb	^{204}Bi
122			^{200}Pt	^{201}Au	^{202}Hg	^{203}Tl	^{204}Pb	^{205}Bi
123			^{201}Pt	^{202}Au	^{203}Hg	^{204}Tl	^{205}Pb	^{206}Bi
124				^{203}Au	^{204}Hg	^{205}Tl	^{206}Pb	^{207}Bi
125				^{204}Au	^{205}Hg	^{206}Tl	^{207}Pb	^{208}Bi
126					^{206}Hg	^{207}Tl	^{208}Pb	^{209}Bi
127						^{208}Tl	^{209}Pb	^{210}Bi
128							^{209}Tl	^{210}Pb
129							^{210}Tl	^{211}Pb
								^{212}Pb
								^{213}Pb

Gold = Au

Gold and isotopes in the periodic table of elements

mono-atomic Ormus gold. These isotopes are still present in native crystalline gold nuggets, which gives these a special value. In general transmutation of materials is a nuclear process (it happens in stars and the sun) and involves radioactive decay. Now most people think radioactivity is dangerous, but this is a matter of dosage and mild amounts of radioactivity can be even beneficial. The study of the long term effects of atomic disasters have indicated that we can handle moderate amounts of radiation and even benefit from it.

One of the most active experimental alchemists of our times, Art Kunkin, claims that the secret of the philosopher's stone lies in the radioactive effects of certain materials, he used the uranium containing peckblende for his experiments.

Gold is thus special, valuable beyond the material qualities, it has secret qualities that seemingly were known or sensed by the sages of old. This understanding got lost, at least I have never found any reference to it. So the non physical secrets of gold remained hidden, apart from some recent work with a special phase (aggregation state) of gold.

Mono-atomic gold (also monatomic or Ormus) is a white powdery substance with very special physical characteristics, that received some attention for esoteric qualities and seemingly was known to older cultures, notably ancient

Egypt. It was rediscovered by David Hudson and is claimed by writers like Laurence Gardner to have all kind of special attributes like superconductivity and bring super-psychic abilities and is supposed to be the white philosopher's stone or elixir of life. The references and quotes from ancient sources given by Gardner make for fascinating reading, but there is little scientific support for his theories. His claims, that older traditions, going back to Sumer and pharaohnic practices, mentions of shew-bread in the Bible (Moses made something powdery out of gold after he came down from the mountain and destroyed and fed it to the Jews.

He has had quite some success with his theories and, based on Hudson's patented procedure for Gold and other Platinum group elements, one can purchase mono-atomic gold as powder and dissolved. People report some effects, but it's unclear whether this is self-delusion or real.

What interest me here, even while the whole story is not very reliable, is that there are more phases than the plasma-gas-fluid-solid ones and here a whole field of explanations of strange phenomena becomes visible. In water this is also observed and there is more scientific evidence there about special qualities.

I do believe that there is something special about gold, and I think the isotope angle has some value.

This story about gold is relevant in the sense, that it illustrates there might be hidden values or truths in ritual practices we don't recognize anymore. It's easy to label certain correspondences as superstitious or ignorant, but sometimes we have to look a bit better, there is a hidden truth.

Prayer: intention field optimization

One of the virtual tools in the ritual matrix is prayer, talking aloud or silently to the powers above, praising, thanking or asking for favors. We may safely assume that ever since the dawn of the human race prayer has been part of religious or spiritual practice, and it is and was, in whatever form part of most rituals. Even when, as I think, ritual was there before religion and ego-identification, there must have been a feeling that alone or with a group one could access the beyond, ask for help, rain, game or whatever or thank for whatever good happened.

Whether wishing for nature's help, imploring a pantheon or asking for the help of One God - praying has always been a way to connect to the otherworld, often in an attempt to cause changes in the present or future. Like many other forms of practical magic, it is essentially time-magic, asking for something to be different in the future. Nowadays praying is not a very popular word in science, we like to talk about intention fields, visualization techniques or the "secret" to getting what one wants (attraction field), but it really all comes down to the practice of magic to alter reality, now or in the future. In the past, this was the domain of shamans, sorcerers, priestesses and churches; today we have ESP and parapsychology researchers trying to prove that praying works. As praying and love are related, I like the following quote of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin:

Someday after mastering winds, waves, tides and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love, and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will discover fire.

The Global Consciousness Project

To study the effect of prayer one could analyze results of healing or could how many more cows someone would have as a result of regular prayer, but this doesn't yield so called scientific results. Now we can assume that mind-energy, consciousness and attention do have some resonance with prayer, there are subtle interactions that link us with each other, with nature and the earth. I have indicated this as thought waves, but any name would do. Some large scale experiments concerning human consciousness are going on and have yielded substantial evidence that the human mind, reacting

to events, influences other systems, notable random number generators (RNGs).

These are computer software programs which undisturbed render a series of numbers that are equally divided, the statistical distribution is not skewed in any direction. The idea behind the Global Consciousness Project with many RNGs all over the world, supported by the Institute of Noetic Science, is that when human consciousness becomes coherent and synchronized, the behavior of random systems may change. So they expected that when a great event synchronizes the feelings of millions of people, the network of RNGs becomes subtly structured, the numbers are no longer random. This in fact happens and this is taken as a signal that there are changes in what Teilhard de Chardin called the noosphere, the unifying field of consciousness. Of course this doesn't prove much beyond that there is a correlation, and other explanations cannot be excluded, but it is one of the first major scale measuring projects.

The magical capabilities of some people with special qualities
subjectively divined

Pythagoras	500	Gerald Gartner	650
Ali (Mohammed's son in law)	750	R. Steiner	500
Paracelsus	1100	W. Reich	500
Leonardo Da Vinci	200	Nicolas Tesla	1100
Giordano Bruno	700	Johnny von Neumann	600
John Dee	900	Kurt Gödel	400
Eliphas Levi	600	Einstein	250
Aleister Crowley	1100	Drunvalo Melchisedek	230
S. L. M. Mathers	650	Philip Carr-Gomm	400
A. Waite	450	Lynn McTaggart	200
H. P. Blavatsky	200	Uri Geller	550
C.W. Leadbeater	1000		

Looking at historical figures it is hard to single out great “prayer sayers”, people who stood out as effective in their wishing. Let’s take a few considered great magicians and give a rating of their general magical level; again this might not be a linear. In comparison, the average human score less than 10 in magical capabilities.

There are many stories about miraculous results, and especially many saints of the different faiths are claimed to be great prayers, but I am looking here at people that had a methodical approach, as the idea is to come up with some system or matrix indicating and maybe explaining what works.

The GCP is basically about attention, the readings go up with events like major accidents, disasters and such, the aim is not to influence the situation as in prayer, the changes are attributed to the reaction of some kind of field to events that just happen or are planned like Olympic Games. The 9/11 disaster does score in the list of results, but not so prevalent as one would expect. The hope of the GCP people is that once the link between events and thoughts (consciousness) is clear, that large scale group consciousness has effects in the physical world, we can make the step toward intention, working toward a brighter, more conscious future. There are already a number of more directed events recorded, like massive group mind meditations, that show intentional effects.

Praying is intention

Not only because of the GCP, but I assume prayer works. Something that has such an universal appeal and is part of all religions and holy books cannot be mere superstition or self-hypnotic. There are, like in all ritual acts, beneficial psychological and social effects (including self-delusion) and those alone make prayer worthwhile, but this should not blind us for the magical side of prayer.

Research into the efficacy of praying (or intention fields) means studying one of the core practices of magic. In a broad sense, magic can be seen as the art and science of influencing reality. Some might call it perceived reality, but where lies the difference? A Buddhist would say that all perception is deception (Maya) anyway. What matters is that magic uses the invisible to influence the visible and tangible, using techniques and methods far outside the rational, linear or unidirectional time paradigm most science is concerned with. This is not to say that prayer, as one pertinent technique, has not been researched. In fact there are numerous studies substantiating the claim that prayer works, to say the least. Proving that it works, let alone explaining how it works however is not an easy thing, since it involves a dramatic paradigm change. I explained in the chapter about time that magic (and thus prayer) seems to work outside of the normal linear time dimension in a special bidirectional time dimension; from the present we are able to influence the past (retro-causality), the future (the general notion of magical efficacy) and the present itself.

Prayer studies

Few will call prayer a magical ritual act, but of course it is, we seek miracles. Prayer is, like dreaming, that other source of parapsychological understanding, a bit more tangible than outright magic and doesn't unduly stretch the credibility of its researchers. There is quite some scientific study of prayer/intent and this has yielded many interesting results. They usually

follow the rules of rational, time-bound causality for as far as repeatability or verification and the use of instruments and methods is concerned. People like Rupert Sheldrake, Lynne McTaggart (in her books *The Field* and *The Intention Experiment*), or Stan Krippner have developed and described intricate methods to prove telepathy, healing effects or intention fields, but they stick to the scientific paradigm. That's a pity, in some respect, as they don't use the tools of the trade they are studying.

In this chapter I take a different route, using an intuitive method (dowsing) to establish the dimensions of intention fields. Now thinking in terms of a matrix or model of dimensions and characteristics indicates a leaning toward the scientific model, while I am allowing for a certain measure of freedom to consider aspects otherwise outside of the range of classical science. The results mentioned here were obtained by dowsing and as such influenced by the personality of the dowser (me), his mood, experience and quality as a dowser, as well as his projections and a priori beliefs. The result is not only a body of specific data, however erroneous and subjective; what emerges is a framework of dimensions open to further testing or investigation.

The resulting matrix engenders a structural image of what intention fields entail. (The word "field" is used for lack of a better image to describe this phenomenon.)

When asked what an effective intention field is made of, people mention things like faith in the healer, belief in healing, group interaction, cultural background, the physical and psychological state of the person saying the prayers, ritual context, specific words or visualizations. They also seemed intuit how these factors influence the outcome, but did not work with quantification. Here I quantify factors and characteristics of intention fields, using dowsing to obtain data, checking them and correlating them, often moving in new directions as I go deeper and deeper. This is a process that achieves a more complete understanding of the relevance of these data and the relationships between the factors involved.

The results are initially expressed numerically, sometimes limited in range as with percentages; in other cases being little more than relative numbers. A doubled result score does not mean that the effect is twice as effective but could indicate a logarithmic or quadratic scale or even defy interpretation. The numbers are then interpreted in terms of relevant dimensions and put into a model.

Correlations with Effectiveness of Intention

To establish what makes a prayer or intent effective, a number of conditions and variables are listed, containing a score of relative importance versus

other conditions, plus an effect score for a low, average and high effort or level of expertise. Something might have a low relative importance, but a high effect, indicating its sensitivity. In some cases it turns out that a specific trait or action yields high results only when applied with a lot of expertise or effort, making these dimensions more sensitive. The data is grouped and ranked. This is a first array of data, a kind of introduction into the intention effectiveness, for specific traits or effects a more in-depth array is developed.

These results indicate already, that there are a few conditions or approaches, that are clearly more effective than others. Others, sometimes mentioned in the literature, seem relatively unimportant.

It seems possible, that the most appropriate brainwave frequency is closely related to being in the inner child state and then the data point at a related quality. The specific frequency that seems the most effective lies in the so called Alpha range, and this is quite a bit higher than the states usually associated with meditation, Samadhi etc.

Brain frequency

Brain waves have been grouped according to their frequencies and labeled with Greek letters. Their most common frequencies include alpha, beta, delta, and theta.

- » 13-30 Hz - Beta Range, the state of normal wakefulness
- » 8.0-12.0 - Alpha range light relaxation, positive thinking, stress reduction, inspiration, motivation, relaxed, yet alert
- » 3.5-7.5 - Theta Range; associated with creativity, intuition, daydreaming, fantasizing, recollection, imagery, dreamlike, switching thoughts, drowsiness; “oneness”, “knowing”, repository for memories, emotions, sensations. Some similarity to trance-like states with internal focus, meditation, prayer and spiritual awareness.
- » 0.1-3,5 Hz Delta range, deep sleep, lucid dreaming, increased immune functions, hypnosis ; Decreased awareness of the physical world. Access to unconscious information. Dominant brainwave in infants under one year old.
- » Below 0.5 Hz - Epsilon range, extraordinary states of consciousness, high states of meditation, ecstatic states of consciousness, high-level inspiration states, spiritual insight, out-of-body experiences, Yogic states.

Brainwave Frequencies are thus the frequencies associated with various mental states and again, are not thought fields but frequencies measured by conventional devices. These brainwave states can be reached by various ways, like meditation, concentration, relaxation, but also by using brainwave entrainment equipment like light&sound devices (brain machines).

These can coax the brain-wave to a certain frequency, and in doing so, achieve the mental state associated with that frequency. There are indications, that this whole approach is too limited because the frequencies monitored are relatively low and higher frequency bands or higher harmonics could have different effects.

The frequencies of the electrical activity in the brain indicated above and measured by electrodes are an indication of the electrical activity relatively at the outside, at the skull and thus close to the cortex only. There are other frequencies involved, in the electromagnetic and gravitational spectrum but also in the extradimensional. Certain colors with specific frequency ranges are used in light-photon healing and the effects of colors on our mood are well known.

Natural Phenomena Frequencies includes natural frequencies that occur in nature -Schumann's Resonance of 7.83 Hz as the basic frequency of the Earth and this one has, contrary to popular new age lore, hardly changed over time and is not an indication of the 2012 Maya story. Then there is the cosmic octave; sound tones calculated from the revolution/orbit of the various planets.

Audio-healing frequencies are also used for diagnosis and healing. The French ear-doctor Alfred Tomatis uses specific filtering to restore the sensitivity of the ears and claims results that are far beyond improved hearing.

"Healing" Frequencies are frequencies that influence various organs and body parts. Radionics practitioners use a kind of frequency device to influence the body and suggest it could be used to heal illnesses of different kinds, or stimulate some region of the body (chakras). The medium used to do this varies - sometimes devices that work with "witness" samples like a hair of the client, some generate EM fields which are applied to a precise part of the body, sometimes symbols or numbers, while others use vibration and sound.

Group size and effect of intention

Being in a group is maybe relevant, so I compared those. The result is that 2 people already score 3 (1 is for 1 person), but 12 is a very powerful group size with a score of 20, and then 144 is important, but the group effect kind of levels out from there, so these worldwide prayer events might not be so effective, a small but dedicated group works fine too.. The group configuration (Circle is best, 3D configuration even better), person-to-person distance, male/female distribution and place matter too.

34 Ritual use of psychotropic, state-changing plants or substances

There are many ritual ways to enter into an altered state of consciousness and even as the actual state achieved varies, the common path and goal is clear, one seeks contact with the otherworld inside or outside one's psyche. Usually to seek answers or solutions for oneself, for a specific other or for the group. The use of psychoactive substances is a widespread way to get to such an altered state of consciousness, but not the only one, meditation, sensory stimulation or deprivation can have similar effects.

Based on studies of prehistoric art, archeological findings, philological (language) references, observations of 'primitive' cultures and texts like the Veda's and Avesta the use of psychoactive plants or mushrooms seems to be part of most cultures, although in many cases reserved for priestly or shamanic use. In ancient Egypt the king (pharaoh) during the Heb Sed festival underwent a near-death kind of experience, probably with the help of some substance.

Although the ingestion of substances can be seen as just another way to reach what I see, in very general terms and with much variation, as the ritual state and is comparable to drumming, dancing, meditation or fasting, the subject deserves special attention beyond being part of the ritualistic process. This because the use of these substances is not without danger, there is the risk of addiction with some, there are physical side-effects and notably the fashionable ayahuasca rituals have a dark side that is not usually mentioned. In general the magical effects of psychoactive substances (and rituals in general) are not recognized or taken serious.

Psychedelics

The mind altering substances (drugs) come in many forms and not all have the same effect. When they became known in the West the initial name was 'psychotomimetica' as they were supposed to induce psychotic states and were initially distributed by Sandoz (LSD) to study the use for psychiatric research and treatment.

Later on Humphry Osmond coined the word psychedelic ('mind-mani-



with Sasha Shulgin, the great psychedelic wizard

festing'). This is usually applied to substances with a strong visual and hallucinogenic effect but in a wider sense psychedelic states bring about changes of perception, synesthesia, altered states of focused consciousness, variation in thought patterns, trance or hypnotic states, mystical states, and other mind and mood alterations.

As the number of known natural and synthetic substances grew, a differentiation evolved based on the most noticeable effect. There were different effects, because of the chemical characteristics but also because of the setting, the one substance could have a totally different effect on different people in different situations. XTC was used in psychotherapy, but also became known as the love-drug in party-settings. Also many of the older mood altering drugs, like cannabis, the opiates, but also alcohol, tobacco, chocolate, coffee could be seen as psychedelics and in some traditions were used as such. Although some are 'legal' and some not, they are all 'drugs' and it depends on the dosage, set and setting what the effect is. The most legal drug is of course sugar, half a millennium of sugar has made most people sugar junkies, with detrimental effects on health but also on our imaginative capabilities. Sugar and eyesight are related, in diabetes cases this is well known, but I tend to blame our 'rationalism' and the gradual loss of contact with the sacred also to our use of sugar. I know people who have a kind of psychedelic experience from just a sugar lump (without LSD!).

There is a tendency, especially among those who see psychedelics as 'sacred substances' to differentiate between drugs used to escape reality and drugs that enhance perception. Opium, heroin, cocaine and such are seen as bad and 'hard drugs', are obviously more addictive and not used in a ritual context. It's all a matter of perspective, in the Western world more people die of alcohol abuse than of any other substance, smoking is bad for your health, but both are legal and money making propositions for the government. Cannabis in high enough doses is also psychedelic, but has become, like alcohol, a common way to escape the stress and is slowly becoming an 'accepted' soft drug. In other cultures substances like coca leaves, khat or kratom (Thailand) are used by sometimes the majority of the people.

I personally believe that regular use of whatever substance in the long run has a detrimental effect. Living in Amsterdam where smoking pot of hash is quite common the lack of creative energy in the heavy smokers cannot be ignored. There are the stories (and proof) of exceptional artistic insights, great creations and inspirations, but I think these have more to do with the contact allowed with the otherworld in the ritual state than with smoking a little bit everyday or all the time.

Psychotropic, entheogen, empathogen, hallucinogen

The effects of psychedelics cover a wide range of perceptual and consciousness alterations. These have gotten names like entheogen effect, being more in contact with the divine, empathogen for improved interhuman contact, but there is no broad systematic classification of all the substances and all the effects. There is a lot of anecdotal material and descriptions of specific material like on the Erowid website but little systematic comparison. The many books about the subject are either very anecdotal or interpretations of subjective processes by people who themselves have experienced them and try to find some logic or patterns.

Benny Shanon in 'Antipodes of the mind' (2003) has tried to find common threads in what people experience in ayahuasca session, kind of uncovering visual archetypes and metaphors, common visuals like visual webs of light rays, similar animals (jaguars) in users who never knew about them. His work however, centers on understanding consciousness, the relation and psychological confusion between sense and concept as experienced in ayahuasca visions.

Perception and interpretation (the experience given a place) are not two stages, but go hand-in-hand. We create as we go, Dan Merkur's 'intense fantasizing' and creating inner realities is already part of normal daydreaming, but has a magical function too, the inner reality leads to outer reality. Jeremy Narby in 'The Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the Origins of Knowledge' (1999) also points at the relation between what we believe and what we see, interpretation taking precedence over reality perception. That he relates the common ayahuasca imagery of the serpent to a deep connection of consciousness and life with DNA is interesting, but maybe that's basically his belief system too.

Psi-matrix

Choosing the right substance or combination of substances for a given person, group or event is an art, one has to see what a person etc. need opening and for what purpose (healing, balancing, expe-



Albert Hofmann, who discovered LSD, synthesized Psilocybin and invented Hydergin

riencing mystical states, etc.).

The perceived experiences, as they are described by people after a 'trip' are very subjective, but a number of effects kind of repeat and they are a guideline for advising the most optimal drug or combination and dosage. When working with psychedelics, and the Dutch situation allows a bit more free experimentation than elsewhere, I felt that some kind of systematic classification was needed. Different people, different set and settings would require different substances, dosage and sometimes combinations.

As I like to think in systems and matrices I have compiled a list of substances and their effects, called the psi-matrix (see appendix) and checked these with many people, also with Sasha Shulgin. We did some tests and the general idea seems ok, individual effects can vary. It is a comparison of various psychedelic substances, somewhat like the periodical system of chemical elements this ranks psychedelic substances according to their effects or dimensions.

It is based on separating and outlining the various emotions and effects, still a subjective classification, but useful to compare the various substances. I have used the chakra system to differentiate between the effects, this not being the only possible approach, but a very workable one. The results that XTC is a heart chakra drug, LSD a mind opening one, Peyote acts somewhere between the second and third chakra, 2CB effects somewhat higher, are not surprising. Most people will agree with these general remarks, but to use the resonance between a person's inclination (trauma/drive) and a specific drugs is not common practice. Most people know they have a drug of choice, something that gives them the best experience, the least aftereffect or hangover, the most mystical insights. I think that careful observation of a person, body language, physical clues and tendencies offers some insight as what the best choice is. This might actually not be the person's own choice. An example is people having (often not diagnosed) liver problems preferring ayahuasca, which is not being very friendly to the liver but gives great visions, They come back again and again, to watch the 'inner cinema' of colors and imagery, not to achieve spiritual growth.

The evolutionary role

Psychedelic trance is not only a fast and usually fairly certain way to reach an altered state. It appears to be such a fundamental part of many cultures, in prehistoric times and even now, that looking at it could help understanding consciousness, evolution, civilization and how our psyche works. Psychoactive plants might have played an role in the development of human self-consciousness and maybe were the change-agents that led to jumps in the use of tools, the need for symbolic communication and the emergence of myth and religion. Then there is the fact that all kinds of animals like psy-

choactive substances (not only plants) and therefore our notion of human consciousness might need an update.

Entheogens at the base of self consciousness and religion

Certain plants and mushroom, but also the venom of certain reptiles has qualities of a hallucinogenic nature but also brings one to state of oneness and communion with the otherworld. They have earned the name of entheogens, bringing about a connection to the Godhead. Using these substances, which were 'known' to animals, may have played a role in the human development and jump started new uses of tools and ways of living, hunting etc. This notion has been promoted by the likes of R. Gordon Wasson, Terence McKenna I and many others and has slowly gained more support because of recent archeological findings, discoveries of the mushroom appearance in ever more ancient works of art and understanding of ritual practices still surviving. It is commonly assumed that the mysteries of the Greek civilization involved the ingestion of psychoactive substances and were instrumental in the development of their philosophical and political views.

There is much speculation about the role of psychedelic plants or mushroom as keys in the development of humanity and religion, and even species evolution.

The sources pointing at a major role for psychedelics are not only ethno-botanical, the Semitic language scholar and archeologist John Allegro in his 'Sacred Mushrooms and the Cross' (1970) showed that there are philological resonances between the references to the Amanita Muscaria (Fly Agaric) mushroom in the early Sumerian/Mesopotamian languages and the

Aramic used in the Hebrew Bible and the original gospel and religious texts like those found at Qumran.

He even claimed that the mushroom cult lies at the root of the Jewish faith and the New Testament was a coded message for a secret cult of mushroom users rather than a historical tale. He noted for instance the resonance of the Jewish indication for mushrooms (little crosses) with crucifixion. This was at the time seen as sacrilegious and destroyed his scientific reputation (he was part of the official Dead Sea -Khirbet Qumran-scroll translation team).



His views were felt as a threat by the scientific community and the religious world, as he argued that our culture and religions were not the result of divine revelation in the classical sense, but are rooted in the use of psychedelic substances. Suggesting that ‘official’ Christianity and Judaism and their sacred scriptures were nothing but smart coded covers and ways of dispersing secret information hiding a deeper and secret mushroom cult ruined Allegro’s scholarly career.

He did however publish his ideas, based on his interpretation and analysis of texts and pointing at translation errors in such a way, that his work could be checked by others. This in a time, that the Dead Sea scrolls were only partially made public and interpretations not aligned with status-quo thinking suppressed.

Allegro’s work is not easy to follow, it’s very scholarly and only points at texts and etymological similarities in pre-Semitic languages, and doesn’t refer to other material like artifacts and texts from other cultures.

Laurence Gardner, author of many somewhat speculative books about the Holy Grail, has combined more sources and come up with fascinating theories about the origin of mankind, the roots of the biblical stories and like Allegro, links the Sumerian to the Jewish culture, but extends this to Egypt. Based on his interpretation of steles, architecture, cuneiform texts, lineages, often pointing at mistakes and fallacies in the Bible, he constructs a view on history quite different from the accepted Christian and Jewish perspective. He sees influence of an Anunnaki race of unknown but extraterrestrial origin, meddling with humans and influencing history in major ways.

Whatever the value of his theories, his realigning of the dating of the Great Flood (he argues around 4000 BCE), placing the Garden of Eden after it, and how he sees Sumerian, Babylonian, Jewish and Egyptian history influencing each other, is fascinating.

One of his claims (but without much scientific backing) concern the exceptional characteristics of mono-atomic gold (see also the chapter on ritual tools and gold). He points at what Moses did with the remains of the Golden Calf in the Sinai desert, turning it into a powder and feeding it to the Jews. The Septuagint Bible calls this shewbread the “bread of the presence”, it was later exclusively given to the priesthood and seems to have given the Jews at the time some deep insights. Gardner also points at the use of this bread, made by secret alchemical process, by the pharaohs of Egypt as a way to reach higher levels of consciousness.

This is also a different approach to what Holy Mass could refer to as a re-enactment of an old psychedelic ritual, not Allegro’s mushrooms, but another psychoactive substance.

In 'The Mystery of Manna' (2001), religious historian Dan Merkur ascribes to the Christian Eucharist sacrament a similar background, ritual partaking of a psychedelic substance. Later discoveries, notably of artifacts with mushroom motives have supported the view that sacred mushrooms were at least part of the religious practice in the region and elsewhere.

Reading Allegro the thought came up, that if the mushroom was such a fundamental part of the early Mesopotamian cultures (and made it into the Jewish faith) that maybe there is a link with circumcision, a secret sign of belonging to the mushroom cult.

That entheogens play a role in many cultures can no longer be denied, the question is how this has affected the species. Are humans just apes coming down from the trees because hallucinogenic mushrooms gave them an edge over their natural enemies and other apes or pre-humanoids? Were mushroom spores sent here by extraterrestrials, as McKenna suggested, or are they the living bridge to the otherworld dimension? There is much speculation and the development of self-consciousness might indeed be influenced by the discovery and the use of these substances, maybe in relation to major more planetary or cosmic events like large comet impact, the end of the ice-age and/or flooding, but I leave that to others. What interest me here is just the role these substances played in the ritual context, especially as the renewed interest in ritual use of substances as Ayahuasca has become a fashion among the 'seekers' of our times.

Animals and drugs

It is widely known that animals, once they have tasted alcohol, tobacco or other inebriating substances, they can become addicted or at least acquire a taste for them. Smoking monkeys, drunken elephants, marihuana-chewing goats, many animals are quite human in their taste for mood and mind-altering plants. The Italian Giorgio Samorini in 'Animals and Psychedelics' (2002) also referring to earlier work by Ronald Siegel has shown that there are many examples of animals that not only acquired a taste through human interventions, but by themselves seek the effects of certain plants. This happens not only accidentally eating a psychoactive plant or fruit, but intentionally. There are numerous examples, mammals but also insects like psychoactive substances and in many cases it turns out it were not the humans who taught the animals to use them, but humans imitating animal behavior. The mandrills and gorilla's seeking out the root of the strong psychoactive *Tabernanthe Iboga* have inspired the indigenous tribes to use the *Iboga* in their Eboka initiation rite of the Bwiti faith.

Samorini gives many examples of animals seeking out plants with specific effects. This not only for the psychedelic or hallucinogenic effects, but for

medical purposes. Cats are known to eat certain grasses that make them puke to clear their stomach, but there are many more examples. When cows discover the effects of certain weeds called 'crazy weeds' they become obsessed with seeking and eating these 'locoweeds' and become even addicted with detrimental results. The interest and sometime symbiotic existence with certain psychoactive plants can lead to inebriation and addiction, but also to rather peaceful co-existence. The results of animals or insects consuming them can of course not be described in cognitive terms, but the behavior of the animals shows that their bodily reactions are similar to what humans experience, including hallucinations. Experiments with animals given LSD and other substances support this. Not all animal 'drug' use is negative or dangerous. Animals thus can 'abuse' the substances or live in harmony with them, similar to the way humans deal with 'drugs'. Some are more addictive, and there are clear withdrawal symptoms like with locoweeds, some seem to give just a nice 'buzz'. The effects are however not always so positive, as the inebriated animals are not moving coordinated and can become the prey of enemies that discovered that they are easy to catch in this state of at least 'altered' consciousness.

Animals are actively looking for specific plants, recognize them and use them. Samorini mentions that a male mandrill, eager to challenge another male, prepares for the fight by seeking the iboga roots. Having ingested this strong psychedelic he then wait for the effects before attacking. Premeditation like this sheds new light on animal consciousness, they are far less automatic and more willful than assumed. There are other incidences, fly that seems to drop dead when close to an Amanita mushroom, therefore also called Fly Agaric, are not dead at all, but inebriated and will return to life after a few hours.

Michael Huffman studied wild chimpanzees in West Africa and noted they intentionally look for medicinal plants, applied as effective anti-parasitic, they have developed a chimp herbalist subculture. Based on all these examples it seems that much of the early medicinal knowledge humans acquired was not theirs, but borrowed from animals by observing their behavior. This again fits in with the notion developed earlier in this book, that the relation with the deep divine consciousness (the base of all) in humans is not better but on the contrary less intense than what animals, and even plants and mere matter connects. Our self-consciousness thus might actually be a hindrance to uniting with the source of all, something I have noted elsewhere.

Conscious plants

Assigning some kind of consciousness and intentionality, even free will to animals is quite a step, but the work of Samorini shows that at least the no-

tion of the uniqueness of the humans and the anthropocentric view need some reconsideration. We can however make another step and ask about the consciousness of plants and trees and even mushrooms. In the context of the ritual use of the ayahuasca brew or peyote these are often regarded as teacher plants, as entities that help us to understand ourselves and nature. This assumes a kind of consciousness far beyond what science and biology accepts. The common view is that plants have no neurons and therefore no feelings and no way of internal communication beyond the chemical/physical. Animals and humans, in a way just plants that decides to move and carrying a bit of earth in their stomachs, had to develop a sense system that would allow movement with touch and sight and feedback. Plants are supposed to be static, not having locomotion, not moving from place to place and therefore not needing a neurological system.

The chemical make-up of plants is not too different from that of animals. The DNA has the same chemical composition. The chloroplasts (the organelles that deal with the photosynthesis and energy exchange) have their own DNA like mitochondria in animal cells. The chemical way to bind oxygen is nearly the same, plants use magnesium instead of iron, and ironically the green sunlight they reject is just that somewhat less energetic portion of the sunlight spectrum animals and humans need. Green light for us helps our balance, reason why hospitals use this color a lot. The essential oils plants provide are used to influence our health and moods and this is known and applied all through the ages. So why should plants not have senses? It turns out plants and notably trees are more sensitive and capable of 'willful' actions than was assumed. Trees can communicate via pheromones, influence and use insects to do their territorial defense and react to abuse like beating or damage.

Also their manipulation of DNA to deal with external situations is remarkable. Plants have much more somatic genetic mutation (acquired mutation), a change in the genetic structure that is not inherited from a parent, and this has been used to develop new strands (sports).

Plants are generally more capable of surviving if they are polyploids, having extra sets of chromosomes (not present in animal life). Polyploids can be created accidentally or deliberately. The genetic manipulation of crops and plants is heavily debated but shows that plants are much more adaptable than animals.

Plants may have more consciousness than generally assumed. It actually turns out that the notion of holy trees, influencing people and nature around them in magical ways is not so irrational. That people working with trees often 'talk' to them and ask for permission to for instance fell a tree is maybe less superstitious than one assumed. The communication might be

slower and via other senses (like the primes) but talking to trees might be more than a silly new age hobby.

Mushrooms (the Fungi Kingdom) are not plants, but in fact are much closer to man and animal than plants. DNA in fungi more closely resembles the DNA of the inhabitants of the animal kingdom and humans. We are thus closely related to mushrooms. They are not dependent on sunlight, some species are more or less free-living can move or seem to crawl through flagella, a kind of whipping tail.

Mushrooms live a kind of symbiotic life, usually related to specific biotopes and trees. Certain kinds like *Amanita* and truffles switched, according to Anne Pringle from being decomposers of organic material to being symbiotic with trees only once in their evolutionary history. After this change to this new symbiotic lifestyle, they didn't go back to their free-living past. What is interesting here is that at some point in the evolution some *Amanita* species made a jump to becoming symbiotic, quite distinct as this required giving up some qualities like the ability to decompose cellulose. Why this jump happen, at what time in history and does this shed light on the jumps in human evolution or is even related?

Among the fungi and mushrooms we know have a mind affecting capacity are notably the precursor to LSD (ergotamine), the psilocybin and some of the genus *Amanita* (600 species among them the *Amanita Muscaria*). They are known for their psychoactive and hallucinogenic qualities.

There is this idea, that mushrooms and other natural psychedelic substances are teacher plants, related to an entity or entities perceived by the indigenous users as benevolent teachers? To describe them as teachers of how our psyche works could be just a projection mechanism or a post facto explanation for what we already know. There are however many stories of how the plants helped humans to find cures, medicinal plants or edible fruits and in general conveyed information about the plant world to humans. I have speculated elsewhere that the plant kingdom (including mushrooms etc.) communicates via the dream state

The psychotropic and psychedelic axis

Maybe it's too much to argue that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Biblical paradise was nothing but a kind of sacred mushroom that opened the eyes of Adam and Eve to the real nature of God. They were then expelled and had to live what we now consider a human life with hard work and painful childbirth, but it's an interesting thought.

Self consciousness, with things like free will and intentionality attached to it, may not have been a very prominent characteristic of the human race in its early stages. In fact pre-hominids, hominids and early human forms

lived for millions of years without much change or progress. Only in the last tens of thousands of year there was an accelerated development of language, script, religion and science, and as Terence McKenna argued, a kind of increased race of discovery, invention and implementation toward a final teleological endpoint.

The Maya 2012 hype tied in with that, but nothing much perceivable happened, the increased pace of progress however hasn't really stopped.

There are quite a few stories about how this progress toward a technological paradise (and biological hell) came about, ranging from comet impact, pole reversal via extraterrestrial intervention to supernatural guidance, root races to Anunnaki stories, Immanuel Velikovsky to Zecharia Sitchin's Nibiru, but what remains is that there were obviously strange jumps in the progress curve. At certain moments in the earth's past things happened that have initiated changes in how humans dealt with tools, crops, livestock and religion.

While the traditional religious rituals are becoming less popular in the rationalistic West, people searching for experiences and transformation have been looking at other means to reach a state of consciousness, that brings more connection to the body, the soul and the divine. In many, if not all cultures the use of mind altering substances, and alcohol and tobacco are definitely in that same ballpark, has been found. Often hidden, esoteric, only for the initiates, but very essential in the whole culture, as part of initiations, rites of passage, as a means for healing, prophecy and contact with the otherworld. In many traditions the use of these substances is considered a sacrament, a holy experience and initiation. The plants or substances are often given a sacred and nearly divine status.

Part of the reason I am interested in rituals is that there is so much similarity between the altered state one encounters in meditation and devotional practice compared to the psychedelic experiences. Trips are, by many, considered ritual events and have the most beneficial effects if done in a ritual context.

I was privileged to have met and worked with many of the flag carrier people in the psychedelic movement like Timothy Leary, Terence McKenna, Sasha and Anne Shulgin, Albert Hofmann and many others in trying to define and explore the essence of the psychedelic experience, in interviews, discussions and trips. In my contacts and thousands of interviews with leading scientists, spiritual teachers, healers, therapists, musicians and artists I have very often spoken with them about their experiences with psychedelics and other mind altering substances and maybe because of the tolerant atmosphere in Amsterdam they were usually very open and forthcoming, sharing and discussing their views, often on camera.

I actually believe that talking about these experiences they opened up and arrived at a more spiritual state of being and shared much more than they would normally do in an interview. I have seen how hypnotic trance can induce a memory of experienced altered states, being high and also drunkenness, and maybe this is what happened in talking with all these people about their trips and journeying.

It convinced me, that much of what we call progress is the result of using psychedelic substances or routines (sensory deprivation, standing of your head, breathing routines, etc. can have similar effects), allowing access to a state, where all and everything is accessible, beyond the limitations of time and space. This also implies, that what we call inventions are usually re-discoveries, information we get from beyond, the Akashic, the whatever. A humbling thought too, we can never claim to be anything more than a messenger.

I have to admit that part of what I understand about I, myself, my psyche, and my mind I owe to the mystical and psychedelic altered state of consciousness and the experiences, trips, and travels there; as well as to the contacts with those who have visited this strange, miraculous and magical otherworld that seems to be inside and outside at the same time.

I do not totally agree with the notions of people like Aldous Huxley, who believed that psychedelic drugs are disabling filters that block or suppress information or signals to reach the conscious mind and in a way open us to new experiences. I think there is another mechanism. I agree we do filter reality, out of necessity, as there is too much input to handle, but we do not do this all the time, and methods and processes to reach a state where we allow more input are part of what true rituals try to bring about. Here my notion of an inner child state (soul state, higher self, ritual state), separate from our ego or personality state(s) is important. I think that psychedelics (and other methods to get into an altered state) bring us to a space where we are less vulnerable to what comes to us via what I loosely call thought waves. Not having to deal with this incoming stream, we can let go of the need to protect ourselves, let go of the masks of ego and personality, and then the doors of perception (our primes) open to receive what I elsewhere explain as extra-dimensional (otherworld) input, and in the magical sense also for extra-dimensional output.

So in a way taking psychedelics is a paradoxical process, eliminating or suppressing the need to defend ourselves. We can let go of our masks. Therefore we are free to feel more and open wider our normal and special senses (primes). This explanation in a way assumes that "thought waves" are different from the normal sensory input, and only part of the extra-dimensional whole and that blocking them opens us up to other frequencies and layers in the classical and meta-dimensional sense. We can see, hear,

feel, perceive more, tune in to whole new levels of experience, and enter the realm of the normally unseen, unfelt, the extrasensory, the clear knowing, the magical realm, where we connect to what we can call ultimate consciousness, love, chi, or Mind-at-Large; where ordinary space and time dimensions become irrelevant. Huxley's Mind at Large concept, indicating a connection to the all, is of course not new, in most religions having access to the Divine Consciousness, the meta-dimensional overarching God is assumed and prayer and rituals are used to make the connection.

The mystical and psychedelic experiences I have had have definitely formed me, changed me, inspired me and opened me to think for myself, as Leary would say. I always believed that the use of these powerful substances should be in a ritual context, with attention for set and setting, but also for the magical effects. Much of the modern use goes toward recreational and habitual use, often adopting half understood liturgies and hiding behind the spiritual and mystical, not honoring the sometimes very real magical. These days the rituals or ceremonies, often under the banner of church like sacramental events, are becoming less spiritual, at best transformational and cut off from the source.

The more modern "psychedelic churches" like the Santo Daime have good intentions, try to follow the outlines and structures from the original culture, but fail to see that these practices come from a different paradigm. Often the "healing" is mentioned as a reason for these new inverse cargo cults, and some amazing results are reported. However, healing is a magical act, it means changing the future of a person, and that's not something to embark on in a weekend workshop. The western "Shaman" is rarely qualified and this I say having witnessed many of them in their ritual role and beyond. Ayahuasca, Iboga, Kambo, San Pedro, Datura, Mushrooms, they are, as LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann called them, "sacral substances", their use has great potential but is not without dangers.

I have hosted and performed rituals with many teachers, shamans, ayahuasceros, priests and medicine men of many traditions and with sometimes strange concoctions, in a place like Amsterdam much was possible and movements like the Santo Daime literally started their European expansion in the various venues I was running.

I could write many books about what happened there and how I grew wary of the multitude of would-be experts in the field, most of them eventually fell for the money. I myself feel not qualified to guide such rituals beyond the scope of therapeutic sessions with a very small number of people and only if set and setting and magical intent are absolutely clear and there is no time limit. I have however, watched many rituals, often participated but also, as this happened in my place, remained sober in order to take care of practical matters but being present in the group setting.

So I will try to pick out the most essential from the point of view of ritual efficacy and develop a theory about how psychedelics work, that is different from the common notions.

Doors of perception

Aldous Huxley's ideas of what psychedelics do have influenced me and many, his *Doors of Perception* was a great tale of discovery, of resonance with my own experiences. His other work, notably *Perennial Philosophy* and *Island* have also impressed me very much. I do agree with his notion of a Mind At Large as in "The Doors of Perception" (from 1954) that "each person is at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The function of the brain and nervous system is to protect us from being overwhelmed and confused by this mass of largely useless and irrelevant knowledge, by shutting out most of what we should otherwise perceive or remember at any moment, and leaving only that very small and special selection which is likely to be practically useful. According to such a theory, each one of us is potentially Mind at Large".

I do however disagree with his idea of how psychedelics work. He suggests that psychedelic drugs are disabling filters which block or suppress signals from reaching the conscious mind. The human mind in his view filters reality, in order to protect itself from overwhelming sensor input, blocks incoming data and perception. We perceive what we can handle, colored and limited by our filters. With a drug like mescaline, Huxley sees much more, becomes aware of visual cues normally not noticed, hears better etc. His sensory perception is heightened and this is what most people pick up from their "trips".

Now this sound very reasonable, but I had some experiences that point in a different direction. I was always interested in gold, and when I was visiting an underground temple with a room totally gilded at the Damanhur Community I had the feeling that my inner flutter, the usual noisy stream of thoughts and impulses kind of stopped.

What a great feeling and this led to further experiments with gold, golden caps and crowns and I found out there was a similar effect when my head was covered with gold. There was a logical explanation, gold was shielding incoming energies, thought waves, whatever it was that made me think in all directions. Aha, that's why kings wear crowns, I then realized.

But then something else came to mind, this feeling of being free from outside thought impulses also seemed very similar to the state I experienced with certain drugs, entheogens and psychedelics.

What if those substances didn't disable or lift the filters as Huxley thought, but closed the user even more off from incoming impulses. One would feel free, thoughts could be focused, attention and intention directed, a paradoxical situation would arise.

Because the mind was free, not longer bombarded and didn't need the protection from the filters associated with personality (masks), one could let go of the masks. In my vocabulary, enter the altered state of consciousness I call inner child or ritual state. In that state, those other senses, the primes could operate and let one enter the magical otherworld. But without the mask also the normal senses could function at full capacity, no need to defend oneself.

In other words, the psychedelic state and we know this is at least similar to the ritual state given all the traditions using such substances, opens one up to those experiences normally not open, but in a two step process, whereby first the need to defend oneself (by staying in a mask state) disappears because the drug closes the mind to thought wave flutter, and then one is free to use all the senses wide open and have a "trip". Setting free the imagination, the talent that suffers so much from those masks and hypnotic programming we are exposed to all the time in modern media life.

This makes clear why we need such careful set and setting preparation, we are opening up ourselves to the full awareness of the inner machinery of the mind, where a connection with the otherworld is possible. This can bring great insights, but also dangers, as there are hidden corners and rooms in our memory or mind, that are maybe better left closed, certainly when the setting is not congenial to what arises. Tim Leary used to say there are no bad trips, only heavy learning experiences, but we all know that if the setting isn't right, funny and dramatic things can and do happen.

Another point, often overlooked, is that in the psychedelic state (this happens in other rituals too) one is open to incoming spiritual and even daemonic energies, in religions like Voodoo this happens a lot and is part of the matrix and kind of contained. For those experimenting with substances this is a serious danger and this requires adequate ritual preparation like creating a sacred container (space) and "Holding space" by people with experience in the otherworld.

The magical, a dangerous but ignored side

There is a remarkable one-sidedness in the psychedelic movement these days. The adherents are usually very positive, and facing the suppression of the use and the information flow by the status quo (government and churches) this is understandable. Be positive, research the potential benefits, focus scientific work on how these substances can help terminal patients (Charles Grob), alleviate Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

symptoms, help to break addiction patterns, there is a kind of positivist stance in the psychedelic movement.

It falls just short of proclaiming psychedelics the snake-oil cure for all, criticism is not welcome and makes one belong to the other camp, the evil empire suppressing the holy grail.

Among the attendants of psychedelic conferences, but also in the amount of books concerning ayahuasca it becomes clear that the focus of the movement is toward the ayahuasca DMT concoction and the cultures around it, be it originally indigenous or mixed christian-vooodoo-American Indian variations.

It's fashionable now to make a trip to the Amazon jungle and obviously this has spurred a local shamanic industry boom there. The focus of the westerners is on the psychotherapeutic, self discovery aspects of the brew and of course interesting notions have emerged, like Jeremy Narby's insights in the correlation between DNA and the ayahuasca imagery of serpents. DNA healing might be one of the forgotten or now rediscovered tools of the ancient, there is some indication that the Egyptian and Stonehenge healing traditions were DNA-Celestial based.

Santo Daime

However, while the stories about magical quarrels and spell-wars among the ayahuasceros abound, there is little or no warning for the magical effects of ayahuasca (and other indigenous substances) on the participants of rituals. Besides the mystical (oneness) and socio-therapeutic effects the magical is ignored or only accepted in healing. The rather religious Santo Daime (it's an official church) approach is quite typical, the whole setup is intended to keep the participants in the subconscious/contact emotion aware state and not let them slip in the more magical, immobilized state where visions overwhelm the normal perceptions.

An effective approach, by changing song and dance rhythms the congregation is kept at bay, not allowing too much entity perception or individual journeying. The magical in this way is held off, although at the cura (healing) sessions it is welcomed a bit more. That ayahuasca in the jungle setting originally is used far more for magical effect, for hunting, sorcery or even war, with spells etc. is noted and some like Narby even warn for this, is not perceived as a deterrent for the aya-tourists.

Yet the magical is at least as powerful and effective as the mystical states, the self observance and the visions reported in so many books, articles and movies these days. Psychedelics (and ritual in general) bring about a state of contact with another world, where the limitations of time, place and causality are overcome. We have access to other dimensions, like the magical

time dimension where free will and access to past and future are possible, but this comes with possibilities to influence reality in ways long forgotten or ignored in our rational scientific approach.

Narrow focus

The focus of most of the scientists and researchers in the West on medical applications, use in psychotherapy, dealing with addictions etc. is still very rational. I applaud the work of Maps, Rick Doblin's crusade is worthy of a honorary PhD one day, the Beckley foundation in the UK does good work, but are they aware of the real danger? To prove that most psychedelics not only are less dangerous than most legal drugs, have less side effects and even can be used for dealing with many medical and psychological problems is great, necessary and I hope will result in a policy change at all levels.

Maybe it's worthwhile not to portray those who oppose a more tolerant drug policy as the Evil Empire, but come up with reasonable and constructive arguments and research, as Ben Sesa does. Fighting evil with their own weapons of propaganda usually strengthens their position, understanding why for instance the medical profession is conservative, honoring their stance of protecting their patients is a better approach.

This should not ignore, however, the magical side of things, the ways of influencing reality via the backdoor. Irrational, but very present in our lives, ignored and even fought by the establishment, pseudo-scientific and irrelevant. That fighting magic (separating it from religious practices), has been a major force in history, that Buddha, Mohammed and Luther were all anti-magical and that the fight between the magical and the anti-magical lies at the root of many terrible wars, witch hunts and crusades is not broadly recognized. The Sunni/Shia schism has much to do with this, reformations in religions too.

So what if it became known that ayahuasca, iboga and most other psychedelic concoctions are basically magical practices? That science and politicians (and most of psychedelic research) thus far ignore these effects as they are unproven and irrational is maybe a happy coincidence, but we should blind ourselves for what would happen if magical abuse was added to the list of arguments against psychedelics.

Religions, magical institutions by definition and full with magic practices like praying and transmutation, would feel threatened, miracles are their turf and they don't like competition. Politicians would use the anti-magical sentiments among the general population to further ban the use and research, the movement would be labeled as underground voodoo and newspaper headlines would scream about witches, warlocks and how politicians

use black magic. This sounds preposterous, but in many African and indigenous societies this is and has been the case.

So, with all the benevolent effects of psychedelics that are presented at conferences and in literature and studies there is this real danger, the magical will one day be taken serious. I don't know what is a good policy to prepare or counteract this. I do see that if parapsychology would really research and prove that for instance spells work, that thought waves have an effect (and in an ayahuasca ritual you are likely to pick up the thoughts, problems and trauma's of the one next to you) and prophecy and divination are real, we would open a can of worms.

Now I am part of that work, as I see ritual in a wider context as practical magic with real efficacy (see my book) and believe that ignoring magic has been part of our ecological and moral crisis, but I see the dangers too.

There are negative side-effects, and they are real but not taken serious in the whole movement. That it is not advised in the case of certain medical condition and psychological problems to use these substances is known, and many organizers make participants sign statements to this effect. But accidents do happen, in Chili there are many people hospitalized as a result of ayahuasca ceremonies that went wrong.

Vision changes

There are even other, less noticeable effects. For instance ayahuasca has an effect on our vision, as exemplified by the artwork by people using it, also the indigenous artists. More saturation, especially in the reds, the vividness of the Huichol art but also the colors in artwork by Western ayahuasca adepts, this is not an isolated phenomenon, but a broad tendency.

Obviously there is a change in the perception mechanisms, the way one sees colors. Looking into it, I found that there is even a scientific DSM-IV diagnosis code 292.89 called HPPD for Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder. This comes with more severe complaints than just a change in color perception. Some diminished perception of red (and hence more hues and saturated reds in the imagery) doesn't seem like a big problem, but then color perception is related to anxiety and depression.

Color perception has a relation with the emotional state, we know this from the use of greens in hospitals. But what if the use of certain substances changes this and affects our mood state and not for the better. Maybe a better artistic expression balances this drawback, but these are side effects that need attention.

Now color therapy (chromotherapy) is seen as pseudo scientific, although some great names like Avicenna, Alhazen and Goethe mentioned the effects of colors, Feng-Shui works with color effects, and our whole fashion

industry exploits it, the colors of the walls of a hospital kind are not really pseudo-scientific I think. So what happens in our psyche and how is the way we see colors affected by the psychedelic experience seems an interesting research subject.

Micro-dosing

The holy men in India smoke their chillums, chew datura or other strong herbs all the time and seem to be fine with it. These days many Westerners use marihuana regularly and don't seem inapt to function in society, in fact many are more relaxed and better able to cope with our stressy world. So what are the effects of continuous but moderate use of entheogens, nootropics (smart drugs) or psychedelics? There are medical considerations, being hooked to substances can be detrimental to one's health, but with a low enough dose the negative bodily effects can be minimized. The mental and spiritual effects on the other hand could be beneficial. More and more reports are surfacing of 'normal' people using micro-dosing of such substances with good effects.

The research into the effects of psychedelic drugs, the research that was stopped for some 40 years and that is now allowed again, has a bias toward looking at the effects on medical conditions, recognized mental illnesses and such. The use of these consciousness-altering substances for healthy people looking to enhance their life, their creativity, their well-being or their spiritual connection is in a way overlooked or not considered politically wise by the scientific researchers.

Dr. James Fadiman, one of the researchers in the 1960s at the IFAS facility in California spoke about the 2013 Horizon conference about this. In his 2011 book 'The Psychedelic Explorer's Guide' he lists six factors that determine the quality and nature of a psychedelic experience.

- . Set: the mental attitude of a would-be psychedelic voyager
- . Setting: the surroundings in which a psychedelic substance is ingested
- . Guide: a person experienced with non-ordinary states of consciousness who helps to mitigate challenges and channel insights
- . Substance: the type and quantity of psychedelic agent
- . Session: the entirety of a psychedelic trip, including all activities or rituals
- . Situation: the environment, people, and culture from which a person comes to a session and returns afterward

Fadiman has argued that well planned and executed psychedelic experiences can help people to cope with the increasingly dangerous alienation we face in the post-industrial society.

He also reports positive results from micro-dose intake for prolonged periods. Fadiman defines a micro-dose as 10 micrograms of LSD (or one-fifth the usual dose of mushrooms). According to Fadiman, Albert Hofmann, the discoverer of LSD, called micro-dosing “the most under-researched area of psychedelics.”

I have met Albert at his house when he was already well in his nineties and also at various events including his 100th birthday (he died being 102) and was always impressed by his vitality. His mind was open and youthful, interested in people and nature, he was exceptionally clear and aware and I always suspected he was taking either small amounts of his “problem-child” and or hydergine (another ergot drug invented by him and prescribed for Alzheimer’s) himself.

Hofmann seem to have hinted at the possibility that micro-doses of LSD would be a viable alternative to Ritalin (ADHD drug) that is also used as a mind-enhancer.

In Fadiman’s project a growing number of volunteers have taken a micro-dose every third day, while conducting their typical daily routines and maintaining logbooks of their observations and have reported back to Fadiman. His findings suggest that micro-dosing is not at all like a ‘trip’ but rather a general mood enhancer, yielding ‘really good days’, when things kind of work and one is in the flow.

Within the framework of this book I would say that this points at the possibility that micro-dosing brings people in an inner child (higher self) state of consciousness where they are more connected and thus more in tune with what happens.

I have met enough people in Amsterdam, where the substance situation is more lenient, reporting similar effects of a small daily or regular dose of similar substances. This in stark contrast to those who would smoke a lot of hash daily or take pills every weekend and where often the vitality starts to suck as if they are draining their energy.

“The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far”.

(H.P. Lovecraft, The Call Of Cthulhu)

35 Gender, sex and ritual

This is the chapter I dreaded most, as these are sensitive issues. Dealing with issues like gender requires looking at the position of women, in society, religion and ritual context. The position of the woman these days is quite different from before. Things have changed toward a more positive attitude. The philosophers of old, even people like Kant and Nietzsche didn't think much of the women. Most religions exclude women to some extent.

Things have changed but feminism in the twentieth century was more of a political and social battle than a true exploration of differences in human nature.

In the context of ritual, and I will deal with specifics of sex and gender related rituals later, the question of gender is important.

Gender as the way we deal socially and psychologically with sex differences is something that has split the world in two groups, with uneven power, possibilities and status. This has affected not only the officiants, the priesthood, but also the audience of a ritual. They used to be strictly separated, men on one side, women at the other or even further away, as second rate people. Women were kept apart, not only because they were not worthy, but also because of some underlying fear in men.

Women are dangerous, seductive, evil and not to be trusted, this was not only the superficial message, this was deeply felt, as we can read in what the 'wise' men of old wrote down. This fear for women has to do with their biological state, they can do something men cannot, birthing children. It also has to do with what women are better at than men, like feeling, intuition, contact with the forces of nature and the otherworld; men easily classify this as the witchcraft thing.

The notion of gender, two opposing but complementing forces is of course not limited to human nature, we see it everywhere, even the spin of electrons can be seen as gender. The Hermetic Principle of Gender states:



Paleolithic images suggest, but not prove matriarchic societies

“Gender is in everything; everything has its Masculine and Feminine Principles; Gender manifests on all planes.”



Prehistoric cave painting (Doust, Iran 8th Millennium BCE), the first image known depicting a horse and rider.

There are rituals that exclude females and this very openly. Many initiation rites are male specific. There are also rituals for women only, but these are usually more secretive, men are not supposed to know they happen. Female rituals are concerned with female issues, menstruation, blood, birth, fertility, healing.

Such issues are often scary and condemned by men, menstruating women are considered unclean, taboo. Sex is a scary thing anyway and female sex is especially threatening.

Feminism

The differences between men and woman, their respective male and female nature have split most societies in two worlds. The one is public, rational and out in the open, the other hidden, irrational, emotional and mostly supportive of the other. These days we consider that (in the West) no longer acceptable, the danger being that we should be not only equals, we should be the same.

Developments like babies (embryos) made in bottles, not having babies by reliable birth control and modern ways of giving birth (or separating baby from mother) make it possible, for the first time in history, to recast the role of women, in society, in religion and in ritual.

This is such a fundamental change that I will have to devote quite some pages to this. I see the danger that in this process, in the equality battle which is easily perceived as a war between the sexes, true values are lost or ignored.

Not only male values, admitting women can be as sharp, witty and rational as men are easy, but human values. Values that are at the root of many rituals are these days considered male chauvinistic and unacceptable in a feminist perspective. I feel feminism, certainly the 20th century manifestation

of it, tended to only attack men and not honored the strength of the female nature as different but valuable in itself.

The quick fix

One way to deal with gender issues is to accept that men in general have a better IQ (intelligence quotient) and women have a better EQ (emotional quotient). So men are more qualified in jobs and situations where the IQ matters more, and women where emotional qualities are important. So the women are equal, but different and this approach accepts that individual people can have variations in IQ or EQ that deviate from the average.

I feel this approach is too simplistic. Intelligence is more complex than what a general IQ stands for, and the same goes for EQ. This could be made more specific and complex, different kinds of intelligence. I don't see Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence approach (in *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, 1983) as very helpful.

I dare suggest a qualification of intelligence(s) or capabilities based on the chakra model works better. But then the difference or overlap between intelligence and consciousness comes into play, so I will leave it to that.

Emotional quality (or should we also call that intelligence) is equally hard to define. Again I see differences between for instance the heart emotions and the sexual emotions. Women deal with this differently from men, they pick up different signals and tend to be (in general, not individually) more feeling, less mental and cognitive. This all has to do with what used to be called left-right brain focus, but neurological findings indicate this is not the correct image.

I like, respect and appreciate women, we are equals concerning our human rights, but they are different from me as a man, biologically, psychologically and socially. There is a biological difference (sex) as they can birth children, while I can only sire them. They know who is the father, men can only trust their word (or lock them away to prevent any doubt about the paternity issue).

There is, nearly everywhere, a difference in status and behavior (gender) but this is culture dependent. The deeper question is if there is a fundamental difference in the human nature of the sexes and whether this carries over in the 'natural' psychological and social attitudes?

Within the model I present I think there is such a sexual difference, and thus different roles (gender), we are not born alike. The deep difference between men and women originates in our connection with the otherworld. We have different 'primes' or use our primes differently.



Otherworld access differences

The differences in hormone levels not only influence our outward behavior, but also the way we think, feel and perceive. This not only goes for obvious things, like women are more sensitive to rational, tangible things. It is also about perceiving and influencing the extradimensional

qualities like beauty, truth, justice. Here men and women are also usually different.

Behavior and capabilities show differences, but when the hormone levels are changed (willingly or unwillingly) the sensitivities and behavior also changes. Think about eunuchs and the effects of menopause. In other words, hormones and probably many other substances play a role in how we behave, but also how we deal with the extradimensional. I therefore argue that women deal different (not better) with the extradimensional, they have a different access and are usually more deeply involved with the inner workings of ritual and religion. In most churches the congregation consists of more women than men, and not only because of the social environment. There are also more female witches than male adepts of the craft, warlocks. Most mystics are male, but could be due to suppression by religion.

The soul decision to be male or female thus influences the way we deal with the sacral, the otherworld, and influences our perception, feelings and actions. But everything works two ways. In a culture, where women are supposed to play male roles, this also influences their hormones and thus their perception of reality and otherworld. Inner and outer are mirrors.

Otherworld access qualities

There obviously is a difference between men and women here. So why not leave our 'rational' gender difference issue to the traditional psychologists and neuroscientists and widen gender-studies to include access to the otherworld? Thinking and feeling both have a rational side but also a connection with the extradimensional through the primes.

What we perceive and transmit via our primes is often far more important for the decisions we make and the way we act. I argue the differences in otherworld access and ‘magical’ powers between the sexes has been far more important in shaping the traditional role of women than the rational differences. Fear for female powers in this respect are subconscious and not easily recognized, but will surface in accusations of witchcraft and evil female spirits.

Suppressed social presence

In discussing gender in ritual and religion, the role of the woman (not her sex but the way gender plays a role in society) is not the most prominent one, to say the least. Regrettable, many women would like to see a better position for themselves, more appreciation, especially for those females who are seen as repressed and undervalued.

There is a tendency to look at the past with the idea that things were better once, that women had a better position then.

Gender inequality

The position of women has, in recorded history at least, been subordinated to that of men. Men are stronger, more aggressive, supposedly more rational and in power in the tribe, the state, the church. There are a few exceptions, like the island of Bougainville and some references to mythical matriarchies like the Amazons, Oiorpata in the Scythian language, a mythical nation of all-female warriors.

Women were, both in civic and religious life, considered inferior to men and not given equal rights in inheritance, voting, property titles, etc. Only in the last centuries this is changing, but an equal position is a relatively new phenomenon and is still not accepted in most religious traditions.

Men in most all religions are placed above women, in that they can hold office, partake in sacraments, there is a general gender inequality. Not only in the Catholic Church men are ranked above women in the sense that the



Amazon statue by P. Hebert 1860

priesthood is reserved for men, this is more or less the situation in Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, etc.

This seems to be the general situation and has old roots, nearly all known cultures are patriarchic and most philosophers of old regarded women as inferior, at least in their capacity of reasoning and thus in participation in matters of state (and religion).

Women were sometimes accredited with emotional capabilities, accepted as feeling more and being prophetic, but not given equal status in worldly matters.

The holy books and scriptures are clear, Adam comes first and Eve has to follow and be obedient to the all-powerful male. She is the of course blamed for giving in to the serpent in Paradise.

Women are supposed to be subordinate to men even when their position in the Scriptures is more protected and appreciated, like in the Koran. The holy words are not usually honored in their actual legal status. Mohammed definitely improved their status compared to what was common in his days, but didn't give women equal rights the way we do, but only since about a hundred years(!).

The religions of old were usually very clear: women were inferior.

The Hindu book 'Laws of Manu' (IX, 18) states: "For women no sacramental rite is performed with sacred texts, thus the law is settled."

There are some indications that once upon the time, and usually more in the context of agricultural societies, this was different. It seems matriarchal societies did exist, were more peaceful and more connected to nature. Here one points at Paleolithic imagery (Venus statuettes) and it is also mentioned in the Mahabharata (Hindu text).

There are some surviving societies that could be called matriarchal-like, such as the Pacific island Bougainville, the Aka people in Africa's Congo Basin, the Chinese Mosuo and tribes in the Indian state of Meghalaya. Anthropologist doubt there were ever real matriarchies and consider these societies as matrilineal, matrilocal or matrifocal societies. The Amazons of old seem a somewhat less peaceful alternative to patriarchy.

In the feminist perspective, there is a tendency these days to address God(dess) as female. This is also based on creation stories and a cosmology



in some cultures with women in a much better position in the pantheon and with mythical references to a female creator Deity

This however feels like a kind of politically correct compensation for having to do with such a long period of male Gods. The third alternative, a neuter God, doesn't sound very good.

In the neo-pagan communities this notion of female Deity is quite common and the female in modern witchcraft, Druidism, Neo-Paganism, etc. is given a more prominent place. Their rituals are often led by women. They use feminine symbols and address female deities. There is very little left there of the rational magic of male alchemists.

This all has been picked up by what broadly could be called feminist authors as meaning that matriarchy was the first and original situation, existing for a long time and regarded as the more natural way.

Female and male nature

It can be argued that all human nature is the result of social interaction: that we are what we are because of the other, because of social interaction.

I do believe, as is explained in the chapter about the psyche, that there is an inborn human nature, related to the soul, but early in childhood lost to the emerging self and selves. It so happens that with the incarnation choice for either sex (and some in between) we pick or are given a set of drives that we can characterize as male or female. Male tends to be more mental and body oriented, female more emotional. In the Enneagram model these are broadly the left and the right halves, in other typologies there is a similar split.

On top of these basic inclinations there is the cultural/social programming, often hard to distinguish as we pick this up at a very early age. When the motherly programming aligns with what we started with as inborn nature, there is little ambiguity, when it is different there may be identity problems later in life.

Feminist writers differ very much in how they see the female nature, how and why oppression is common, whether it is a social (culture) thing or a biological necessity, and how the burden or pleasure of maternity is linked to the position and role of women.

Whatever the focus, the result is that (Western) women have become more free, shedding the fetters of a designated role and now can have a career, work on themselves and seek individuation (Jung) as they please.

The question is whether this women-friendly approach is 'natural' and feasible, finds support and can survive in a stable society. In the animal kingdom, usually the males are stronger, more prominent and look more impressive. The females do decide with whom to copulate or become mates

with, but they don't seem to look for feminine qualities in the males. They usually choose the strongest, most dominating and impressive males to give them progeny, a logical choice biologically.

There are animals where male and female are nearly equals, in looks and role, but more often there is a clear distinction between the sexes. Their roles differ in how they raise their offspring and who is obtaining food for the young ones (and sometimes the males). It is clear that within the family or herd females do have an important internal role, and toward the outside the male is the main defender. This we see also in human societies where the gender roles and status outside are often different from what happens inside the household, where women do have more power.

Who is the father?

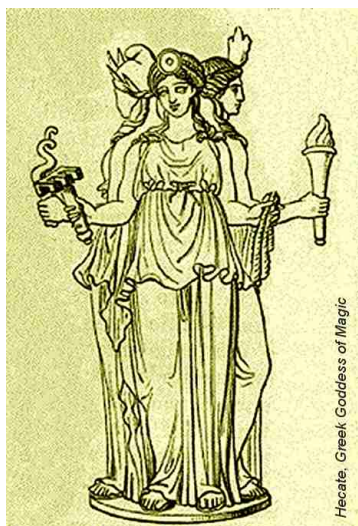
In a nomadic hunter-gatherer situation, the strength of men to fight and hunt makes a patriarchal structure more logical than a matriarchy; just look at the surviving "primitive" people societies. In settler societies with agriculture and animal husbandry patriarchy has also usually won out, not only in daily life and law, but in the whole religious worldview. Maybe settler cultures are slightly more woman-friendly, but often at the cost of more workloads for the women.

Male dominance is often attributed to the paternity issue. The idea is that in more primitive societies the direct relationship between having sex and fathering a baby was not clear or not seen as important. As soon as this was understood, the males became more dominant, in order to defend their position and be sure about their children.

Bronislaw Malinowski pointed at this, he described how the Pacific Trioband people around 1914 still had a culture where physiological paternity (fatherhood) wasn't recognized as such.

It is possible, but not certain matriarchy has been the prevalent mode in the distant past, or at least there were societies with matrilineal inheritance of status and property.

The matrilineal nature of many totemic societies seems to support this. Also in Judaism we still see this, the mother is the one certain factor in the lineage. As soon as fatherhood became an issue, men wanted to be sure the children were theirs and hence the repression of the female liberties by isolation, locking them away and the whole moral code that made and makes women second class citizens.



Hecate, Goddess of magic

Axial times

Now the fatherhood issue certainly played a role, but it also seems a bit silly that a wider understanding of physiological paternity only came as late as 3.200 BCE, even accepting that this notion wasn't universal. This timeframe is often indicated as an axial time and the end of matriarchal rule, the era of the emergence of the religions as we now know them.

What has brought the change, if indeed there was matriarchy in our Paradise past? Did something change that, did some singularity happen?

The change from hunter tot settler societies seems to have happened earlier, around 9-10.000 BCE when the first (wheat) crop cultivation and animal hus-

bandry originated somewhere in the upper Mesopotamia area in South-East Turkey. This understanding is not only the result of excavations but comes from DNA-analysis of the varieties of wheat, spelt. etc. This knowledge of agriculture technology has spread from that area in all directions, and it can also be found in human genetic distribution patterns. It seems that this jump in what is basically technology and probably related to a jump in self-consciousness was a singularity event at a specific location or area.

This makes me wonder if similar advances like the riding of horses, equestrianism, were not the result of singularities, DNA changes of some sort. There are cave painting indicating horse riding existed some 10.000 years ago, using horses for work and driving only finds proof in chariot burials dating to 2500 BCE. It's interesting to know who were the people that first rode on horses, maybe the gypsies?

Patriarchy as a defense mechanism

I argue that next to the fatherhood issue there was another but related mechanism that was instrumental in bringing about patriarchy, it was the fear for the (hidden) female powers.

Men need women, not only for sex and pleasure, so they feel dependent, but hide and suppress this.

Having children is very important socially, also because they provide support for the elderly, there is a sound incentive to have offspring. Women in indigenous cultures are known to have much more influence over their fer-

tility than their Western sisters before the advent of medical birth control (contraceptives like the pill). Using herbs, massage, body exercises, noting fertility rhythms, there was and is much knowledge about feminine issues, but this was (for good reasons) kept from men.

It is unlikely that women didn't understand very early on that having intercourse and becoming pregnant were related, but maybe this was kept a feminine secret, part of initiation wisdom. This knowledge gave women or maybe only some women (witches, midwives) a hidden, but real power, they knew who the father(s) were and could decide (or advice) with whom to have progeny.

In fact this is the situation in the animal kingdom, the female decides and sometimes males only get their way in what looks like forced rape, but still the female has a decisive role. This makes sense in an evolutionary model, where a good father (physically) is important to make and defend good offspring. Genetic survival demands this, choose the best. In humans this goes both ways, strong males seek strong and beautiful women, and vice versa, the way we look, act and think is a strong factor in seeking mates, even unconsciously.

Humans even willingly adapt to expectations and change their looks, these days in ever more technical ways. Bigger breasts and a better figure might make you more attractive, in your own eyes but definitely in the eyes of prospecting males. That our looks are influenced by unconscious programming to the extent that less attractive features are sometimes used to evade being attractive, because of inclination or early experiences. The other extreme, becoming very beautiful is sometimes a strategy (half-conscious) to achieve life-goals like being famous or rich. There is, in many people, a difference between their age in years (genetic) and their age in looks and health. Within families this is sometimes striking and helps in analyzing psychological strategies.

The power (right) of women in allowing or not sex (and progeny) is clear. Women, I believe, understand more of sex and have generally a much higher awareness of the second chakra energies than men. I have noticed



*Hatshepsut, first female
pharaoh (18th dyn.)*

this in many women and it seems to be one of the reasons our sex-lives and sex-experiences are so different, but this is a personal observation.

Women have always had, because of their biological role, a certain sex-wisdom. They knew more than they admitted, things like female orgasm didn't reach medical (male) science till fairly late.

They may have kept this to themselves in those days when they were in power or equal to men, and surely hid it when in a subordinate position. So when long ago gradually this understanding that women knew more about sex than men surfaced, men had reason to revenge, with a power-balance shift and female subordination as a result.

Keeping women out of the religious hierarchy, not admitting them to male rituals or giving them more than maternal duties and some cleaning jobs in public events is a logical result of the general power imbalance of those times. Additional but fake arguments like detrimental menstrual cycles, limited willpower and inborn wickedness in women, were easy to find or construct.

Evolutionary roles

Women have babies, take care of them, feed them and usually take care of much of the early education. Babies pick up their first lessons from the mother, and usually develop a self-consciousness and personality in interacting with women. In my model they do interact somewhat with the inner child core of the mother, but very soon face the mother's assumed self. They then develop their own personality as a shield between the inner child and the mother.

I believe that, in Enneagram or typology terms, the basic type (first mask) of a child can be deducted from the interaction between inner child type of the child and the prevalent mask of the mother. This is not recognized very much, with subsequent misunderstanding of how this carries over in male and female behavior. Nurture thus plays a bigger role in gender than assumed, even as the biological differences are there.

In this way many specific female patterns, rooted in the social position of the mother as a woman, are passed on through the generations. They are thus culture based, but have become part of what can be called the female nature. Things are changing, but isn't there a biological ground, a natural reason that women are different?

The chromosome difference

It is now accepted that there are physical (genetic) and functional differences between not only the bodies, but also between the brains of men and women. Brain researcher Dick Swaab did some work in this direction and

although his views were controversial, the facts are there, they show up in brain scans etc.

On the gene level, men and women are different. Biologically men have a y chromosome where women have an extra x. This alone makes women, already in the womb, different from men, not only in the genitals, but in their whole behavior.

According to neuro biologist Gerald Hüther this has to do with the innate need of a male baby to secure its survival, by going for more extreme confrontations. He sees male babies as less balanced and less fit than female ones. He defends that the lack of the secure extra X chromosome gives women less inclination to fight or confront. This also shows in later life. Although the brains of male and female children are not much different at birth, they gradually diverge. In his view this leads to men going for more extreme challenges and confrontations and thus displaying more extremes in achievement.

So there seems to be neurological evidence for differences in male/female representation in some occupations, and the cultural imprint feminism blames for this inequality is on top of biological differences. In the context of this book; it is obvious that there are (in recorded history) more male prophets, kings, great leaders, inventors, scientists, while women score better in healing, care, witchcraft, and the soft sciences and professions, including diplomacy.

In management, the differences are not so clear, as both male and female qualities are useful and necessary, depending on the situation.

In ritual context, there seems to be little ground for any inequality, except that female office-holders with children might need more time for them than males. This is the same argument used against women in top level positions elsewhere. Concerning rituals of a highly emotional character, think about Catholic Confession, women might be even better equipped than men.

The female power

There is another side to this all. We can see women as powerful and worthy in their own right, in a different way than men. Women have qualities men don't have and most of them are positive. Beyond their rational qualities, where some men seem to have some advantage in decision making, women are generally more sensitive, aware of qualities like beauty and love and have a better contact with the otherworld.

In feminist literature the focus is mostly on suppression and lack of possibilities to become a whole self, less on the strength of female qualities. It is measuring quality of life from within the male perspective of rational capabilities.

This, however, can be seen as not honoring what many women enjoy in child rearing and homemaking, creating a warm atmosphere, security and beauty.

Even in very macho societies, like in the Latin world, the power of the mother is there. Inside the house the mother or mother-in-law rules, and often decides many things that only apparently are male prerogatives. That this leads to other power discrepancies within the household is clear, like younger women being subordinate to the mother-in-law.

Women have powers, but they are different from male powers. Their rational powers, participating in the male world, the public world, have increased. I think it's fair to say women have (in the affluent West) have a better position now than before. They don't need to have children, can choose a career, work on their development and individuation, Birth control gives them a choice, they can decide to enjoy sex or not. The power of women allowing or denying sex to their men is there as before, they can use all kinds of excuses and manipulate their moods to keep their men at bay.

The feminist view is often one-sided and negative, with propaganda-like statements. The notion of the powerless and suppressed wife, raped by her demanding husband, lacking identity and ways to express herself is not how women see themselves most of the time. This might be self-delusion, making the best of a structurally inferior position versus the rape-oriented male beast, but I doubt it.

Why would any soul incarnate as a woman, if there was such inequality?

The lessons and joy of having children must outweigh the disadvantages somehow, but this might be my male rationality!

I am waiting to see a proper evaluation of the results of the change in gender-balance, as we have seen the last century. What counts is not only the number of women winning Nobel prizes, running corporations or being part of the work economy, but the effect on physical and psychological health of generations growing up without much motherly care, love. I would like to see research into the relationship between the changed gender-roles and the increase in prostate and



breast and ovarian cancer, life expectancy, addiction and why not, sexual satisfaction.

Birth as transformation

The process of birth is a blueprint for rituals, also because of the effects on mother and child in relation to psychological and magical spiritual growth. Psychologically it also constitutes a major event with traumatic as well as euphoric aspects. By now we know that hormones like oxytocine (the love/relax hormone) play a major role in the emotions and physical status during childbirth.

Oxytocine is not only a hormone but also a neurotransmitter and thus works very fast and powerful. The effects are very positive and might bring the mother to a high, comparable to what drugs like xtc (mdma) achieve. So the oxytocine could bring the mother is a state that can be described as closer to the inner child or ritual state of consciousness.

Combined with the pain of contractions and struggle to push the baby out, which brings the woman in a state of liminality and loss of identity, we see a classic ritual transformation process, luckily mostly ending in a high state of happiness as the mother holds the child in her arms. Quite an opportunity to make a jump in consciousness, changing her outlook in life, feel the connectedness not only to her baby, but to the world. Happiness is, also neurological, the best incentive to grow in neuron connections and consciousness.

From darkness to the light, birth is an experience of major importance for both mother and child. It is noteworthy in this respect to realize that the most important new experience for the newborn is the sense of smell, as before there was no breath. The other senses, although muffled by the fluids in the womb were there, but smell is new, exciting and in combination with the whole birth process, a formative experience. Also the child received, because the connection with the mother was only severed shortly before, a dose of oxytocine and other hormones and pheromones to start independency.

Now here I will make a remark, which might incite some criticism and discussion. At the moment of birth the child will smell not only the normal smell associates with the situation, blood, the fluids from the uterus, fecal matter, but also the pheromones present at that moment. I think that the kind and intensity of the pheromones a child is exposed to at and shortly after the moment of birth is an important factor in his or her later sexual life. In other words, a good dose of sex pheromones will influence and benefit the sex life to come, a shortage will limit the susceptibility to the pheromones that play a role in attraction and sexual activities later.

The consequences of this hypothesis could be serious. This could mean that babies, born in a way that limits pheromone intake, would have less of a satisfactory sex-life as those who are born in a natural way, whereby the mother releases the appropriate pheromones (coplunis) and the child remains in the vicinity of those pheromones.

Modern ways of delivery using anesthetics, Caesarean etc. take away the opportunity for mother and child to experience the full possibilities of the process. This not only because of necessity but because pain is now considered unnecessary and unnatural, the allotted time for delivery in an efficiency-driven hospital is limited, all due to the general rationalization and industrialization of medical processes.

This, alas, includes the most natural ones, birth and death. I fear, that we are, by these modern practices, denying this and future generations part of the full experience, of access to the higher frequencies of inner life and, maybe, sex as it is supposed to be.

I fear that modern medical practice and education is not very beneficial in this respect and that sexual dysfunctioning will be rampant in a generation growing up with internet intimacy and overdosed superficial media-sex as an alternative for closeness and real intimacy.

The Egypt case: more female equality

Matriarchy is a great ideal, but not much of a reality, not in recorded history. Apart from the archeological findings pointing at paleolithic situations, there is one culture, where male dominance was less and females were at least more equal to men than elsewhere. This was the Egyptian antiquity, from some 3000 BCE until the Ptolemy days when Greek and Roman patriarchy notions took over and even in Cleopatra's days women obviously could hold power.

Now Egypt in those early days was a second chakra culture, as I argued before in the chapter about religious and ritual development. Their focus was very much on fertility, the Nile and the flooding of the river were all important, most of religion and ritual were directed toward this. They were less interested in the higher chakra energies but developed an awareness and hence culture and technology that amazes us even today.

Luckily they did adorn their buildings and tombs with lots of hieroglyph texts and scrolls with hieratic texts were preserved, explaining their rituals, laws, and how their kings lived and ruled. So we know a lot about them and it is clear that women had a more equal position, more say in education, significant roles in ritual, there were even a number of female Pharaohs like Hatshepsut.

Both the Pharaoh and his wife were involved in rituals, many concerned with the fertility and the Nile.

Maybe it goes too far to make a strong connection between the chakra focus of a culture and the gender balance, but I would not be surprised if the more matriarchal cultures the anthropologists studied follow the same pattern.

In modern neo-pagan communities there is the same focus on the second chakra, often more toward creativity than toward fertility sex, with deities, spirits and a general approach that honors the feminine, fertility, the seasons and nature.

Even as it is not openly confessed or acted upon, newly emerged and reborn old traditions like the Craft have a second chakra focus and the deeper motivation of those joining is often in resonance with that.

Sky clad (naked) dancing at the full moon and not admitting that sex is an underlying drive is a bit silly, a hypocrite denial of deeper drives.

I have witnessed enough craft, voodoo and assorted magical events and rituals not to notice the underlying energies and motivations, and have them seen played out during or after the event. Often the need to be different, like in craft or gothic lifestyle and clothing have to do with an unhappy attitude toward second chakra expression.

The pretended and often overtly displayed creativity and holiness is a projection, an endorsement of what is subjectively qualified as special, unique, different.

Birth as a sacrament, a ritual

The process of human pregnancy and birth, starting at impregnation is considered holy by many and for instance accompanied by samskara's (sacramental rites) in Hinduism.

It sounds a bit weird, to look at birth or giving birth as a sacrament, but isn't it one of the most profound experiences a woman can have? For the newborn it's definitely a deciding moment and experience.

It's a gift from the God(des)s, and often handled as a ritual, a feminine one of course with midwives as the priestesses.

The new baby and the mother are the centers of attention. The Biblical image of the shepherds and the three kings at Epiphany clearly shows a ritual situation, with sacrifices and all. That having children elevates the status of the woman is clear; she is entering a new phase in her life and the community usually treats her differently.

The birth process is a powerful and archetypal image, copied in many rituals. In many cultures certain rituals are seen as a rebirth, in a setup that is intended to simulate the birth process.

In North American indigenous sweat lodges the whole layout is like a womb, more or less in the earth and signifying a process of (re)-birth.

In the Christian faith baptism is also seen as a rebirth of the person as a true Christian

Ritual circumcision

One of the rituals at least physically related to sex is male circumcision, although the way it has become habitual in North America can hardly be seen as ritual or spiritual.

The origin of circumcision is not known with certainty; the oldest documentary evidence for it comes from ancient Egypt. Its origin is supposed to be a religious sacrifice and often considered as a rite of passage marking a boy's entrance into adulthood. Circumcision is a highly debated issue and there are many interpretations like:

"It is incontrovertible that baptism has been substituted for circumcision and performs the same office."

Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin, Vol. 2).

Interesting view, but what was first then, circumcision or baptism?

For some religions circumcision for men is obviously a sacrament, like in Judaism and for others it's more or less a sanctified custom like in Islam. In the USA circumcision (for men) is seen as a hygienic measure and still practiced widely, nearly as a standard procedure. For this we can thank some well intended but over the top moralistic medical practitioners from the 19th century, like Sayre and Kellogg.

In the wake of the Victorian age fear of anything sexual, and not at all related to any religious ideas people like the influential surgeon Lewis Sayre were promoting circumcision since around 1870. Sayre was a founder of the American Medical Association AMA and saw circumcision as a purported cure for several problems in young boys, based on "reflex neurosis" theory of disease. A tight foreskin inflamed the nerves and caused systemic problems and the foreskin was also seen as harboring infection-causing smegma. John Harvey Kellogg, with his brother famous for cornflakes, was another advocate of circumcision, his concern was to curb masturbation, and circumcision would help there, he supported some kind of mutilation in girls also. For nymphomania, he recommended "the removal of the clitoris and nymphae..."

Other physicians followed, they believed circumcision could prevent or cure a wide-ranging array of medical problems and social ills, including masturbation (considered by the Victorians to be a serious problem), syphilis, epilepsy, hernia, headache, clubfoot, alcoholism and gout. In England

articles in favor of the procedure by doctors like Sir Jonathan Hutchinson appeared.

Toward the end of the 19th century circumcision became widespread in the Anglo-Saxon world. This went on till after WWII when in England it was no longer paid for by the insurance and died out, in the USA it is still a common practice (30% of males).

Circumcision as a mushroom cult identifier.

Just to surprise the reader a bit, a bit of tong-in-cheek speculation. Maybe male circumcision in the Abrahamic traditions has something to do with the magic mushroom cults that existed in Sumeria and Mesopotamia.

Quite a statement, but in the chapter about state-altering substances (drugs) I show why the work of John Allegro on the Qumran scrolls gave me that idea. If the mushroom was such a fundamental part of the early Mesopotamia cultures (and in disguise made it into the Jewish faith) then maybe there is a link with circumcision. Maybe this was a secret sign of belonging to the mushroom cult. I have not found much other explanations for this practice, so why not a daring new one?

Islamic practice

In the Muslim world circumcision is a nearly universal practice but it is not based on Koran texts.

Probably it was already such a common practice, that the Prophet didn't give it much significance as like making it into an obligation. Yet it did become a tradition, it now happens between the ages of seven and twelve years.

It was long believed Aztec and Maya also practiced circumcision, but this was probably due to wrong interpretation of certain ritual practices of higher-ranking families, involving blood letting of the genitals.

Jewish circumcision

In Judaism, the ritual circumcision is seen as a sign of the covenant between Jehovah and the Jewish people, given by Jehovah to Abraham. The sanctity of circumcision derived from its divine institution and sanction. The male children, following Isaac's example, were circumcised according to the law in Genesis 17:12-14; 21:4.

The practice of circumcision did change over time in Judaism. The Biblical rite of circumcision, called brit milah (or bris milah), entailed the limited trimming of just the very tip of the foreskin, only that amount that could be pulled down over the tip of the glans, not affecting normal sexual functioning.

This is far less dramatic than what is actually now done, called brit peri'ah and brit mezizah; taking away far more skin, whereby the penis loses sensitivity and its flesh often becomes thickened and scarred. Aspects of the rite like drawing the blood from the circumcision wound through sucking or a cloth also seem rather unhygienic in modern eyes. This modification of the original brit milah was started around 140 CE to prevent Jewish men to participate in the Olympic Games, where only complete men were allowed, but one could get away with the minor brit milah.

Christian stance

In Christianity, circumcision was a controversial issue in the days that the faith spread outside the Jewish community and started to appeal to gentile folks. The Council of Jerusalem decided against the necessity of the rite, and St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, condemns the teachers that wished to make the Church of Christ only a continuation of the synagogue:

"Behold, I Paul tell you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing".

Augustine, who with other Fathers maintained that circumcision was not a mere ceremony, but a sacramental rite. (City of God).

Thomas Aquinas held that circumcision was a figure of baptism: this retrenches and restrains the animal man as that removed a part of his body - which physical act indicated the spiritual effect of the sacrament (De Sac., Summa). He gave three reasons why this had to be the penis, like that Abraham was to be blessed in his seed; that it took away original sin and it limited the longing for lust and the flesh.

FGM: female circumcision

Female circumcision is of course similar to male circumcision, but this linking is considered controversial, female genital mutilation (FGM) is positioned as a totally different thing. Not amazingly, as about one third of all males is circumcised, but if there are sound reasons for male circumcision why wouldn't there be for the female operation. Recently it became apparent that female circumcision is spread more widely than was assumed, in many countries is Asia like in Indonesia it is quite prevalent.

That the extreme practice in some African countries doesn't serve any decent purpose is clear, but the fact that it is generally accepted that many women and girls in the Western world now have plastic surgery on the genitals makes me wonder. The one thing that can be said with some certainty is that male and female circumcision is well established among certain tribes, and probably has been for thousands of years, most likely as a fertility rite.

The roots and reasons

About a third of all males in the world is circumcised. The major medical organizations these days are mostly against circumcision, or neutral about the risk/benefits, only the World Health Organization WHO has a recommendation for parts of Africa in relation to a potential reduction of HIV.

There are some studies that indicate that circumcision also affects the incidence of the Human Papilloma virus that is associated with female organ (cervical) cancer.

There are nowadays ethical and legal questions regarding informed consent and autonomy concerning non-therapeutical neonatal circumcision. The importance of the practice in ritual context is usually downplayed by most observers and this has to do with the lack of much background or facts about why this became such a widespread practice, also in indigenous cultures.

It is assumed that the roots are religious sacrifice (even a substitute for human sacrifice) or rite-of-passage, sometimes related to phallic worship and fertility rites, and as such it plays an important role in the social life of many tribes and people. It is in a way a tribal mark, but less conspicuous than tattoos. The origin of circumcision is not known with certainty; the oldest evidence for it comes from ancient Egypt. There is some notion that it came from the Jews settling in Egypt at the times of Moses. Herodotus wrote that the Egyptians, Colchians, and Ethiopians, from very early times, were circumcised. He mentions Phoenicians and Syrians of Palestine who say that they learned the use of circumcision from the Egyptians.

There are, apart from the hygienic arguments, no rational grounds for the practice.

To be different

The “us and them” effects of circumcision are obvious. It’s an identifier for belonging to a group or people. Countries or groups that do not circumcise have often held antipathy for those that do. Anti-Semitism might have some roots here. In history there have been attempts to root out the practice, this has sometimes led to serious uprisings and wars.

The Romans had to fight a serious war when Hadrian passed an anti-circumcision law (together with building a Jupiter Temple on the Temple mound in Jerusalem) which is seen as the main causes of the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135), but at the expense of so many lives (580.000 Jews were killed according to Cassius Dio) and so many Romans that Hadrian refused a Triumph, the traditional procession into Rome of a victor. Hadrian said regarding the war:

"I forbade the Jews to mutilate themselves, and they started a war."

Ritual Body mutilation

There are, and this is hardly mentioned in the discussion of the female procedures, other and more drastic forms of genital male modification. There is the practice of penile subincision which consists of a urethrotomy, in which the underside of the penis is incised. This is practiced as a rite of passage by some Australian aboriginal groups, in South America and on some Pacific islands. Now in Australia we see a similar origin or explanation as in the Jewish tradition, it is seen as a gift from a God. It is called *mika* and was supposedly gifted to the aboriginal Arernte by the lizard man spirit *Mangar-kunjer-kunja*, a being from the Dreamtime.

A subincised penis is thought to resemble a vulva, and the bleeding is likened to menstruation. *Mangar-kunjer-kunja* (says Wikipedia) is a lizard god who created humans. He found the first aboriginal beings, *Rella manerinja*, on one side of a hill. They were fused together and he separated them with a knife and cut holes for their mouths, ears and noses, then gave them the knife, spear, shield, fire, boomerang and the *tjurunga* (*churunga*), and lastly gave them a system of marriage. *Tjurungas* are sacred stone or wooden objects associated with certain legends, chants, and ceremonies. They have been studied by many anthropologists including Durkheim in the context of Totemism.

Ritual sex and sex in ritual

There is no denial that the sexual aspects and symbolism of sex in ritual are to be found everywhere, as even the most basic joining of the positive and negative, or of the male and the female represents a union and a sexual symbol.

Sex is natural, and one can see the whole process of attraction, mating, reproduction as a ritual in itself. It's both a natural thing, necessary (in the old days at least) for having children and it molds the shape of civilization in its ceremonial and practical implementation, with all the taboo's and moral limitations usually associated with it.

We tend to see animal sex or sex with animals as a lower form of lovemaking, but look at Indian temples, they display all forms of interaction, although at different vertical levels.

In many ways we are not much different from animals. Think about the way we deal with sex and mating, we also ritually dress up, impress, dance, fight and do other things that we call instinctive behavior in animals. That animals have fun in doing this and have some consciousness about how, when

and with whom they perform these mating rituals becomes more and more clear.

The role of mirror neurons (seeing an act causes similar neurological effects in the brain as doing it) was discovered in Macaque monkeys, but seems to be part of the reason that watching people engaged in certain acts brings about resonance. This resonance mechanism, which I see as much wider than just brain traces mirroring, has been observed in situations where there is a visual observation, but it probably works as well with other senses.

Apart from the eternal fascination with sex as a primary drive in our lives, in the Freudian perspective, sex cannot be ignored, it is part of many a ritual matrix, like in fertility rituals. Sex no doubt was part of the old Dionysian mysteries and these days neo-tantra ritual sex has become a cult of its own.

Sex is kind of ignored or eliminated in most of the official religions, or surfaces through a back door like in Carnival/Mardi Grass. Of course in many myths sex and fornication do play a role, the juxtaposition of the tight morality of the official religion and the loose morals of myths is dealt with in the myth chapter.

Sex and psychiatry

The psychotherapeutic world and psychiatrist have a lot of patients with sexual problems, but are not inclined to use experiential or ritual techniques to deal with them. In the approach of Osho (Bhagwan) and his followers there is more freedom to experiment and in family constellation work (Bert Hellinger) there are clearly ritual techniques that are helpful and effective.

Sigmund Freud attempted to reduce love to elementary instincts originating in the Pleasure Principle. In his book 'beyond the pleasure principle', Freud (he warns he is speculating) draws an analogy between the Libido and Eros, which he takes as the poetic representation of the force which binds together the universe and all living things.

Talking about the origin of sexuality, he asks whether the view put forward by Aristophanes (in Plato's Symposium) that humans were split from their other half many eons ago and constantly strive to reconnect with their other half in the hope of being whole again, might serve as a useful metaphor for the individual's desire to lose himself in his partner during the sex act.

Viktor Frankl returns to 'love' its human, existential character, not a side effect and sees sex as an expression of love, acceptable if it is a vehicle of love.

Discussing the meaning of love, Frankl states:

“Loving represents a coming to a relationship with another as a spiritual being. The close connection with spiritual aspects of the partner is the ultimate attainable form of partnership. The lover is no longer aroused in his own physical being, nor stirred in his own emotionality, but moved to the depths of his spiritual core, moved by the partner’s spiritual core. Love, then, is an entering into direct relationship with the personality of the beloved, with the beloved’s uniqueness and singularity.”

Frankl’s Logotherapy suggests a method of treating sexual neuroses based on the phenomenon called paradoxical intention, in a way comparable with Jodorowsky’s ‘psychomagic’ approach, going for the anti-poison in a situation caused by a known poison. Thus, the opposite situation should somehow be explored. For example, if an individual stammers, rather than trying not to stammer, one should force oneself to stammer as strongly as possible! Frankl relates to many cases where a short paradoxical intention treatment cured people from stammering, perspiration, phobias, sleeplessness, and impotence.

Sex rituals and fertility

Sex is a necessary part of life, unless we decide it’s enough and we can do without children. Celibacy is the way then. Religions like Catharism believed this to be the way, at least for the leaders (parfaits). How we deal with sex is mostly a cultural thing, there are very free times and very repressed periods in history, but presumably before that, looking at the various ways “primitive” indigenous people deal with it. Sex has been studied by many anthropologists in the context of marriage and how marital relationships and patterns are the basis of kinship patterns.

Lévi-Strauss’ model of kinship systems is called alliance theory, and sees exchange as the basis, women are a kind of mutual and reciprocal gifts to establish relationships and marriage rules about incest, cross-cousin marriage, sister-exchange and rules of exogamy (marriage outside the group) create social structures. He sees marriages are primarily forged between groups and not just between the two individuals involved. This thinking about marriage in non-western cultures as being less based on love and attraction, with arranged marriages for mutual group interest, might be too simple. I point at the chakra system as a measure of development of cultures and individuals to make a distinction between marriage practices and choices at the lower and higher levels. A society advanced to the higher chakra consciousness will honor the higher goals and motives and find ways to accommodate them, while still understanding and bowing to material considerations, while less developed societies will mostly deal with practical concerns.

Much of our culture is concerned with checking natural impulses and sex is a major issue. Societies and religions in them have usually limited the expression of those impulses, for practical reasons like preventing incest, promoting stable relationships and preventing the spreading of diseases, but also because there is this idea that control of lower chakra impulses will help in the development of the higher faculties.

We can look at sex in rituals in general and then the imagery, the symbolism and the direct references are everywhere, either with a positive or negative connotation, regular religions in the West seem less inclined to applaud what in other cultures is often seen as a sacred and spiritual act. Procreation is of course a necessity and marital rites are part of all cultures, but adding an orgiastic accent to a marriage ceremony is not usually part of the liturgy. Sexual rituals are a different matter. There sex is the core of the ritual, with direct sexual ambitions like in neo-tantric rituals or using sexual energy for other purposes, as sexual magic.

Sex rituals

Sexual rituals are often highly formalized as part of traditional religious or spiritual activity, as re enactment of divine marriages, where a God and Goddess are represented by human actors in a more or less realistic or only symbolic act. In some cultures sex by temple-maidens (hierodules) in the service of a specific deity was not unusual.

In the Western world, partly due to the repression of sexuality by church and mores, sexual rituals were more part of underground or cult movements, and only in esoteric circles like branches of Rosicrucianism the subject was touched.

This has led to all kinds of strange and secret rituals, often limited to small groups. Usually with the odium that apart from the spiritual goals more down-to-earth inclinations were served and often the role of the female was a subordinate one. There is a lot of material about the sex magic of the 19th and early 20th century, like the work of Paschal Beverly Randolph, the phallicism of Hargrave Jennings and of course Aleister Crowley and even H. Blavatsky dabbled in sex magic. This is something hypocritical ignored by the Theosophical Society.

Crowley, the great mage of the last century saw sex as “the supreme magical power”, but insisted that sex magic was to be seen as a sacrament. A lot of complicated and often not effective sexual techniques, with or without the help of psychoactive substances, were developed. He described elaborate rituals, all based on the idea that sexual energy is a potent force that can be harnessed to transcend normal reality and states of consciousness. Of course it was known that in other cultures, in the East, but also in Africa and

the Americas, there had been a different stance toward sex as a magical and ritual tool, and some of those notions were imported in the sex magic(k) procedures.

Later in the 20th century, when texts about tantric and taoist practices and exercises and pictures of sexual positions in art and on temples became available, a new interest in sexual magic arose. Alas, the original and often very refined ideas from the East were repackaged to become a new variety of sexual ritual and practice, now often indicated as neo-tantra. Especially the rather permissive approach of Bhagwan (Osho) has sprouted a new wave of interest in sexuality, more for sensual gratification than for spiritual growth.

I will not analyze here what exactly is the original fundament of the Eastern sexual spirituality, I just notice that neo-tantra in its various forms has often little to do with the principles, goals and practices of the originals. One has taken concepts from Taoist teachings, like that preservation of “Jing” or exchange of “Chi” should be beneficial to increased and prolonged pleasure, kundalini effects, longevity and general health, but used these out of context. Notably the training of willpower and sacrifice of desire (deferred gratification) to attain a higher spiritual level has mostly been overlooked.

Such exercises and techniques are part of a much wider and deeper curriculum and discipline. Most of the neo-tantric tools and training rather fall in the general category of recreation, stimulation, relational therapy, sex enhancements, sex tools, penis enlargements and such. The emphasis on intercourse without orgasm or ejaculation from the man and sometimes the woman with all kinds of miraculous effects and results has been promoted in many books, workshops, video’s and websites, but alas not to such an increase of sexual happiness or health for the participants that insurance companies lower their premiums.

Neo-tantra

Tantra has become a fashionable thing. There are many books and courses, usually centering on the relational and sexual, not so much on the original Tantra of the Indian spiritual traditions. Calling them neo-tantra is probably more appropriate. My personal experiences with such tantra courses in the



Aleister Crowley, the Beast

Myster center and elsewhere are not very positive. Neo-tantra is often irresponsibly playing with very fundamental and powerful forces in our unconscious. In some cases, it's like opening a can of worms and the so-called teachers are not equipped to deal with what then surfaces. Also the intentions of participants differ greatly, some come for a kind of swinger experience, others see it as a first step in sexual exploration, and this doesn't mix easily.

It's good business, adding the word tantra to a bodywork, massage or encounter group is a good promotional tool, but misses the mark. Many people do have sexual problems, and good sex-therapy is definitely needed for maybe more than half of all, but then a better understanding of the second chakra in the context of consciousness is needed.

The purpose of a ritual, as explained elsewhere, is to bring a person in the inner child or original state, as that is where healing and magic can take place. Now sex is, for many, the backdoor into the inner child. We are so conditioned and programmed, that entering that inner child state is very hard. In dreams, under very adverse conditions like serious illnesses or fever, with psychoactive drugs, under hypnosis and in orchestrated situations like rituals we do get to that inner child, but sex is for most people the backdoor. In sex one can, given a safe and permissive situation, play, show oneself, experiment, in short enter the inner child state.

The normal taboo's and secrecy related to sex in our early childhood are in fact favorable in this respect, children are not normally burdened with a lot of sex programming, beyond the common denial of the whole thing, so they can creatively play with it. Of course traumatic or negative intrusion of the sex-gestalt in early childhood does lead to problems later and often close the access to the inner child via the sex-route.

The relatively easy access to the inner child state via sex is why sex can be such a useful and powerful part of a ritual. Sadly our Western upbringing has in many cases frustrated even this backdoor access to our inner child state. This can be a serious barrier to a healthy and happy sex-life, spilling over onto our general health and happiness.

36 Fire, central active principle of our times.

What would we be without fire? Fire, as its kindling and handling is so specifically human, is the most logical and common tool to address the beyond, the Gods, the spirits, and the otherworld. More anthropocentrically, fire allows us to cook food and digest more efficiently which also distinguishes us from animals.

Our inner fire is what we feel as the driving force in us, the thing we are looking for in life. It is the light, the source within, the holy fire that enlightens us. As fire is related to light and light to the sun, these things are often related in the mythology.

Using fire in a magical way to influence reality and as a messenger to the otherworld is a less rational but still common practice in ritual context. We light candles or do a small daily agnihotra fire ritual. To honor fire is an age-old custom; we can safely assume that rituals and ceremonies using the psychological, practical, social, and magical power of fire are as old as mankind, even in its early hominid forms. There are traces of the use of fire dating back one million years ago (South Africa's Wonderwerk Cave finding 2004).

Early hominids (pre humans) are supposed to have walked the African soil at least two million years ago and probably used fire. The change in our jaws and less potbelly stomachs were the result of cooked food, fire might have played an important role in evolution toward modern man.

These days, many feel we have lost much of the connection with the essential aspects of nature and especially fire. There is a cry for renewal, for new and meaningful ways to celebrate and honor this source of light, warmth and safety.

In our modern world many kids grow up never seeing a fire or bonfire, except on television or in a movie. They might hear warnings about fire, but the intimate connection we had with fire in the past for cooking food, warming the house and as a place to gather around is lost to them. That they have the electronic fire of Facebook, a smartphone or tablet at hand doesn't make good for this loss of experiential connection to a basic element.

Fire ritual is a good way to experience fire, but not many have access to such events, they are more or less the exclusive domain of some groups and events. In the USA for instance the Burning Man event is well known, but who can afford the expense of going there?

We do need a new connection to fire, the search for the physical and the inner fire is what might help renew our connection to the spiritual, the all.

That is what this chapter intends to do, offer insight in what fire rituals are and can bring.

The latin word 'Focus' for "hearth" or "fireplace" has survived in modern language. As the focus of our culture moves from fire to electricity to internet and cyberconnectivity, incorporating these new forms of fire-energy and the new fire-media into the ritual matrix also requires a better understanding of what ritual and thus magic is, how it works and what it can achieve.

Fire and ritual are not only connected in many rituals, they both seems to be essential in de development of the human race. Of course the usual two typical human descriptors are language and fire, Darwin considered language and fire the two most significant achievements of humanity. I argue that ritual existed before language (in symbolic form, exchanging practical communication is common among animals) and allowed the development of the human race. Whether the humanoids like the Neanderthaler, Denisovan and homo erectus could be considered human is another matter (there is some Neanderthal DNA in us) but they probably used fire all along.

Fire played a role in changing food patterns, is what Richard Wrangham argues in his cooking hypothesis (*Catching Fire*, 2010). Mastering fire allowed to cook food and because cooked food is easier to digest, one needs less gut, and there would be more energy to feed the brains. Brains could expand and the hominid body became more modern.

Now a similar argument about the development of the human goes for ritual. The efficient group size (Dunbar's number) in a society is a limiting factor, as the group grows larger, more time is needed for social grooming. Robin Dunbar showed a correlation between group size and brain capacity so seeming larger groups require larger brains, probably one of the reasons hominids have this larger brain size since about 2 million years.

Larger social groups beyond the Dunbar size (100-230, median 150) have distinct advantages, they allow specialization, division of labor but require means and ways to manage, communicate, establish common norms and values, accepted sanctions and status differences (Muzafer Sherif's social unit) and ritual is a logical platform for all of that. Ritual allows more structured social grooming and thus larger group size. This means that ritual and fire both are essential to hominid development, where language is of course a further means to allow groups to grow larger, as Dunbar also pointed out and internalized (symbolic) speech allows the development of self-consciousness and voluntary symbolic goals in humans, eventually leading to religion, science, etc.. Other mental function like dreaming and visual imagery are common in the more evolved parts of the animal kingdom, like

mammals. I have argued before, that we have inherited dreaming from the plant kingdom.

Even if Dunbar's number is not the most appropriate way to look at group size limitations; concepts like weak and strong ties within a group complicate the issue, the idea that rituals are functional in shaping relationships and thus add value to the connections remains valid.

The ritual matrix dealing with fire is manifold, complex, and has deep roots in our cultures and archetypical symbolism. Working with fire or holy fire can be done in many ways and there are many traditions we can refer to, with lots of specific details and interesting socio-cultural roots and anthropological interpretations but here I try to look for the general model, the structure.

Rituals are loaded with links, with symbolic and archetypical messages. The mages of old referred to these as the "correspondences", symbolic links between the worlds and dimensions: the substances, forms, acts, words, sounds or symbols that hyper-connect, like hypertext buttons on a webpage. In the chapter about set, setting, and correspondences I developed an expanded view of how a ritual hypothetically works and is related to a meta-dimensional view of our psyche, senses, time and existence.

Fire rituals as our link to the spiritual and magical extradimensional

Where do we go with this broad interpretation of rituals in times, where the connection with some deeper levels of reality is so rare, where we lost the "live" link to religious traditions and seek spirituality that is mostly self-serving? There is a challenge, an invitation to re-embrace the ritual dimension, going beyond the mere repetition of old formats or copying indigenous and tribal rites outside our "Western" worldview.

I like to refer to what Jeff McBride, one of the inspirators of modern fire-rituals asked himself and his band of co-creators of FireDance and subsequent fire rituals. What is an appropriate way to stage a private or public fire ritual, honoring and not disrespectful copying the traditions of East and West while leaving space for new forms and messages, with a high degree of interaction and participation and yet with the solemn quality and transformational energy and even the magical effectiveness we expect of such an event?

The FireDance format as developed in the USA is, in this context, an example of a modern way to explore the fire and its magical, mystical and transformational qualities. Also Burning Man, the massive desert happening centering around the burning of an effigy, also deserves a critical analy-

sis of its ritual qualities, as it combines pagan, new age, cyberpunk and psychedelic escapism with Bay Area innovation and exhibitionism and even counts US president Obama as a regular.

Fire, as one of the essential elements, has a special role in the relationship between man and the other world, between this and that, between inner and outer reality. Fire is in itself a deity or elemental force of nature's order but is also the natural bridge between the worlds, linking the natural and the supernatural, the sacred and the mundane.

In our modern world, fire is everywhere, it drives our cars, gives us electricity, propels our planes, it is more omnipresent than ever before, we have a symbiotic relation with fire. It has become the central active principle in our world of combustion, incandescence, without fire modernity would be a pretty uncomfortable state. Light, directly and indirectly related to fire, is becoming more and more the basis of our communication networks.

An important aspect of fire rituals and maybe the reason I am so fascinated by them, is that there is not only the external fire out there but also an inner fire in us. The inner fire, the holy fire, the kundalini, by whatever name, this energy in us is a formidable force but one that is hard to accept and acknowledge, even harder to unleash, at least in my experience. I see fire rituals as one of the ways to get closer to that inner fire, to the deep source inside.

The origins of fire

In the development of our species the mastery of fire counts as a major achievement; according to many, including Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist and ethnologist, it marks a watershed in the development of our species. It might have been what allowed our forefathers to come down from the trees and walk on their two feet, having fire with all those enemies in the African savannah would have made that move a bit more feasible. The control and manipulation of fire is what really made us 'human' and, moreover, distinguishes us from the animal world. We are the only animals that can really control fire, are able to make it, sustain it and practically use it. Animals use the result of fire, wildfire actually attracts many animals, looking for food and licking the salted ashes, only humans will deliberately cause fire. We can of course not be sure how the first use of fire by humans or humanoids came about, whatever dreams and visions we can have about that discovery are mere speculation. The facts are that the remnants of human fire have shown up in archaeological finds (as early as the Lower Paleolithic age, 790.000 years ago and in pre-homo sapiens human races) and we can make educated guesses, based on those findings and studies of

more recent and even contemporary but less 'evolved' cultures, as how the use of fire has developed. Worship or deification of fire (also pyroculia, pyrolatry or pyrolatria) is known in many cultures. The controlled use of fire is considered typical for the human species.

Stephen J. Pyne, author and professor at the School of Life Sciences, Arizona State University, gives us, in his book 'Fire, A Brief History' which eminently teaches us about the history of this element, some great insights that help us understand the various stages in the use of fire. He distinguished First Fire, that which came from the heavens as lightning or from volcanic eruptions, Second Fire, the fire humans sparked and Third Fire, the industrial fire of combustion engines and electricity. He makes clear that Fire might be a fairly unique phenomenon in our solar system, maybe even beyond that. The three factors that are necessary for fire, being oxygen, fuel and a spark, did not occur till about 400 million years back. Then life - one-cell organisms, algae, plant, the very earliest flora - produced enough carbon for fuel and oxygen. This also means that fire is quite an Earthly thing, no other planet in our solar system has fire. They have molten magma, lightning, the sun is a fiery ball of thermonuclear energy but no fire.

Of course we can and should extend Pyne's notion of a Third Fire with the now so prevalent Fourth Fire, the era of cyberconnectivity and internet. As we have taken electricity, in digital form, as the new idol, the new god of connectivity, this clearly delineated a new stage in dealing with reality and the extra-dimensional space. One could even say, that fire as a centerpiece of the communication (information exchange) with the otherworld is just evolving and that using internet and cyberspace for ritual information exchange is the next challenge. For many, their smartphone and Facebook interactions are a new altar, where they ritually interact, with new patterns and even traditions emerging but a deep hope that it will magically give them what they want and seek, being it new friends, new challenges or just pleasure and happiness. That their hope to connect to many is limited again by Dunbar's number is not generally understood.

There are many stories and myths about where fire came from, how humans learned to master it and what role God(s) or deities played. The seminal work in this respect is *Myths of the Origin of Fire* (1930) by Sir James George Frazer, a Scottish social anthropologist, who in his main work *The Golden Bough* gave us volumes and volumes of descriptions of the customs, habits and symbolisms of what then we regarded as 'primitive' cultures. Although many of J.G. Frazer's conclusions and assumptions proved unfounded, his enormous work of bringing together the stories from all over the world still demands our respect. At the surface he was a sturdy

positivist of the nineteenth century, labeling all those strange customs he described (or had to describe) as superstition and totemism but at a deeper level one can taste his fascination and his understanding of magic and many of the theoretical models he shared are still worthwhile.

I will come back to some of the origin myths, like the complex of notions around the mythical figure of Prometheus.

Fire and civilization

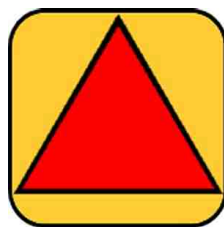
The role of fire in civilization can hardly be overestimated. It played a central role in the development of the human race, was the major tool in hunting, agriculture and building, it shaped our world in more ways than we usually realize. What would we be without fire, how could we survive in colder climates, maybe the control of fire was what made us come down from the trees and venture into the savannahs of Africa, made *Homo sapiens* evolve.

In his book *Fire and Civilization* (1991), Johan Goudsblom, a Dutch sociologist, describes how he sees civilization as a process, a dynamic development of all those aspects of behavior that are learned, shared and transmitted.

Carl Ortwin Sauer, an American geographer, sees fire as one of the three pillars of social development, together with language and agriculture; it changed the face of the earth.

Fire and agriculture are, for most of human existence, very much interwoven, burn and slash was the way to tame the woods, fertilize the soil and grow crops. Control of fire brings also dependency, once we knew how to use fire we became dependent on what it gave us, be it open spaces for farming or animal hunting or for warmth, light and cooking. Comfort is addictive; living without fire is seen as a barbaric experience.

This paradox of the fire, that we at the same time master it and become its slave, makes it all the more mysterious and magical and feeds our fascination with this strange, sometime dangerous element. Again here the parallel with cyberspace is obvious, again we have an utterly practical medium that has the tendency to enslave us and definitely has very dangerous elements. The social effectiveness of ritual as used by many religions to keep us in line becomes even more manifest in cyberspace, where the means of communication also become a way to control us.



Alchemical Fire symbol

Ritual elements	Candle	Olympic flame	Vedic Hotra	Fire Dance	Burning Man
Intention attendants		12	22	88	67
Intention officiators	55	96	18	96	92
Spiritual Frequency attendants		80	105	110	46
Spiritual Frequency officiators	75	100	145	150	67
Bonding-social cohesions		16	17	82	86
Intensity for attendants		70	19	80	68
intensity for officiator	55	40	60	94	91
inner child-mask balance	10	98	25	13	55
clock time - inner time balance	80	3	25	70	80
liminality (Turner)	40	2	31	55	40
set (psychological)	95	20	10	95	60
setting (environment)	5	80	90	94	96
form-content balance	25	92	60	25	90
Effect Psychological	40	2	45	90	70
Effect Social		4	26	99	98
Effect Magical	35	0	45	44	2
FSE (Fire subtle energy)	50	600	1600	35000	7400

Comparing the qualities of different fire rituals (divined) with a resulting FSE (Fire Subtle Energy units) indicating the magical quality (for the participants)

Fire and cooking

Apart from the use of fire to clear forest for the above mentioned purposes, agriculture and hunting, fire has obvious benefits like light and its use to cook and prepare food. Our forefathers must have noticed that after a brush fire not only the animals that fell prey to the fire were 'cooked' and more edible but also many plants, nuts, seeds and roots were transformed in digestible, tasteful and healthy staple. Apart from the cooking, which led to specialization in household chores and increased gender specific roles and tasks, fires provide warmth and light.

Ecology and fire

We humans have changed the face of the earth (Carl O. Sauer) and although we might think that cities, concrete and agriculture are most important in that respect, fire has been the major factor, certainly in the centuries and ages past.

The use of fire to burn and slash has, according to Johan Goudsblom, led to substantial deforestation in Europe before the Middle Ages and is still a very obvious practice in many third world countries.

The same goes for the North American plains, when left alone they slowly turn into forest again; only massive burning could have prevented the majority of the USA plains from being forest. There is enough evidence that

Native Americans greatly changed the character of the landscape with fire, and that they had major effects on the abundances of some wildlife species through their hunting (Benjamin A. Botkin, Stephen J. Pyne). The American Indians in this way adapted the ecosystem for their use and survival. Jan Houben studied the Vedas and old Indian sources and suggests, following Gadgil and Guha, the possibility that the Aryan ritual practices of burning down forest areas may have led to deforestation in North-West India. The agro-pastoral nomadic ways of the Aryans and their nature deity religion, who invaded India from around 1900 BCE eventually had to give in to more sedentary lifestyles and the more settler oriented Hindu religion with fixed temples and different, more symbolic deities.

Of course natural occurring fires also happened but it is clear that the human hand played a role in this process, sometimes called culture burning. The term “fire-stick farming” is also used, mostly to indicate that by using fire to clear the forest or burn down the high grass and shrubs one could attract both the grazers and their predators. Even today, artificial burning is often used in wildlife parks in Africa to attract the animals to areas close to the lodges and tourist locations, sometimes using salt to attract the animals but thereby offsetting the delicate balance of the whole ecosystem.

“Slash and Burn” as a short-term way of preparing fields for agriculture works for a short time but in the long term has a devastating effect. As Carl O. Sauer noted “The role of fire, especially in the hands of primitive man, needs much additional observation, undertaken with the knowledge that long-continued burning may have opposite effects on vegetation from those that result from a short series of burnings.”

Traditions and rights

Amidst the many forms that religions, cults or individuals have developed to honor the fire and use it as an intermediary in their communication with spirits, some universal formats and themes recur and are used as the basis of the general fire ritual described here.

Fire is not only useful and docile in its domesticated form, it’s demanding respect. Traditions like the native Americans (Indians) have a great respect for the fire. Their ceremonies around the fire, the sweat lodge and the pipe, I would actually call them rituals according to the way I distinguish between ritual and ceremony, are certainly valid and powerful but also bring up the issue of cultural ownership and even intellectual property rights.

There exist many fire-traditions and as they often belong or even establish the cultural identity of specific people or tribes, there is the issue of respect and integrity and in legal terms intellectual and copyright of the ritual components, songs, etc. Just copying the rituals of indigenous traditions, using their songs or part of the procedures is thus not appropriate, and is felt as

stealing or an insult. The fashionable and often disrespectful re-enactment of sweat lodges, sundances, ayahuasca rituals, etc. or disrespectfully copying parts of rituals is therefore not the right approach. Of course there are certain fundamental parts of the ritual matrix that one can recognize as universal but one has to be careful not to infringe on what others regards as their sacred heritage (and are willing to claim as such in a court of law).

Sun, gender

Fire rituals are very basic; most traditions honor and venerate fire, often in connection with light and the sun as the prime light giver. The element of fire is part of stories and mythology all around the world, often related to the sun. Many traditional fire rituals like St. Lucia, or New Fire events are related to the solar cycle, the winter solstice, the seasonal rhythms. The sun, gold, light, fire, the circle, there is a clear correspondence. In physics terms, the sun has no fire (only hot magma in nuclear processes) and whatever energy we receive from her is radiated out again (otherwise we would have heated up far more over our 5 billion years earth existence) but in spiritual terms she is often seen as the source of all. British writer Gregory Sams has pointed at the importance of the Sun in our worldviews throughout history.

The role of fire in human development

The role of fire, the care for the fire and its worships have probably evolved over time, especially in relation to the male/female role patterns. Sociologists like J. Goudsblom have described the role of fire in the civilization process, in how cultures developed. In most societies the sacerdotal (priestly) role is now strictly male but in the hunter-gatherer and pastoral societies no doubt the women had to take care of the fire, tending and preserving this essential resource.

In settler societies the hearth remained the domain of the woman, for warmth and cooking, also keeping the healing role in female hands. As the art of fire-making developed, seemingly men assumed the role of fire-makers and even excluded women from participating.

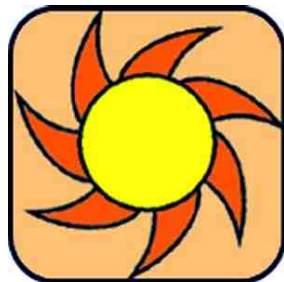
Cooking was not always a female thing, one of the interpretations of the name of the Brahmin caste is “cooks” and in many of the old Vedic rituals the brahmin are the one taking care of the fire and the preparing and cooking of soma.

Fire has, besides cooking and heating, also more aspects, it can destroy things, burn them down. Fire thus became part of war, burning down cities was the easiest way to destroy



Celtic Arwen Fire symbol

them. Fire is thus also the destroyer, there were some great fires in recent history like London and Chicago and 9/11 in a way was also a fire-event. This aspect of destruction and renewal with fire we see in the Phoenix but also in the image of Shiva. Fire is transformation and the digestive tract in ayurvedic terms is the Agni (also the God of fire).



Native American Fire symbol

Fire has also linguistically crept into the culture and reveals the associations (or again correspondences) we have with fire. In the Vedic tradition, the fire-god Agni is both a deity and the way to address the other gods but agni is also the indication of the digestive tract. The Sanskrit word for fire is Tejas, also meaning life-power, energy, beauty, dignity, seed. Homa is Sanskrit for fire ritual.

Henry David Thoreau:

Love must be as much a light, as it is a flame

From candle to festival

How strong is a ritual? Starting with the most simple ritual of lighting a candle and ending with millions of people witnessing a devoted Indian widow throwing herself on the pyre, it is clear there is an energetic difference.

The question is what dimensions there are, how we can describe or even better quantify the difference? One could try to distinguish between setting and correspondences as dimensions of ritual energy, or use psychology, sociology and magic as viewpoints, or do we have to look at many more factors and influences and allow for individual assessment of what a certain fire ritual means, achieves or effects?

If we just start by lighting a candle, a simple operation, we can see how a ritual can evolve, become more powerful, more impressive, more effective. One can hardly call the mere lighting of a candle a ritual but what if we lit it in front of a special statue or picture, meditate on the purpose, pray while lighting it, kneel, sing, circle seven times around it, call spirits or deities to help us, wouldn't that increase the subtle energy of the flame?

And what if we lit it not with a match but by making fire with a flint, abstained from eating for days beforehand, drank a special concoction, specially prepared and blessed the candle, used special herbs, incense or oils? What if we did this on a special day, under specific planet constellations, dressed up in ceremonial clothes or stark naked, with thousands of spectators, sacrificing with gifts or cutting off our hairs, ultimately throwing kerosene over ourselves and using the candle to lit ourselves a the ultimate sacrifice?

What if this act was the beginning or end of a holy war or intended to ward off a famine or drought that could kill millions?

Would these ritual extensions of the basis fire act effect our minds, our connection with others and the reality in a magical way and how much, what would work best psychologically, what would increase the efficacy, what would be mere embellishment or pimping?

Most of us would agree there is a difference between the simple act of lighting a candle and a fully fledged fire-ritual but what is the difference? Can we quantify these differences? The “hard” indicators like number of attendants, timing, costs, materials used etc. have been described by anthropologists, with questionnaires we would assess subjective qualifications and with modern brains and medical equipment we can measure brain-states, oxytocin, serotonin, blood pressure, acidity, and hormone level find out what parts in our brain are triggered but does this help in understanding ritual? I am sure one day we will be able to pinpoint exactly what the physical, chemical and electric effects of a specific step in the ritual scenario or liturgy are but does this explain them? If one believes matters follows spirit (not spirit as an emergent quality of matter but mind over matter) then for sure there are symptoms and qualities associated with a certain state, and they can be measured. However, why not assume we, as humans, are capable of not only causing but also feeling what happens at a ritual (and thus remembering, visualizing, imagining), why not accept the subjective as a way to gauge effects and try to learn from those subjective impressions.

It is obvious that there is a difference between fires and I propose a Bovis type scale of (subtle) fire energies in FSE (Fire Subtle Energy units)

Not only in physical characteristics, colors, size and what feeds the fire but also in origin, in the magic qualities, the energy level. To differentiate between the various levels and energy forms is quite a virgin territory and one could adopt many models and structures.

Sampling some fire rituals

Fire is fascinating, we all have some memories about fire-events, from a quiet meeting around a hearth or fire place, maybe a violent burn we witnessed, to events where many people gathered around a fire in the open. Some left a mark in our conscience, some became a vague recollection, I personally remember some great burns, like the Millennium Burn 2000 at Amsterdam's Ruigboord, where thousands of people



gathered to welcome a new century by setting fire to an enormous Tower of Babel structure that took nearly a year to construct. But I also remember a Catholic priest holding two candles over my throat at age five or six, giving me the Blasius blessing.

Meaning of fire and fire ritual

There are different levels of meaning, concerning fire.

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard wrote about it, analyzing the imagination of matter and the literary, poetic qualities of fire and the flame. He saw a simple flame as a strong symbol, a moral communication with the world, a reverie linking our heart with the vertical destiny. He calls fire the ultra-living element, intimate and universal, offering the warmth of love. He mentioned the Prometheus complex, the Empedocles Complex and sexualized fire in his 'The Psychoanalysis of Fire'.

Meaning is of course based on the signs (text, words, images, movements) used but also on the context and in the case of specific rituals on the initiation level and the cultural literacy of the participants.

Are they aware of the symbolism, the sensitivities, the 'Umfeld'?

Meaning is (in the semiotic view) very much a relational thing and in the case of a ritual extends into the subconscious, archetypical and spiritual realms, of course both at the set and the setting points, in the individual and the group.

Cultural differences can easily be overlooked and when staging an event with cross-cultural participation effective communication about intentions and form is necessary, purity of intent is not enough.

The moral meaning of fire is that it is dangerous, represents energy and passion and can burn evil (hell and purgatory) in ourselves and our enemies but also represents transformation power.

Fire and hell

Although there is little in the Bible about the relationship between hell and fire, since Dante's *Inferno* this association is quite prominent, especially in Christian context.

The symbolic and mystical meaning comes from the deeper notions about function, form and outline of the fire.

Symbols derived from the fire are a spoken wheel, concentric circles, the Arabic flame in the tent, the Pentecostal spirit-flame, the sun-image and the colors of red and yellow/gold and white. Rolling a burning wheel down the hillside in winter at solstice looks like the sun coming down, it's a symbol that reminds us how important the sun is in life.

The allegorical meaning of fire is first and foremost its quality of purification and transformation but it also resembles the sun (the father) and the original creation. The Phoenix myth of rebirth from the fire is a good example; one can also be baptized in the fire.

As for the transcendental/magical qualities of a fire ritual, the notion of fire as the mouth/ear of the gods, as the window or doorway to the heavens, as the connection between the seen and the unseen gives us a broad idea as what one aims for or can be achieved. The fire (or the smoking of a pipe) itself can be seen as an intermediary (the original role of Agni) or as a divinity itself.

The mother fire - continuity

In New Fire rituals the first fire is used to seed the other fires. For instance one can have one ritual to ignite in a special way (flint etc.) the central fire of a larger festival, then bring that fire to all the fires of the festival, as a uniting energy and use the same fire source to ignite an effigy (like The Man in Burning Man) in a special ritual. Using the same fire-source throughout a festival is a great symbol of connectedness. The use of the ashes of previous fires to seed the new one is also a worthwhile tradition, emphasizing the continuity.

Fire as a symbol, fire symbols

Fire has iconic meaning, is considered powerful, and when used as a symbol it's displayed in many ways. There is a symbol for fire in virtually every tradition and every era. Fire symbols and their meanings are often archetypical, warm our hearts, move our bodies, quicken our minds, and lift our spirits. Fire symbols and meanings allow you metaphorically to embrace the power and passion of the Gods. The symbolic attributes of fire refer to it being hot, illuminating, wild, lively, passionate, energizing, impetuous, consuming and enlightening and is from the south direction.

Although at first sight one could think that fire as an active agent would be fully yang, in fact in Chinese trigram thinking as well as in the I-Ching the fire and the other elements are combinations of yin and yang.

Its inner trigram is radiance = fire, and its outer trigram is identical. The origin of the character has its roots in symbols of long-tailed birds such as the peacock or the legendary phoenix.

Other fire symbols

Prometheus and the Phoenix were already mentioned but there are many fire myths and fire symbols.

In alchemy the chemical element of sulfur was often associated with fire and its alchemical symbol was an upward-pointing triangle. This symbol signifies upward mobility, forward motion, rising flames and aspirations to solar embodiment (in both literal and philosophical senses).

To move into the energy of fire is to be utterly consumed, transformed and lifted out of limitation, rising as the Phoenix.

This alchemical symbol signifies transformation and corresponds with southern directions in practical ritual, the season of summer, and is also associated with archangel Michael.

The ancient Celts used the form of three flames or rays (Triple Flame - Arwen) found upon the faces of deities or Celtic clansmen and women. These flames were rendered in lines aspiring up and outwards to the subject's forehead with the base of the three lines meeting at the bridge of the nose.

The Chinese I-Ching Trigram for Fire is an open line between two closed lines. This trigram also indicates southern directions and clarity, independence, health and vision and rules the physical eyes. The Chinese animal that corresponds with this fire symbol is the pheasant.

The Ken Rune, a Symbol of Fire and Strength. The Nordic Futhark runes, an old system of divination based on 24 alphabetical symbols derived from ancient Nordic tribes establishes a link between the physical and non-physical. The ken rune represents the flame or fire as a symbol of positive action, sexual prowess, passion and warmth and victory.

The Uto-Aztecs had this fire and sun symbol motif representing the seven rays of spiritual development. Each ray is symbolic of the energetic fire that ignites the whole (or soul) of man.

The Mayan Symbol for Fire K'ak' is a composite of several symbolic elements like the flame itself and the fire holder (the hand). This glyph is also a symbol of the incense burner, a device used in fire rituals. This fire symbol points at the yajaw k'ak' which translates to mean "servant of Fire and expresses the point of ignition of magic, when the cosmic flame enters the awareness. This is a state of unification between body and psyche, as fire is a consummate unifier.

The Tarot card most associated with Fire is Judgment, where the newborn rises from a coffin.

There are also animals that are connected with fire. The eagle as a bird is associated with the Agni fire ritual; it is part of the floor plan of the altar and is expected to show up in the sky as a favorable sign. The Salamanders are supposed to have taught prehistoric man how to create and use fire, they rule the element of fire. In Greek and Roman myth the Salamander lived in the very heart of fire and thus took on the representation of fire itself. The

elemental concept of, and the term salamander was coined by Paracelsus. The salamander (or lizard) is also depicted on several cards in the Tarot Suit of Wands in which it signifies the creative spark.

The fire signs in the horoscope are of course often used in connection with fire, the Ram, Sagittarius, Leo. The lion has special meaning, as it symbolizes gold or the sun – the very highest characteristics of ascension and enlightenment in Alchemy. In many cultures lions are representing courage, wisdom, royalty, justice, bravery, victory, loyalty and protection

Chinese Dragons, that suggest action, vigor and protection are also related to fire and the sun, being a beneficent being.

Sexuality and fire

The erotic and sexual connotations of fire are many, the fire of love is a metaphor we encounter in many a poem. Fertility rites usually have a fire aspect and it is not wise to ignore the arousal stemming from a fire. There are few natural occurrences as erotic as a volcano, and the fire in our loins is a well-known metaphor. The rising of the kundalini energy around our spine feels like a fire and we recognize the caduceus as a symbol of that process. An active volcano, where fire is present as the hot molten lava burns everything in its path, brings about erotic feelings and lust in many that watch it from close by.

The Kundalini force is also called the “The Serpent Fire”, or the “Dragon” and points at this life energy that resides in the lowest chakra but can be made to rise up and fill one with fire energy, creative and sexual. The Secret Fire ascends along the ida and pindala, we see in the Hermetic imagery as two snakes around the central staff. It is the Vital Energy that holds the Secret Fire in check

Light(ning) and fire

Flames and light were sacred all through the ages. Fire is quite a unique earthly thing, as you need free oxygen and that is not around on other planets in our solar system. The first fire was the result of lightning or volcanic fire, hitting organic matter. Lightning came from the heavens and is therefore seen as an act of the Gods, a gift from heavens, from the creator or at least a divine entity. Many divinities therefore have lightning, thunder, fire as a tool or symbol, usually these are ferocious, active Gods, breathing fire, throwing thunderbolts.

In prehistoric times, tool making and fire were likely to go hand in hand, even wooden spears and arrows get hardened points with fire. In the Stone Age, making stone tools, striking one stone upon another, as the flaking process requires, often creates sparks of super heated stone; a kind of min-

ature lightning. Ancient references to light, lightning, or fire are often a metaphor for being educated as in having the ability to make fire but also refer to having the divine spark, having achieved enlightenment. The suggestion of Carl G. Jung, that the invention of fire making resulted from pre-sexual onanistic-like use of wooden sticks seems rather far-fetched.

Fire and electricity

In the modern era fire is still a major force but much of its use has been supplanted by electricity. There is still fire at the beginning of many electric grids, fueled by gas or cokes but we use the easier to handle electricity as an intermediary. Especially at the beginning of the industrial revolution fire was still everywhere, in the steam-engines that drove the first machines, trains and installations.

Now we do most of the work with electricity, and most children hardly see fire, maybe there is a hearth or fireplace in the house but experiencing open fires becomes rare, for sound ecological reasons of course. Psychologically and culturally however this is regrettable, we are more and more separated from the live-giving element.

Fire and information

There is an interesting analogy between ‘information’ (like digital data) and fire in that one can easily multiply, reuse and proliferate them both. A fire, given adequate ‘food’ in the form of combustible material, can be divided, split up, handed out, transported, all that without diminishing the usefulness of the original fire. The similarity of our modern fascination with the digital data that we shoot all over the globe with the fascination of our forefather with this magical element fire is remarkable. Didn’t the developers and researchers of the digital era act like the ‘priests’ of a new religion, their faith in the power and effects of their ‘precious’ made them as special as those fire-tenders, blacksmiths, potters and fire-magicians of old.

The Phoenix, the flaming bird

The bird Phoenix, rising from the ashes is a symbol of the transformation fire brings, the power to overcome death. Phoenix is a Greek word for red, and the Greek called the flamingo bird *phoenicopteros*, phoenix with feathers of fire, flaming. The flamingo is also the Egyptian hieroglyph for red, for



*Fire brings communitas: Firedance
2003 Boulder Creek*

all things red, anger, blood, the desert, all are indicated with the flamingo hieroglyph. And maybe not coincidentally, the flamingo breeds on the ash cones of lake Natron in Central Africa, so the young flamingo rises from the ashes. The name Phoenix comes from the Egyptian Bennu bird related to Vena in the Vedic tradition. The Prometheus story is well known but there are many myths like that. In the Rig Veda (3:9.5) the hero Mātariúvan recovered the hidden fire. In the Book of Enoch, the fallen angels and Azazel teach early mankind to use tools and fire. For many North American natives animals like coyote, beaver or dog played a role in stealing fire and bringing it to the humans.

Lucifer

The lightbearer Lucifer is an interesting figure in relation to fire. He is seen as a devilish “fallen” angel who stood up against God but he is also an archetypical figure of independent pride and dedication to only God’s will, refusing to obey or help the humans. He signifies in a way the force opposing dogmatism, human rule and independence from scriptures. For some he is the symbol of an exalted morality, not of devil worship. As he refused to be subordinate to humankind he is the opposite of the Promethean figure who opposed the supreme God (Zeus) to help the humans. The Serpent God Serpenta Mainyu, the divine wisdom, is another of Lucifer’s many names.

In a high level freemason’s ritual the Mithra-Agni-Lucifer identification figures prominently and is seen as opposing all spiritual tyranny.

“To you, Sovereign Grand Instructors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the Brethren of the 32nd, 31st and 30th degrees: ‘the Masonic Religion should be, by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luceferian Doctrine. If Lucifer were not god, would Adonay (Jesus)... calumniate (spread false and harmful statements about) him?... Yes Lucifer is God...”

(Albert Pike, A.C. De La Rive, La Femme et l’Enfant dans la Franc-Maonnene Universelle)

The fire ritual as archetype for rituals

We don’t know how humankind could exist without some fire, and in the development fire played such an important role, that fire-rituals probably were the first rituals. Noah’s sacrifice and fire to thank the Lord after the Flood is the first ritual in the Bible.

Even today the use of fire is a very normal part of ceremony and ritual, even as in daily life it is disappearing because we use electricity and the fire in our central heating systems is still there but not experienced as an open fire. In a ritual context, we do make the connection, what would a church be without candles, and the burning of incense is basically a fire act.

Fire and the Holy Spirit

In my interpretation of the Trinity, where the Father is the transcended, the Son the immanent (in all manifestation) and the Holy Spirit the emanent, the revelation, the divine that makes itself known, the Holy Spirit becomes known in moments of total surrender and loss of ego and is often experienced as rapture, as a moment of becoming aware of the divine as one and all.

Fire as a sacrament

Traditional rituals are always a mimesis of what was done by the first sacrificers who found in sacrifice their way from privation to plenty, darkness to light, and death to immortality. Fire has been, from Paleolithic times, the natural choice to connect to the otherworld, as it had such magical qualities. As I have argued before, **Fire and Ritual are the main factors in human evolution**, certainly before self consciousness developed with language etc.

Using the fire as part of a sacrament, a rite of initiation or passage was common. Jumping over the fire, using smoke as a kind of baptism is well known. The mentioning of Fire-baptism in the context of what John the Baptist did points at some alchemical notion of fire as essential for personal change. Not always was the fire the object of oblations, prayers and incantations, sometimes one would jump over the fire, hold limbs over the fire, brand oneself or used it in other ways to communicate more physical with the fire. The extreme of course is self immolation.

Some more examples of fire-rituals:

The Olympic flame is already mentioned before. The origins lie in ancient Greece, where a fire was kept burning throughout the celebration of the Olympics in antiquity. The fire was reintroduced at the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam, and became a standard part of the modern Olympic Games ceremonies.

The torch relay which transports the flame from Greece to the site of the actual games was a new aspect, had no ancient precedent and started with the Berlin 1936 Summer Olympics. The whole procedure is mostly a public ceremony, with little or no magical effects, although individual runners and especially the one who lights the final fire in the stadium might have some personal transformation experience.

In Buddhist tradition there is fire ritual which is called Goma or Homa. In the ritual the priest burns 108 sticks of wood which symbolize 108 human sins. They pray to destroy the sins in the ritual, in an act of mercy which helps the evil not to repeat their falsehoods any more.

New fire

In most fire rituals emphasis is on a clean or new fire, not taken from an existing source or from a source with special meaning. A clean fire starts with creating a spark from flint, chafing wood, using a magnifying glass or special object (like the crystal skull in the Mayan culture presumably used in their New Fire ritual) but sometimes fire from a volcano or a lightning fire is used. In the Celtic tradition at Samhain (October 31st-November 1st) existing fires are put out, a new (King's) fire lit and the new fire is then transferred to other fires and hearths. In that sense one can have mother and daughter fires.

The kindling of a new fire symbolises purification and the release of new personal and social energy. This took place at Samhain or midwinter but more often in spring or when the first fruits were harvested.

The liturgic scenario

A ritual can be seen as a sequence of actions with a symbolic meaning. The scenario of a magical or religious ritual around a fire is usually fairly formalized and has distinct stages. A rather extensive fire ritual would comprise of the following stages, set in a liturgic scenario and logical order. Not all the stages are necessary in every fire ritual but this is a kind of manual for setting up a ritual, partly inspired by the way FireDance is set up.

Stages and elements of the ritual

- . **Preliminary preparation (of materials and sacrifices)**
- . Ordination of sacrificer, master of ceremony (priest), fire-chief and helpers
- . Permission asking (of the spirits and owners of the land) and invitation-welcoming
- . Cleaning the site Staking or casting the ritual enclosure (circle or square)
- . Preparation of altar and fire(s)
- . Processions around and closing the circle, sometimes including the attendance in a wider enclosure.
- . Entrance into the circle by participants
- . Dedication of the altar, firewood, utensils, tools and sacrifices
- . Honoring the four quarters, the sky and the earth (the vertical axis mundi) and the inner dimension.
- . Lighting the fire, ignition
- . Naming the fire and dedication of its main purpose (and at the same time renunciation)

- . Opening the Gates (as an additional layer)
- . **Purification stage**
- . Burning sage and cleansing with smoke, blessing
- . **Devotion and worship stage:**
- . Silent devotion of sacrificer and attendants
- . Hymns or songs of praise, thanks and devotion
- . **Communion stage:**
- . Honoring the energies, evoke spirits
- . Offerings including donations
- . Charging and dedication of sacrifices
- . Sacrificial acts; consecration, libations and oblations
- . Invitation to participate in smoking, eating or drinking, story telling
- . Divination, dowsing
- . **Transformation stage**
- . Preparation for trance
- . Silent meditation and visualization
- . Walking the fire, jumping the fire
- . Trance dancing and music
- . **Closing stage**
- . Blessing
- . Ceremonial gifts to the ‘priests’
- . Thanks to the spirits
- . Burning the implements
- . Closing and dissolving the Gates and the circle
- . Cleaning of the site

Rejoicing, celebration, the theatrical side of things, fire spinners, dancing, fireworks, etc. can be added at appropriate stages.

Timing and place

You can light a fire anytime but some times and places are better suited than others, and there are practical considerations like safety, privacy and legality (open fire is not always permitted). Many suggest that a liminal (threshold) time and place is most effective, as things are on the cusp of change, at crossroads like on the beach, on a cliff.

This goes both for celestial and human times. Full Moon, New Moon, dawn, dusk, noon, midnight, when the moon or certain stars rise above the horizon, eclipses, solstices and equinoxes, the pagan calendar (Sabbaths)

but also when the astrologers deem it to be a auspicious moment. Harmony is most important, and natural processes like the tides and the waning or waxing moon should be observed. The Egyptians use certain pyramidal star constellations for their Earth/Star fire rituals.

The length of a ritual varies, some Vedic rituals take weeks but to make it practical and focused a couple of hours would do and the daily Agnihotra of a Hindu might only take a few minutes.

A larger fire ritual could start about an hour before the sun goes down, so as to have the transformative stage at sunset but doing it at dawn, welcoming the sun, has a special flavor too.

As for timing, one also observes the personal calendar of biorhythm, female cycle, etc.

The calendars play an important role, either based on the sun, the moon, the seasons or just on human events like one's birthday or the name day of a saint. Although calendars are in a way human constructions, they do bear on celestial or cosmological orders, even if we still don't understand exactly how like in the case of the Meso-American calendars of the Maya and Aztecs. They have a 260-day year (pregnancy) and an 18-month of 20 days civil calendar. There are often multiple rhythms in calendars, like the week, the month, the solar and the lunar year and these give rise to sometimes long waves, like the 18,890 day/ 52 year cycle of the Maya and the very long periods like Baktun and Katun, we are nearing the end of such a solar era, the Aztecs believed this to be the Fifth Sun era.

As for a place, there are sites where nature feels more divers, more abundant, with more variation in flora and fauna, often where there is water, at a shore, at a vantage point in the landscape, where leylines cross or special earth energies emerge. In the Bible often a special tree is mentioned as the place to erect an altar. Human energy can also bring power to a place; crossroads or sites become sacred because of what people have done there, also in a negative way.

Ritual enclosure – sanctuary-holy space - circle work

To separate the place of worship or ritual from the surrounding is common practice but can be done in many ways. A square, pentagram, or other forms are possible, the circle is most common. The circle is a magical symbol, with no beginning and no end and can be used in many ways in a ritual. It usually stands for the sun and in a fire ritual the combination of fire and circle emphasize the connection, the correspondence between the two. The sun is often seen as the father. The Sundance of the Plains Indians is widely known, it is a most sacred ritual, unusually inside a circular lodge, wearing

Isswun (sacred hat with two horns) and a painted body, sometimes piercing occurs (Sioux).

Respect for the circle is essential; it is the sacred boundary between the worlds. The concept of the circle as a special place, apart from the world and yet connected, is often used and accepting someone in the circle is an act of trust and love. In Wicca rituals, especially initiation, passwords are used to restrict entrance to the circle. Entering (or leaving) the circle is entering a sacred domain, and some attention should be given as to the way one joins the circle.

A circle of people is the most common form of a ceremonial gathering, where everybody is at peer level and has an opportunity to participate. Creating (casting), charging, closing the circle is done in many ways but the basic mechanisms are the same. Simple images as just holding hands, singing Ohm, a talking stick, there are many forms of circle work. Often one uses a symbolic item, like a pipe or a bowl, a crystal, etc., to pass around the circle, allowing the individual to partake in the community by devotion, prayer, speech or other expressions.

Holding hands, singing Ohm, using mirrors, a rope, twine, candles, sending (breath) energy around the circle or onto a specific person, his or her surrogate or a charged object, storytelling, smoking a (peace) pipe, circle work can take many forms.

Libations, or the offering of water (salted, consecrated, perfumed), milk, wine or other substances to the earth or the fire, by the officiators or all participants, are a common circle ceremony. As an example, passing a bowl of (salted) water or a crystal counterclockwise (against the sun) to collect the negative feelings of powerlessness, grief or anger then transforming them by passing the bowl over the fire and dedicating a little of the water and then passing the bowl clockwise, so that everybody receives the antidote and positive energy. Oblations are libations into the fire, also called immolations. In baptism, there is the ablution with holy water but oblations could be done with liquids of any kind.

Music , drumming

Drumming, didgeridoo, flutes, music makes the people and the spirits happy, probably the mirror neuron mechanism plays a role here. You can use whatever, if it feels appropriate and is at hand but again there has to be some unity. For some songs or moments heavy drumming is less suitable, for others anything goes. Sharing instruments is a good practice but as some people are very careful about their instruments, having tuned it right etc., make clear which instruments are for sharing, like placing them a designated spot and returning them there after use.

Sometimes inexperienced drummers or musicians tend to play too loud. It helps to explain that one should only play or sing so loud as to be able to hear the others. Especially the Tambourine is a dominant sound, that could distort the balance.

Sounds (rhythm), postures and words are tools to focus the body (breath), minds and hearts and the ‘prana’ of the participants. Inner harmonization of thoughts and visualization in line with the external action is important.

Scents

Fragrance and smell belongs to fire but can be enhanced by using special wood, vernal grass or sage, essential oils and of course incense, in whatever form (frankincense, myrrh). It can be offered, extolled toward the altar or the people, one can walk around the enclosure with incense-sticks or a censer or pass along incense sticks in the audience.

Sweat lodge

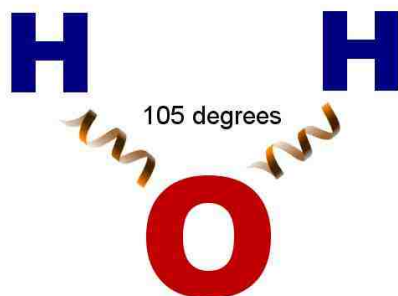
A great deal is written about sweat lodges in the Native American tradition and although they are not totally conforming to the matrix described in this book, they have a structure that displays many of the same elements like circular sacred space, cosmological correspondences in the layout of the site, naming of the implements (stones) but the whole format is more of an individual challenge and experience, an inner quest and personal experience than a communal fest. The beautiful analogy with the womb makes clear, that the sweat lodge is a great psychological invention, using powerful archetypical imagery.

Celebrations and bans on open fire

Because of ecological reasons and to limit the risk of fires spreading these days in many countries open fires are outright forbidden or restricted, only at certain times (Easter) they are permitted or condoned, and often all kinds of permits and supervision by official firemen is required. Although there are good reasons for these measures and limitations, it also means that many children will not experience open fire in their youth.

37 Water; the essential

Water flows, water is time, change, the essential *Panta Rhei* of Heraclitus, the symbol of periodicity and of human life. It's the element that fluctuates, has ebb and flood, is never the same and yet loaded with meaning and information. Water, or the lack of it is what defines a culture, a life form, us. No water, no rain, no life, no society, no structure.



In a ritual context water should be there at the start and the end and at the moment of time-bound transformation. Water is the unconscious rhythm and drive in us, and in water we are closer to our unconscious, inner self. Water is life, the closest we come to the shadow of God's love. Being baptized in or with water is the moment this notion is bestowed upon us.

The ritual correspondences of water are many. Water is a feminine energy and thus connected with the aspects of the Goddess and the Earth. It is associated with the color blue, and the Tarot suit of Cup cards. When used for healing, cleansing, and purification, water is related to the West, and associated with passion and emotion.

The four elements fire, air, water and earth represent plasma, gas, fluid and solid, the basic states of matter. I see correspondences; like water in combination with earth is blood, water with air is the breath and as water is the essential information element, language.

It is the medium we can use to look at the moon, to scry and see beyond the form, beyond the veil of the reality we think we perceive but also make. Looking at the reflection of the moon in water we have a double mirror that brings us insights in that what the sun tries to tell us, but is too heavy, too bright for the human soul during the day.

Aristotelian physics, which recognized the four elements added the fifth element (aether) as it was necessary in this view to keep the lighter elements fire and air connected to the heavy water and earth, a kind of additional gravity function. Aether, which fills space and composes celestial bodies, intrinsically moves in perpetual circles, the only constant motion between two points.

Water is essential to the life forms on earth. Where it comes from is as amazing as the qualities it brings to us. The lump of star-seed that the earth was originally might not have had water. The present idea of the cosmological order in how the earth came to be, is that we acquired the water because of frozen water in comets hitting the primordial earth. There is a lot of water out there in space, but earth is the only planet in our solar system where it is clearly visible, we are the blue planet.

Our life and consciousness depends mainly on water. Our body is composed mainly of water. Many people do not realize how important this is. Even many doctors do not know the importance of water, and that you can heal the body with water. Of course water has been used in ritual long before it was known as the H₂O molecule, but from its ritual use we might get an idea about what water is more than the chemical substance. And water is used in many rituals, for baptism, cleansing, fertility purposes, as a carrier of information or as the holy substance it really is. Water, the sea, the rain, we wouldn't be here without this amazing fluid. And as water expands as it freezes, it has very much shaped the world by breaking up and eroding rocks, with ultimately sand and clay as a result.

The study nature of water is essential as it serves also to describes the nature of consciousness in matter; water is our most easily graspable example of manifested love (will, divine purpose).

I don't personally like water to drink, but I love sailing and diving is not a hobby of mine. The surface of water is what I enjoy, immersion in it might reveal my unconscious. I had some traumatic drowning experiences when young and easily panic when there is a lack of air like when water is poured on the stones in a sweat lodge. I grew up in a country where water is everywhere, with lots of rain, and a language that has a sea-like quality, where trade (an exchange) used to happen over the water, using the rivers, lakes, sea and canals as a carrier.

As a physicist I was amazed at what water quality in the esoteric sense could do. Visits to Findhorn, where obviously nature responded to care and love with abundant crops and good results from homeopathic remedies sparked my interest. Was water more than the chemical molecule, could it carry information beyond the tangible?

I then learned from Nick Franks ("21th Century Radionics," 2012) how Radionics, extending the homeopathic notions, uses the pure information to create healing remedies of all kinds and started experimenting myself to 'charge' water.

Another magical encounter with water was my participation in a couple of Kumb Mela's in India, where millions of people take a dip in the holy Ganges water. Certainly one of the largest ritual gatherings in the world, and an experience that made a deep impression. It's a massive baptismal plunge in which I of course partook and indeed felt as if a new life was beginning. As the crowd is so large and of a single mind, the group energy was amazing, the soul of Hinduism and the cleansing capacity of the Ganges water was laid bare.

Water, the miracle molecule with the hidden dimensions

Water is a miracle and we find new qualities all the time. Chemically we describe it as H_2O , a combination of oxygen and hydrogen, but in reality there are many more molecule forms in what we call water. It is now known that in water there are many more immiscible liquid phases and crystalline forms and what looks like plain water can be a rather complex mixture. These newly discovered forms of water and variations in the molecule bonds maybe is the explanation of some of those yet unexplained capabilities of our most essential treasure, like we see in homeopathy.

Water is miraculous and reacts to intention and 'thought waves'. The approach used by Masaru Emoto is not very scientific and his background questionable, but he can be credited for showing this to the world with his pictures of 'charged' water crystals. He did illustrate that water has memory, something Jacques Benveniste has shown more scientifically before him. Now this confirms what homeopaths too have been doing as matter of daily practice: water can be used to inform and remind the body of its own inner health.

Water combines the principles of motion (H) and electromagnetic coherence (O) in its molecular structure. The importance of water is not that it is composed as H_2O (two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom), but as $2 H_2O$: two water molecules normally are in close connection. This is a result of their shape and polarity. The Hydrogen atoms are at an angle of 105° with respect to each other, which gives the water molecule a kind of boomerang shape. As a result, two molecules are normally found together as one hand clasping another. Between them they



take up less space, yet have room to move with respect of each other. This last bit is very important: the water molecules link up two-by-two. They are thereby determined by the angle of 105° that the hydrogen atoms make with respect to the oxygen in each water molecule. But if that angle changes ever so slightly, the relative position between the two water molecules will change also. This variation allows for storing information. Water exists thus most often as $2H_2O$, which means that the relationship between the two molecules can determine the behavior of water as a fluid. Small changes in the relationship between the two molecules reflect important changes in energy and coherence.

The Russians Profs. Kussakov & Deryagin point at “Poly Water”, a term coined by them to describe the macromolecular clusters of water under certain conditions.

Information

Water not only stores information: it is a form of information, it is the neg-entropy catalyst. Water can do this because of the electric polarity of the molecules and way the (pairs of) water molecules differ and align themselves. Water is also a liquid crystal, it can form invisible crystal constellations in what looks like just water. It is the same property of matter that is now being used in LCD (Liquid-Crystal Display) screens. The water in our body cells is not liquid, but more like to a gel (in computing such materials are called Intelligent Gels). Now in this book I argue all matter is a form of information (consciousness) manifesting in spacetime; the universe as a whole is information in formation and manifestation, but water is very special.

By understanding water, we can understand more of the universe as a whole: in water we see the same changes in the main material phases (solid, liquid, gas, plasma but more aggregation states are being discovered) as we see in the universe as a whole (in reversed order: Big Bang, Cosmic Gas, Liquid Stars, Solid Planets). By looking at water we can therefore more easily grasp and understand the same principles as we see in the manifestation of the universe around us. What matters, is not the matter that it is composed of, but the way it changes, the phase-shifts, in physical manifestation. More important than the changes of water – or matter – is the reasons for change. All these changes take place because there are changes in the context, shifts affecting the inner balance. As this balance shifts, so does the form of manifestation of information.

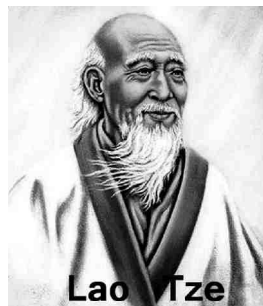
This again is very important: matter is information in formation. It is a manifestation of information, which is consciousness. As the ‘universe cools down’, information in matter ‘heats up’. The level of information in manifestation (negentropy) increases, while the entropy (second Law of Ther-

modynamics) increases. There are ever more complex forms of manifestation. This can be seen in the emergence of minerals, plants, animals and humans. This can be seen in water: water changes shape, form and manifestation according to the way the conditions around it change. When the heat or pressure goes up, water adapts and becomes more fluid, vapor, plasma. When the ambience cools down, water assumes its own shape, determined by its own inner structure, and memories of its last context.

Esoteric and symbolic notions of water

Water has been recognized as a spiritual substance, as a fundamental correspondence category long ago. This of course is because of its essential qualities and usage, cleaning, watering plants, drinking water, water and life are inseparable. Water as a symbol pops up in many esoteric practices, in ceremonial magic, in astrology as well as in typology of people.

The Element of Water deals with everything relating to liquid, change and the frozen - physically and psychically. Water flows, like the mind which constantly evolves, adapts, and grows. The Element of Water is seen as a chaotic element, just like its counterpart, Fire but is not inclined toward destruction. Water is not aggressive and violent like fire, but rather completely random and undecided and a water-like personality can likewise change, bend and go with the tide in another direction and is prone to repeat mistakes and successes. It is the most unpredictable element, and a dangerous one, more so than even Fire at times.



Water is change and represents transformation as it can come as a fluid, a solid or as steam and fog. And it is because of this ability to change, adapt, and evolve that the world has come to the point it is today, or would have died out long ago.

"There is nothing softer and weaker than water. And yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things. For this reason there is no substitute for it."

Lao Tze in the Tao Te Ching, Ch. 78

Alive water

Water is essential to life as we know it. Normally life is limited to organic substances (containing carbon and hydrogen) but in itself water is not organic, so how can we call it alive? But then what do we really know of life, even as we are deciphering the DNA of all kinds of organisms. There are computer programs that act surprisingly alive, and a computer virus

spreading itself all over, multiplying and even adapting to the threads comes close to a biological virus in many respects.

The question of what life might be, if it is not confined to the organic sphere has been raised by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari ("A Thousand Plateaus", 1980). They expand the notion of life to be closer to consciousness at large.

"If everything is alive, it is not because everything is organic or organized, but, on the contrary, because the organism is a diversion of life."

They also claim that organic life is like a subset, a limited form of life.

"the organism is that which life sets against itself in order to limit itself, and there is a life all the more intense, all the more powerful for being anorganic."

They thus expand the interpretation of life and see organization as a way life expresses itself, so why not see social organizations as alive. Their notion of what they call a "Rhizome" (originally used to indicate a complex root/stem form in trees) as a mode of knowledge and cultural interconnectedness that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points has some resonance with the way the extradimensional in my three world model can be accessed, beyond duality, linearity, logic, locality and time. A ritual could be seen as a Rhizome act using correspondences as complex, multiple and interwoven hypertext-like links.

Interesting enough, there are some experiments with inorganic life forms. A team of Scottish scientists from Glasgow University are conducting research which, they hope, will enable them to create life out of inorganic molecules. They have pioneered a method of animating inorganic material, which they claim can replicate and evolve just like an organic cell.

Matter of life

In an expanded view of what life is we touch of course the fundamental philosophical questions, like where does life come from? Is life is core process of the universe or just a particular manifestation of consciousness at large? If we accept that the earth has some kind of consciousness (the Gaia

hypothesis of James Lovelock and Lynn Margolis), why not call it alive and then what about the life of the Sun etc. We are, after all, all stardust and everything is connected to the extra-dimensional.



Flow forms

Water, coming from the tap or even from a bottle of spring water, is not naturally clean or pure in the sense, that the powerful crystalline structures that can hold information and have a healing effect, are distorted. By letting the water follow a natural downflow, like in a small brook, can restore the original quality. There are flow forms designed to achieve this apart from a process in nature. Another way to do this is by letting sun- or moonlight cleanse it or by using crystal energy to be transferred into water.

A special kind of water is human pee, there are spiritual schools where drinking morning urine is advised, it would tell the body in a kind of feedback loop what it doesn't need. In a homeopathic perspective it would be enough to just add a very small amount like a drip of urine to a glass of water or tea.

The esoteric and alternative qualities of water concern its applications in health, healing, ecology and awareness. Water has much more to offer than the basic qualities in terms of purity, acidity, conductivity, pollution, mineral content and other 'classic' physical and chemical yardsticks. There are other energies, structures, information contained in and related to water. Some of these are recognized and known throughout history, holy water has been part of most cultures and religions, but the rational Cartesian scientific model has discarded that as immeasurable and therefore bogus. That the quality of water is reflected in the growth of crops and therefore some rational measure is possible, although time-consuming, is ignored or labeled as pseudo-science.

Bovis scale for energized water

However, the 'hidden' qualities of water have intrigued many people and although not common knowledge, a kind of esoteric water science has emerged. Energy-water, Bovis scale, restructuring, clustering, micro-crystals, information storage in water, there are many angles to this.

Quantitative results can be obtained with certain methods that can be reproduced and stand up to critical scrutiny. The radiesthesist André Bovis, looked into the energetic quality of water and came up with a scale to measure this, based on divination. His Bovis scale for calibrating water/food quality gives a numeric indication of the holistic (not the chemical) quality of water. The scale can be checked against tangible reality, not by using the hardly scientific water crystal pictures of Emoto but by doing experiments with plants.

It's not a very quick method, but the qualification of water obtained by a pendulum can be checked against "reality" by comparing the growth and health of plants given that water. Better water yields better crops. Not an easy method but possible and used by organic farmers.

These more hidden dimensions of water are important as they can help reach new insights in what water really is and how it can be used. This includes a whole gamut of water aspects, ranging from the more or less 'technical' orientation to the very esoteric like those being able to charge water, gauge water quality, see water aura/radiation or perform water rituals.

Alternative views about water

Expanding our knowledge of water, beyond the basic chemical qualities of the H₂O molecule, has been an uphill struggle, as the mere mentioning of magical qualities of water has usually been met with ridicule and worse.

The story of Jacques Benveniste, who has tackled the issue of the 'Memory of Water' and came up with scientific proof of it but was ridiculed and had to give up his scientific career, is a case in point.

In the study of water many people came up with alternative views of some consequence. Samuel Hahneman, the father of homeopathy, made potentiated water into a medicinal tool used by many, but his method is seen as quackery by most of the medical establishment. Many unknown qualities of water were also discovered and described by Viktor Schauberger.

"Criticisms centered around the vanishingly small number of solute molecules present in a solution after it has been repeatedly diluted are beside the point, since advocates attribute their effects not to molecules present in the water, but to modifications of the water's structure. Simple-minded analysis may suggest that water, being a fluid, cannot have a structure of the kind that such a picture would demand. But cases such as that of liquid crystals, which while flowing like an ordinary fluid can maintain an ordered structure over macroscopic distances, show the limitations of such ways of thinking. There have not, to the best of my knowledge, been any refutations of memory that remain valid after this particular point is taken into account....it attests to the limited vision of the modern scientific community that, far from hastening to test such claims, the only response has been to dismiss them out of hand."

Brian D. Josephson, Nobel Laureate,
Physics

Ritual use of water

As water is one of the four or five essential elements in many traditions, it is usually part of the ritual matrix. It is converted or charged into 'holy water', sprinkled, used for baptism, cleansing, drunk and in most cases honored as the life-giving substance. Rain, river water, the fertility cults have usually associated water with life, rain coming from the sky with the sperm of God.

Very often sacred places are located on top of aquifers, springs or close to rivers or lakes.

Water is so fundamental and so miraculous that even in the limited context of ritual a wide vista opens. Water, rain, baptism, cleansing, water plays a major role in history, as the major factor in climate, fertility and thus in civilization. The great flood or deluge shows up in many myths and ancient texts. Water is not only a friend but also a danger. We need water for crops, hydro power, to cool nuclear reactors, for fishing; major political issues have to do with water as the supply of notably freshwater is limited in many parts of the world and things don't get better, while at the other end the solar warming makes the sea level rise, flooding and tsunamis threaten the life of hundreds of millions near the coastlines.

Ritual water performances

In the context of performing rituals to help rebalance our lives, shift energies, and experience an overall positive transformation, the element of water is often ritually invoked to cleanse, to renew to remove obstacles from our life. Baptism by water has a similar purpose. This use is in line with rituals with other great gifts of nature, like fire for transformation, earth for connection and salt for communication.

In the context of a ritual, water can become alive, listen to thoughts or words (be charged) and respond, become a communication medium, similar to fire (Agni).

A setting that is befitting of water rituals is of course a zone or place connected with a river, a brook or lake, also the sea. Stagnant, still water is less appropriate, it's the movement of the water that corresponds to the cleaning. If we see our life like a river, a water ritual can help to get rid of pollution, of obstacles in the stream of our life. Identifying worries or problems with small items to be thrown in the water and taken to the sea is then a similar symbolic act like throwing them in a fire to be transformed. As we release obstacles by removing them in such a way, this makes room for empowered, proactive energies to take their place, like energies that propel us toward our most profound power and highest level of being.

Water has a central place in the practices and beliefs of many religions for two main reasons. Firstly, water cleanses, but secondly, it is a symbol and ingredient of life itself, an essential building block. We are at the mercy of water just as we are at the mercy of our God or gods. Water washes away impurities and pollutants, it can make an object look as good as new and wipe away any signs of previous defilement. Water thus purifies objects for

ritual use, but also can make a person clean, externally or spiritually, ready to come into the presence of his/her focus of worship.

Deluge myths

The great flood stories, the memory of a deluge willed by God to rectify humanity is a theme in so many traditions and seems so universal, that there must be a historical ground for it, some huge disaster in a distant past. The biblical story of the Great Flood is told in Genesis 6-8. The story of the Great Flood of Manu, somewhat similar to Noah appears in Hindu scriptures. Geology now dates a big flood in Mesopotamia to around 4000 BCE, but there may have been others.

Holy water, living water

Some faiths use water especially prepared for religious purposes (holy water in some Christian denominations, amrita in Sikhism and Hinduism). Holy water is basically water which is blessed, a blessing or invocation said above it. The use of water other than for baptism goes back to the 4th century in the East and the 5th century in the West.

The custom of sprinkling people with water at mass began in the 9th century. At this time 'stoups', basins for holy water from which people could sprinkle themselves on entering a church, were in common use. Holy water is also used at blessings, dedications, exorcisms and burials. Many religions also consider particular sources or bodies of water to be sacred or at least auspicious; examples include Lourdes in Roman Catholicism, the Jordan River (at least symbolically) in some Christian churches, the Zamzam Well in Islam and the River Ganges in Hinduism.

Water cleanses and purifies. Taking ritual baths in rivers or holy wells is commonplace, like Hindus washing themselves in the Ganges. Faiths that incorporate ritual washing (ablution) include Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, Shinto, Taoism, and many smaller groups like the Rastafari and Surinam Winti movement. In many Pagan traditions water is considered a sacred and holy item.

A ritual bath in pure water is performed for the dead in many religions including Judaism and Islam. In Hinduism, after burning a dead body the remains are thrown in the water (preferably the Ganges again).

In Islam, the five daily prayers can only be done in most cases after completing washing certain parts of the body using clean water. This in line with Mosaic law that required that designated individuals, to ensure religious purity receive a ritual washing (ablutions), sometimes in preparation for entering the temple. In the animistic Japanese Shinto, water is used in almost all rituals to cleanse a person or an area.

Not only people are cleansed, also deities (or at least representations or statues) are immersed, thrown into the sea or the water.

For Buddhists symbolism and ritual make no sense because it would only emphasize the reality of unreality. In Zen, ritual practices are seen as fanatical, provisional teachings. Some use of water sneaked in, like in Buddhist funerals where water is poured into a bowl placed before the monks and the dead body. As it fills and pours over the edge, the monks recite

“As the rains fill the rivers and overflow into the ocean, so likewise may what is given here reach the departed.”

The Moon Method

The moon, as I indicated in the beginning of this chapter, is linked to water. The color of the moon is not very gold like the sun, and is often associated with silver. This is more obvious if one looks at the reflection of the moon in water. In some traditions, the moon's energy is used as a way of consecrating water to make it holy and sacred by placing it outside on the night of a full moon. A silver coin is often placed in the water, as a correspondence to that moon.

Baptism

Ritual baptism has been described in the chapter about sacraments. It usually marks the beginning, the initiation of a new phase. Almost all Christian churches or sects have such an initiation ritual involving the use of water. In the early church baptism was usually performed with the person standing in water and with water being poured over the upper part of the body. This was called ‘immersion’ but today this refers to dipping the whole body under water which is used, for example, by the Baptist and Orthodox churches. In most Western churches today the baptism is performed by pouring water over the head three times (affusion) and sometimes sprinkling water over the head (aspersion).

Hot water

Usually cold water is used, but heating water (to dissolve herbs) is also common, it unites the elements of fire and water. In the tradition of indigenous peoples of the Americas, one of the forms of ritual purification is a sauna like procedure, known as a sweat lodge or in the south as a temeszcál, also as a preparation for a variety of other ceremonies.

In Islam water is important for cleansing and purifying. Muslims must be ritually (tahara) pure before approaching God in prayer (salat). Ghushl, the major ablution, is the washing of the whole body in pure water, after declaring the intention to do so. Muslims are obliged to perform ghushl after sex

which incurs a state of major ritual impurity. Ghusl is also recommended before the Friday prayer, the two main feasts, and before touching the Koran. Ghusl must be done for the dead before they are buried. Wudu, the minor ablution is performed to remove minor ritual impurity from everyday life, like before each of the five daily prayers. The third type of ablution is performed when no water is available and then clean sand may be used.

38 Epilogue: why this book

Writing books is a personal thing, you do it because you feel a need to do so. I do it because it's a way to organize my thoughts, integrating all the tracks and paths that I followed. This book is the result of many years wandering between and in three worlds, the rational, the world of the alternative irrational people plus my explorations of the spiritual otherworld. Coming from a fairly rational base in my education and entrepreneurial activities I gradually became aware of the great rift; the separation between the rational and the irrational.

I do have a foot in both but missed the connection. Over time I noticed that ritual offers me a bridge between the different realms inside and outside of me.

Science and spirituality have parted ways since the 18th Century Enlightenment has enthroned reason and materialism. We have a rational, *scientific*, outer stance, where we have penetrated tangible reality with technology and physics. This while we forced the spiritual and core inner self, the essence of being

human, underground. Although this undoubtedly has led to progress in many fields, it has also left us with a serious Dissociative Identity Disorder.

This separation is slowly becoming pathological inside us, as the human psyche gets torn between the two modes. It is also mirrored in society, in our ecological bankruptcy, in the secularization of thinking about who we are. The loss of meaning, happiness and connectedness as the price of what is termed progress is cleverly hidden. Media, cyberspace and chemical dependency keep us in our affluent illusion of material welfare, while our true, inner identity suffers in autistic silence.

This grim image of where we have gone is not new. Scores of great thinkers have seen this, pointed at this rift and have looked for bridges. We have been amply warned that we are hiding and relegating large parts of what we are behind this rational mask. They pointed at God, metaphysics, the unconscious, the magic(k)al, the esoteric, the new age, the psychedelic or the transpersonal. Our libraries and wikis are full of great names, who have not



*Ritual: the paradox of letting go of the mask
by becoming your mask*

only warned about this rift but have come up with explanations, cures, theories, art, and inspired all kinds of movements to reverse this trend. Not with any noticeable results; the reductionist, rational, material mask in our world and in ourselves has grown stronger and stronger. It is only disease, disaster and crisis that occasionally remind us things are not OK.

I myself have been a willing participant in the materialistic and intellectual rat race, at times bowing but not succumbing to the alternative views until my system (mind, body, soul) stopped me in my tracks. I became aware I was not whom I thought I was; there was a hidden core, an essential me behind the mask of ego that seemed to call the shots. Somewhere in me there was an deeper identity or soul that controlled my health and guided me. My eyes opened a bit to what was clearly there but hidden from sight because of this mask in me, that was also in society, in science, in technology, in politics.

I have since explored this hidden and yet so present underworld of consciousness of the true self, in many directions. I was, in line with my work in ICT (computers), mostly driven to understand information, this invisible thing that cements all and everything together. It then slowly dawned upon me, that information, magic, love, spirituality, and consciousness were all just different perspectives and names for the same, just colors or manifestations of the Deep Oneness.

I needed a framework to deal with this convergence and found it in the concept of resonance. If something exists, works or moves, there is resonance; the universal connection (and manifestation) mechanism.

Resonance and magic

However, resonance is not an easy concept, it's too hard, too technical, much like information. On the other hand words like spirit, soul and love are too soft and consciousness too vague.

So I started to use the word magic as the overarching phenomenon, in the sense that everything is magical, the physical is just a subset of the magical.

Magic is an interesting concept, as "normal" science doesn't want anything to do with it. It has these connotations of evil, secret, hidden and yet we all know it's everywhere, that synchronicity is magic, that religion is magic and even that science in reality is a magical game.

But how to practically deal with this broad concept of magic as a fundamental force in both tangible and intangible worlds, which I began to recognize in all and everything?

Magic is also, in a more limited sense, the synergistic link between the worlds, it can achieve something beyond the limits of the material world

and yet influence the material reality. It links together two realms with effects in both, offering synergy.

How to elevate magic from a bad word to a level where it can be seen as the core connection, the bridge between the rational and the irrational, the essential technology of love and power?

Well, that's how this book came to be. It tries to give a different perspective. Why not look at what remains as magic in our society, and evaluate the practical magic that is still there, the ritual?

Ritual is a way to bridge the worlds. Not only the inner world of the mind and the outer world of society and tangible reality but reaching out to the otherworldly, the spiritual, the extradimensional.

In this book I use ritual as the vehicle, one could say the excuse to talk about how I see magic, resonance, information. The title in a way is hiding the real purpose and message, which is that I believe all is one and that it's time to do away with this split between the worlds in our selves and in science and society.

Ritual beings

Humans are ritual beings and always have been. At some deep level we need this vehicle, this bridge toward another state, as an escape from the burden of reality or as neutralization of an unbearable urge or anxiety. It offers us an opportunity to feel ourselves, a way to connect to that otherworld we assume or believe exist.

Ritual bubbles up from the deep, as immensely varied as we humans are. It's not atavistic, we are not reverting to the ways of thinking and acting of a former time. Rather it is of all times, we have only suppressed it for the wrong reasons.

Ritual can have many forms, many goals, many liturgies but in this book I tried to make clear what makes an act a ritual by describing what in my view differentiates them from mere ceremonies, habits or compulsive repetitions. I go beyond the notions that it's only the symbolic aspect, the sacrality of a ritual or the intention that matters as a kind of self delusion. Although not denying the point of the liminality (disconnected/limbo) state of the participants and the possibility of transformation and psychological growth I argue a ritual is more, it is basically a magical act.

Magic-All

I believe a ritual is a way to connect to the totality, the ultimate consciousness, the all that includes the spiritual as well as the mind and the tangible world. We can do this alone or with others. We can do this in our mind only

(although that is more like meditation or praying) or by performing more complex ritual acts by working with the correspondences, liturgy and what our tradition has preserved. We then use aspects of the tangible world as the (often symbolic) magical links between the three worlds of the inner, the outer and the spiritual. The symbolic has roots in a different causality, in relationships that exist, but are not material or tangible. Ritual is not a rational thing, it is related to exchange of energy and information at a deep level, it goes much deeper than the mere mind or cognitive.

I often repeat that I see ritual in essence as practical magic. It is a magical act, offering more than the psychological and social effects usually ascribed to it.

This interpretation required me to define magic in this context and in this book as the essential tool to influence the wider consciousness (the meta-dimensional all) that gives (causes) all existence and sparks creative development.

Everything has a magical aspect, our normal perceived and measured reality is a limited subset of the Magic-All. In that perspective prayer, intent, magical acts, ritual, witchcraft, religion, play, art, games and psychotherapy are all magical. They make a connection between the worlds using the correspondences and are as such deeply rooted in what we are, magical beings in a magical world. Magic is in essence resonance work and as such the ultimate technology. In more practical terms, magic means using the links with the spiritual to change reality.

Ritual is our link with the other dimensions (or single dimension) that exist beyond space-time tangible reality and even beyond our thinking. That link works not only via our normal senses and acts but also via transceivers, exchange points, I called primes. These supersenses connect us to the spiritual and thus to the ideal, the beauty, balance, kinship, justice, health, danger, the future and all those intangibles that so much govern our lives but cannot be measured in a physical way.

I used in this book the subject matter of ritual as a platform to clarify how and what the process of exchange with this intangible otherworld is, how magic plays a role and how it relates to our thinking and acting.

I hope I clarified by looking at many aspects of it, why ritual is such a fundamental interaction, essential for our well-being in the broadest sense. It's not a calling for a ritual revival but I hope it re-qualifies ritual as part of "proper and just" living.

Metanoia

We need the sacred, and although I don't consider myself a Christian, I like the phrasing and the truths of that faith, if we are open to the original mean-

ing and context of the Bible. Especially Mark 1:24 and Matthew 4:17, where the core commandment, the Kerygma, is given as:

“the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel”.

The central word, repent, here is a rather limited translation of the Greek “metanoia” or the Aramaic “tob” meaning flowing back into God. Metanoia indicates going beyond the mind, to a state of total connectedness, indeed becoming God-connected. Reading it with this in mind, one could interpret it as a commandment to meditate, pray, or why not connect sexually or drop some acid (LSD)? For me, the Kingdom of God is the total meta-reality and doesn’t Jesus tell us to be like children if we want to enter there? Doesn’t that mean to enter into a deeper, inner childlike state? Such a state can be approached by various means but the ritual one seems to be a fairly common path.

The shadow of God’s love

Why write another book about ritual, as it will be no more than another study into the esoteric and anthropology, into the world of subtle energies, prana, magic and the unknowable, spiced with some quantum possibilities? Why try to put in words my often irrational and strange notions, weird ideas and possible explanations, amidst such a multitude of scientific books and studies about ritual?

Maybe my efforts are egomaniacal but there is a feeling that it is about time we embraced the wider meta-physical again, instead of limiting ourselves to the tangible, the measurable daily reality of the scientific world view. We have reached the borders of Cartesian rationality (even as Descartes was a believer in God and modern science is not), it’s time to look beyond. Why not accept magic (by whatever name) as a fundamental and all-pervasive aspect of life, including the mundane things like economics and our daily bread and thus deserving scientific validation or at least research?

There is no professorship chair in “Magic” at any normal university, even “Study of Magic” hasn’t made it to academia, at best it’s a subject in comparative religion or shamanistic studies.

Most works in this field treat the “other dimension” as something outside the normal, as an irrational subject and realm. I tend to see the world more and more as a magical place where the logical and the rational are the exceptions. This means I am not looking for the rare occurrences of paranormal experiences, for the miracles and the fringe events but trying to discern the magical force in all things.

All my life I have tried to see the underlying principle in everything, in mystical terms to see “the shadow of God’s love” in all the manifested.

Not the amazement about the yogi's miraculous powers, nor diving into the esoteric rituals of hidden tribes or brotherhoods but accepting that the basic life-force (or whatever resides in the meta-dimensional) pervades everything and should be accepted as such. Not something for the elite, for the seekers and the priests, for the officiator in a ritual, not reserved for the mystically inclined but the base of everybody's reality.

Our world seems to have rigid "natural" laws but who classifies the bending and manipulation of those laws by so-called saints, prophets, sorcerers and assorted holy men as irrational or supernatural? It's us, science, not noticing that we ourselves have fixed those laws, that they are a conviction, a belief system. We have imprisoned ourselves in a belief system about reality, not even seeing that at best it's a map of what really is. If incidental deviations from those "eternal" natural laws are possible and in fact frequently encountered and accepted as historical facts, then how "eternal" are those laws? Is it too bold to assume that those laws have changed over time and may change again?

I believe we have to fundamentally shift the paradigm. Not only because some strange sensitives tell us this but because science is hitting on such deep layers of reality that the classic notions of physics are caving in under the pressure of quantum physics. We now suspect at least that consciousness plays a role in manifestation, the quantum equations point there and experiments confirm that what we think is matter may just be consciousness resonating.

In this book I have developed some rather unusual takes on this, one being that time is the transport mechanism, the vehicle of consciousness. In other words, consciousness comes first and uses time to manifest what we experience as matter and space. The art and science that deals with consciousness is therefore the mother of all. It is what I call magic and ritual is a form of practical magic, beyond and including the social and psychological effects. So the reason I am writing this book is also because I would like to shake up the "scientific" paradigm a bit by introducing some of my unusual insights and hypotheses.. They have come to me in sometimes strange circumstances but seem to represent a common thread in my life, expanding my understanding of what information really is, and evermore expanding my "A byte is only information if it bytes" one-liner.

One of the basic models in this book has been the three world model where I see mind, world and the spiritual otherworld as three points of a triangle. The spiritual is very broadly the realm where the intangible resides, the Platonic ideas, beauty, the otherworld. This might be many extra dimensions or just one but they are outside of normal space-time. The whole, the three worlds together, the space of ultimate consciousness, I call the meta-

dimensional, the overarching all, which extends even beyond the universe I can imagine.

We, as humans, and maybe animals too, have access to the extradimensional (the unseen part of our universe, but philosophically also a manifested realm), via special senses or energy exchange organs I coined primes. They are primitive in the sense that they are less cognitive (are maybe shared with animals) and more like intuition and feeling. It seems likely that our ancestors were more in touch with them than we are. What these primes reveal is more easily accessible if we reach inside us into the deeper self, the inner child or higher self, whatever we call it. And this is where ritual comes into play.

This is what I have argued that the true ritual does, helping us to get there inside of us, letting go of the mask, the ego, reaching a state of consciousness that allows access to this strange magical or spiritual realm.

This process has to do with braking through the structure and normal functioning of our psyche, where the subjective 'me' comes as masks or assumed selves covering the inner me or higher self.

To clarify how the ritual state can be achieved I developed models about the psyche and the relation between the various me's and I.

Time comes in two flavors

In order to explain what is so special about the ritual state, where we are free of the ego masks or the assumed self or selves, I hypothesized that there is a second time dimension. There is magical time in the spiritual realm, different from logical and normal time and that's how and where we can influence reality and overcome logical clocktime causality.

Living in two time dimensions solves a few major philosophical issues, as it allows determinism and free will to happen in two different dimensions.

The roots of ritual

There has been much debate about how ritual came to be, also about the relation with art and myth, and there are many ritual theories. In this book I used a different way to look at both the history and theory of ritual. I used the oriental chakra model of development (in individuals or societies) to show how gradual development of consciousness is mirrored in the ritual focus and forms. Every chakra has energies and a consciousness factor that can be recognized in individuals, in rituals, religions and in development paths.

This model allowed me to look at the historical development of celebration, ritual, law, games, myth, theater and art and to see how they relate and can be classified. This development model mirrors human development; we also grow through the chakras, from very material to very spiritual, and in

this sense ritual and individual resonate. It makes clear that ritual, as an act rather than a thought, came way before the self reflective stages of myth and religion.

I could have used other models, like Maslow's hierarchy of needs or the Enneagram but the chakra model offers an elegant ladder. Of course in the scientific classifications of religions there are also morphological schemes, with a series of discernible stages of development. But there an advance beyond the earlier stage is mostly seen as progressive or evolutionary development in a material sense, from primitive to technologically advanced and more rational, usually with a decreasing influence of religion. The chakra model also implies some organic growth, not only toward more materialism or secularization.

Lucidity

Another thing that lies at the base of this book is my Lucidity approach, which looks at subpersonalities as masks over a deeper layer (Inner child/higher self). I have used it a lot in work with individuals (see appendix XI) and in this book I used it to look and explain a little better what happens in the ritual process. For me, the essence of a ritual is to get into a deeper state of consciousness, getting closer to our true core, connecting to the I-dimension.

The words don't matter much, getting into an inner child state, letting go of our ego, personality or mask, concentration, meditation, getting into trance, being possessed, these are different words and ways to reach this magical or ritual state. Different terms and techniques but with the same goal. In this state, being closer to the inner child, we have far more access to our body and our psyche and, by way of the primes to the spiritual. This process of getting into the ritual state is what defines (for me) a ritual, makes it different from a mere ceremony with just psychological and social intent and effect.

The notion of efficacy, the word I use in the subtitle, is important. I do take magical interaction seriously; I see the magical efficacy of ritual as real; it works. Much anthropological work has been done and many theories developed that don't accept this efficacy. This however has led to a limited view of what ritual, religion and magic really are, beyond the rational and measurable.

Expanding reality

Religions paint the otherworld as heaven or the divine realm. In modern times few of us have kept up the belief that we are indeed guided and directed from another level. We have become atheists, not like Spinoza's

“God or Nature” pantheistic or even panentheistic notion, but denying any God, any spiritual reality, looking for the God particle in Hadron Colliders and quantum physics.

The holy books of most churches are fairly clear about the other world, heaven and hell, the afterlife, and how their saints and prophets have performed miracles and wonders but science turns this into fairytale and superstition. We go along, hide our true beliefs, pretend to be rational and logical. Usually we don’t openly regard or experience things like business success, relationships or even birth and death as influenced by the other dimension. Yet at some level I think we do but the rational mechanistic paradigm forces us to keep this a secret inside. Very few see it and live by it. Even among so-called fundamentalist movements one sticks to the codified dogmas. This leaves little space for walking the talk, living the faith, being the love that is the root of all.

Many pray and worship but at the same time our world or at least our perception of it is becoming overpopulated, ecologically destroyed and ethically narrowed to political correctness. There seems to be no way out; water and air are getting worse every day; war and violence are rampant. Where to look for salvation and hope?

I do believe a better understanding of the magical nature of ourselves and the world around us offers a way out (or in), a way to overcome our human condition of suffering, a way to move toward a broader consciousness, a way ahead. I don’t mean to preach about this. On the contrary, for the message to have any impact, it has to use the words and concepts of modern man.

The challenge is to prove that magic is the real science or the science of wider reality, that magic is practical and even economical. I do believe that studying and applying the magical force and its fundamental relationship to what some call “information” is the fundamental task of this coming era. Can we deny that what is out there, in the wider or complete reality, has to do with information, negentropy, consciousness and the mind-at-large?

The true information age is yet to come, not concerned with what happens between data and screen but with exploring the whole process whereby data becomes information.

My saying “A bit is only information if it bytes” is a powerful phrase that essentially attacks the twentieth century notion that more is better and that computers and logic are the



only way to progress. Data is no information, until it hits home. There is no manifestation in quantum terms until the probability curve collapses. Information (as the resulting consciousness-change) happens when the probability and possibility curves of the data collapse and the noise is turned into byting bits. Maybe information and consciousness are pointing at the same?

Furthermore I argue that if our reality is indeed permeated by magical force(s) then there must be a interesting connection between magic and true information technology. The journey and transformation from so-called reality, from facts and figures or even sense data toward understanding (and wisdom) cannot be seen as a one-way process, a computational and logical software operation. Information in this perspective is more of a field effect and duplex process. The sender and the receiver are in a sense one, interacting with each other, in and beyond time and spatial dimensions.

In order to illustrate that magic exists (proving it is maybe too audacious a task) and can be recognized and used on a far wider scale than even the softest new-ager could imagine, I had to delve into the depths of history and the hidden knowledge of many a (sub-)culture.

I came up with maybe an overwhelming amount of detail and explanations but tried to shift back to a more personal view by adding many small personal stories, more or less relevant to the points raised. I hope the personal examples and applications will help to pave the way for the deeper understanding, that we are capable of (inter)action in the other world but have mostly forgotten how.

Explorations

Part of my inspiration for this book comes from psychedelic travels. These have helped me to expand the set and setting notion (thanks to Timothy Leary and the psychonautic community) with a third item, the magical. This refers to our dealing and exchanges with the spiritual world, and in fact set, setting and magic are my anchors for working within a three world model, with mindset, worldset and the spiritual.

The inspiration for this work thus comes from experiencing mystical or altered states through various means, meditation, brain technology and psychedelics, usually in a ritual context. The notion that there is more than the tangible has been experienced many times in different situations and has grown beyond mere belief, it has become an inner certainty for me. These experiences have helped me to see and feel beyond the limits of everyday perception, tuning in on Aldous Huxley's *Mind-at-Large* and looking at ritual with new eyes, a new perspective.

The most important lesson from exploring the inner realities with the help of various techniques and substances is this: reality is a subjective experience. We don't know if even simple things like the color "red" are the same for you as for me and what is red anyway, the old qualia problem of perception.

How do we translate or reduce sense data to concepts, actions, thoughts, internal images? There obviously is no little man inside our skull projecting the incoming data streams from our sense organs onto what? Is what we see or hear or feel a reality outside of us, are we participants or co-creators of a reality field outside of us?

Many wisdom schools of old have pointed to the illusionary "Maya" nature of our reality perception, and have told us there is a higher level of reality.

The authority problem: what is reality and what is maya

An aftermath of mystical experiences – and I have had some – seems to be that the 'connection' to a deeper truth often induces a notion of authority and the need to express it, in writing, teaching or stance. One assumes that the ultimate truth one has seen or experienced can be translated into a more mundane form, and still retain the supernatural qualities. Alas, many mystical revelations are distinctly tinted with personal projections and ideas. In line with 18th century empiricist David Hume, who so clearly pointed out that ideas are but filtered, mediated, interpreted and often mechanical versions of the impression, we have to be careful in accepting all those 'truths'. Indeed reading Hume and trying to understand his motives for being so skeptical, one has to see and humbly accept one's own limitations.

So I must state that this book and my attempt to arrive at 'a' truth can and in fact must be colored, filtered and influenced by my personality and filtering of reality. Projecting my own shortcomings onto the theories and views of others might be the customary pattern of what I think is logic and reason but what according to Hume is nearly always a mechanical process.

I see many parallels in Hume's 'debunking' approach and the way Gurdjieff kind of discarded most of our behavior and thinking as mechanical.

Hume insisted we have to go back to the impression, the experience, if we want to know the truth. He did point out that religion, morals, justice are constructs of our minds, merely ideas that might or might not bear a relation to the ultimate truth.

It is interesting to see that he took 'sympathy' as a valued way back to the real, back to the experience, back to the deeper truth. Sympathy, in the language of his times, cements the whole and is the unifying force of the cos-

mos. It is also interesting to note his views about how the mind functions, using association as the way reasoning ordinarily proceeds.

Association then relies on three principles: resemblance, contiguity, and cause and effect. Resemblance is then nothing but sympathetic attraction elevated to the realm of ideas, as Hume asserts, according to Appelbaum.

Sympathy in this context is a concept very much related to resonance and correspondences, a subject I have dealt with extensively in this work. It lies at the root of my understanding of magic and miracles, something Hume, by the way, definitely rejected as “a violation of the laws of nature”.

I don't think Hume was not a believer in God; on the contrary, he pointed out that our mental toolkit and filtering of impressions is not really suited to discovering the ultimate splendor and unlimitedness of the Godhead. So he abstained, staying deliberately inside the realm of ordinary perception and common sense. He only took a distance from ‘thinking’ and the mind; reality is what it is, not a mental construct. I even got the (personal) notion that what Hume was longing for, and missed in what other philosophers wrote, relates to what in theology is called the Holy Spirit, direct experience of the divine.

Others like Kant took Hume as a challenge and concentrated on what that same mind and rational thinking (cognitive functioning) could achieve and discover, without recourse to experience, sensual input and empirical methodology, limiting reason and rationality to leave room for faith.

Different from Hume, who saw impressions as the origin of knowledge, the original stuff of the mind, Kant accepted “innate” knowledge, a conceptual framework, a grid through which impressional experience must pass (Appelbaum). But are Kant's schemata, the ability to categorize, what today we would call patterns, really totally different from the sympathy or correspondences of Hume? Didn't they together come up with what I now see as the fundamental laws of magic?

The theorizing of Kant and the widespread debate between the empiricist and the rational approach has led to great theoretical models but I cannot escape the feeling that many of these theories are in themselves so rational, a little bloodless, that they are removed from what I feel, experience, am. The observer is part and even (co-)creator of the observed, in his renderings of it and in the act, as also modern physics state. Then the thinker is part of the thinking, the writer is part of the written, the process of writing is a projection and should not be claimed to be the ‘only’ truth, just one (and rather individual) dimension of the truth.

So this book is my truth or my attempt to define a truth, not ‘the’ truth!

At a distance, yet personal and fresh

In trying to write about rituals – and my fascination also comes from my personal mystical experiences – I constantly have to remind myself not to go for the constructs, the theories, the preconceived notions and inherited ideas and culture. Instead I should look for my individual tree in the forest, remember what I experienced, and look for Hume’s ‘sympathy’ and resonances to bring me back to the underlying truths, bring me back to Zen’s ‘beginners mind’.

Observational awareness, being here now, conscious in the experience, not outside looking in or back, quite a challenge! Writing about rituals and their role in the alchemy of consciousness as a process of becoming aware of the deeper truth, I wanted to explore the ‘new’ meaning, the fresh understanding, feeling the ‘pang’ of resonance as I write, remember, intuit, in fact experiment. This might also only be the resonance with my own prior programming but I hope there is some connection with the structure and deep matrix of the ultimate reality I believe exists.

So part of the objective of this book was distinguishing between impression and idea, between subjective and objective and in discussing the various rituals trying to discern between them. The paradox is that the main tool I use, resonance, is also an important part of the subject matter.

The lens I look through is the mirror, is the object, is therefore a cognitive construction. And to complicate it even further, I use resonance to control and check whatever information bubbles up, using divinatory (dowsing) techniques. Is this double checking part of my inspiration or just another dialectic mirror in the mirror?

Poetry explains this maybe better.

The temple of my inner fire

*O lord, do I need your grace
I stand, in awe and fear
at the entrance of the holy place
I see the altar, feel the sacred
but sense the barriers, right in here
where armor, ego, doubt and hatred
prevent me from a lusty stride
to race toward the holy grail
I stand, only my eyes travel*

*my body frozen, my soul chained
O lord, help me move one foot
to start a journey of a thousand more
You got me here, I made it to the door
and even if you make me trip over this threshold
then at least I will move forward
Thou art my true love
helping to hold you in my heart
to include the world and all above
even me, the hardest one to love
so, help me kneel,
as being closer to the earth
will help me move toward the fire
the inner joy and utter rapture
that I see before me
but cannot embrace, yet April 2005*

To finish this justification and epilogue, this is not a scholarly book, it's an account of a personal struggle of dealing with the unexplained. It's most of all a way to find structure in the chaos of experiences, insights, lessons and paradoxes one encounters. It is a way to assemble and classify all those ideas and notions in a somewhat integrated framework, a reference to and for myself.

Not an encyclopedic work

The initial reactions to the draft copies of this book indicated that many saw it as a kind of encyclopedic work about many aspects of ritual. The volume of the book made them look at the table of contents and they would pick a few chapters to read, not going through the whole. Of course that is fine, and I have repeated many insights a number of times to accommodate such reading, but it is not the intention of this book.

I present a different view and interpretation of what ritual is, can do and means, focusing on the magical and the psyche. These ideas are not isolated, but based on reading, interpreting and weighing the works of many others. I do mention them and trust modern methods like using search engines on the internet will allow readers to seek out the references. We don't

have to go to libraries or use specifics like ISBN-numbers or the names of publishers and exact locations to browse for background information. Internet provides easy access to sources, even as search engines are rigged and commercial tools. It does challenge you, the reader, I hope. There is much I agree with and I do give references but I do not subscribe to the footnote culture that I think is outdated. I believe these days of Google and internet search just the name and a book title are usually enough for the reader to check my sources.

The looking glass

The book mirrors who I am and offers a view onto who I am and how I function. The book and the author are connected, I don't claim objectivity.

I made this book to clear and clean my understanding of things. My experiences in the media, in business, and my spiritual and psychological quests plus some out-of-the-box thinking I developed due to life's challenges over time have resulted in so many articles, notes and videos that it's time to sort things out. This in order to make some sense of it, for myself mostly. I have a tendency to systematize, typical for the slight Asperger's syndrome I share with many physicists. This, combined with some unusual talents and a lot of work has resulted in this book, or is it a grimoire really?

It definitely mirrors my critical stance, I have this tendency (from lack of security no doubt) to spot the weaknesses in people, theories, companies and concepts. In this book I take a shot at quite a few notions concerning ritual, myth, religion, consciousness and manifestation. In doing this I feel I have to at least briefly mention here and there what drives me and where and how I came to my alternative views.

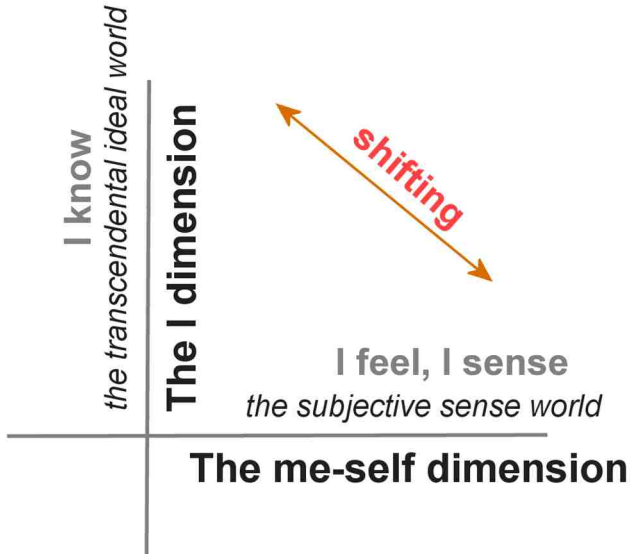
My ideas are rather wild, I agree and come across as obnoxious sometimes. "Come on, let's change the laws of nature" might be the battle-cry of a lunatic but I feel the company and inspiration of Hume, Giordano Bruno, Pythagoras, D.C. Broad, Einstein and so many others who dared to challenge the scientific correctness of their times. Admittedly, some of my claims may sound preposterous and a tad too wild but don't we need a little exaggeration, a little noise to stir things up? If only this work wakes up a few people to the notion that love is not a construction of our imagination but the magical ingredient of life and reality, it's worth the effort.

L.S.

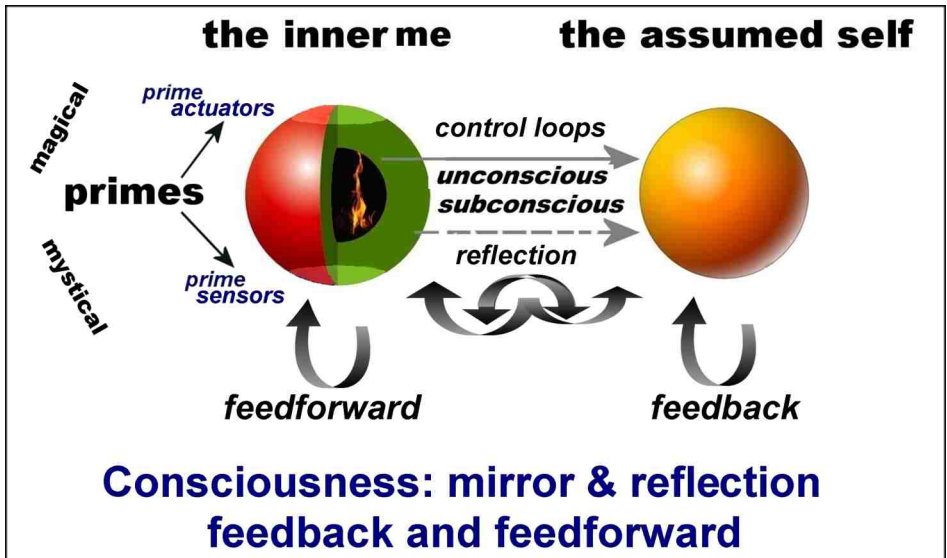
Appendices

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I and Me: two different things



I - Appendix: the psyche in perspective

The model I use to describe the two axes of the psyche in the chapter about the psyche, the I axis and the me-self axis, has its roots in the thinking and theories of the past but is quite different in some aspects.

In this appendix I will look at some of the older theories, and try to indicate where the fundamental differences with my interpretation are.

The Ancient Greek aphorism “Know thyself” (Greek: *gnothi seauton*) was inscribed in golden letters at the lintel of the entrance to the Temple of Apollo in Delphi. It sounds like great advice, but to what extent can we know ourselves? How deeply do we have to search into the depths of our souls or the dark recesses of our sub- and unconscious mind to arrive at some useful knowledge?

Did the Greeks mean self as in ego, as in mask, the obvious personality we display to the world or did they hint at knowing our deeper core, the inner child hidden in our shadow, the true or higher self? In their culture, masks (*persona*) were a normal way to express things in theatrical form, so was Delphi a way to get beyond the image, the pretense? And can we know ourselves by ourselves, or do we need the help of others? The Delphi oracle obviously was one way to self-discovery, as was divination, visiting a clairvoyant or partaking in the Eleusinian mysteries.

We have seen many ways of self discovery as mankind developed, the great religions of the world are basically all ways for coming to grips with whom we really are. Jesus, according to the gospels, taught us that we have to become like the children if we are to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and according to the Gospel of Thomas, that Kingdom is the now.

Buddha, in his teachings about liberating us from the fetters of the senses, used different words but the same message. In Zen Buddhism the discovery of the self is the major task, in Hinduism and the Upanishads there is the acceptance of Brahma as our inner core (*Atman*). Do you think the ultimate goal of the Cathar Parfaits (the perfect ones) was anything else than to be true to the self? And what was the purpose of the “Spiritual Exercises” of Ignacio de Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits? Different paths, different techniques, an emphasis on different chakras but the same goal.

Even a superficial study of the various esoteric schools reveals that understanding the self and the personality is the core of their teachings. Understanding the drives and limitations of the psychological defense systems in oneself and others is clearly important, even as one aims at losing that personality in a surrender to higher forces, or as a prerequisite for entering cer-

tain consciousness states. Metacognition, thinking about thinking is what we do, trying to find out why we think and are conscious the way we are.

There are simple systems to classify and describe personality or the psychological subtypes of the human species, and there are complex ones. The Ayurvedic Kappa, Vata and Pita approach is already more refined than describing people in terms of the basic fire, water, air and earth characteristics. But what about astrology, in many variations another link into the quantum-magic realm? There is eastern and western astrology, but also more complicated systems based on the celestial constellation like the Human Design System of Ra Uru Hu.

Whoever scientifically studies the various types of psychological make-up knows about the Myers-Briggs typology or the Big Five resulting from statistical analysis, while the enneagram of personality types with sufi-roots provides a more logical framework.

Many of these systems assume the brain is where personality resides, but it is the body where our personality manifests, body and mind are one in expressing who we are. One's body can be read as an expression of what we do, want, need and lack. This manifests in every feature and every organ, in our face, eyes, ears and down to our cells.

Here the most significant is our oxygen engine - our lungs (even more than the heart). Breath is what primarily defines a personality or the way someone behaves in a sub personality. Whatever the discipline or path, breathing seems to be a universal part of the training and toolkit of shamans, healers, mystics, sadhus and the modern new-ager alike. Change the breath, change the consciousness is a core understanding of yoga but not part of modern typology theory or psychotherapy. The military and the monastic discipline however have incorporate this as part of the regime. I believe the use of a corset or other way to restrain and change the breath is an underrated tool to help people realize their personality is not so fixed as they assume.

The unconscious revealed: Freud

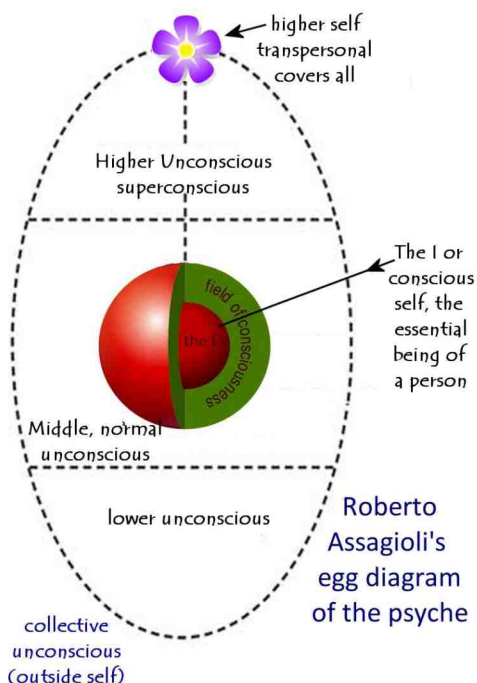
Talking about soul, self, ego we face the problem of what means what. What we have learned to see as ego comes mostly from the charge Sigmund Freud gave to this word: the complex of psychic functions like judgment, tolerance, reality testing. The word "soul" also has many interpretations. For Freud the soul (Seele) was a material something, deeply hidden in the neural mechanisms, part of the brain. Spirit (Geist), soul (Seele) and brains (Gehirn) were all based on material interactions and processes, whereby he - and this is his important contribution - understood that we have in the unconscious (Unbewusste-Id) a big store of programs and imprints that control what we do and think.

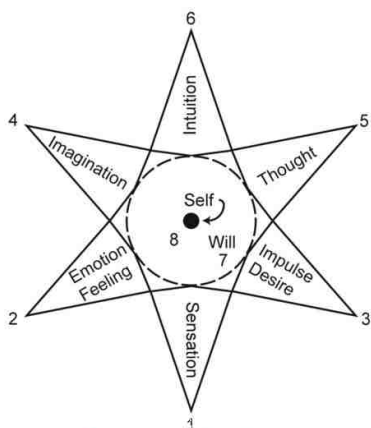
This unconscious influences the conscious more than vice versa, it originates in experiences we have before we become conscious, and there is an Ego (Bewusste Ich) that knows little about why and how we actually do things. Freud believed there was a material basis for the psyche. The brain was a machine, not for itself, but an instrument to give meaning and cause actions for the individual in her/his relations with the world and the social other. The ruler of this instrument, the ego, was in his view rather limited, as there was this unconscious Id and also the superego of parental and cultural programming limiting its freedom. The superego consists in his view of the conscience and the ideal self. Freud's sees the "self" emerging out of conflict between biological drives and the demands of society.

Freud had a pessimistic view about what the unconscious (id) gave us, and described it as a reservoir of unacceptable wishes, feelings and thoughts, not as a place where talents would be hidden.

He thought in mostly mechanical terms. Those were the days of machines, of drives and pressure, things like programs were not part of the paradigm then. He would probably not have accepted that animals had an id too. However they do need an unconscious to react to external forces. The automatic responses we pick up as we develop are useful as they give us the opportunity to focus on other things. Routine, automated things like driving a car, walking, biking, our brain likes to turn them into neuroprograms (subroutines) and stack them in the unconscious.

Being conscious is heavy work and calls for the I to switch on one of the me-self modes. In a way the strong tendency of our brain to create these automated subroutines brings freedom and also underlies the ritual paradox - that a strict liturgy helps us to let go of ego attachments. Complex and new ritual forms are great as psychological exercises and as theatrical social events,





Psychosynthesis Star Diagram
formulated by Roberto Assagioli

but are usually mind trips and magically not very effective.

One can try, as Freud did and neuroscientists now do, to describe this complex “organ” of the psyche as purely material, as rooted in chemical and electrical processes in the brain, generating consciousness and self consciousness in the process. We just have to find out where they are located and what mechanisms they are based on. This is what most scientists are looking for, the how of our mind. This approach has yielded inter-

esting insights. Freud’s approach of id, ego and superego points to the reservoir of unconscious programming that governs so much of our behavior, but he tried too much to make it all reside in the material brain.

The notion of the witness “I” in that view is kind of limited to a controlling superego loaded with parental rules. Conscience is then a rule book, not a multidimensional awareness. Even if one accepts the notion of a Platonic realm of ideas, where thought and concepts are, the resulting models are limited to rational causality and logic. What I do like in Freud’s earlier models is that he recognized the development of consciousness in a child, with a conscious system (early years 0-2), a preconscious system (2-7), and an unconscious (after 7). His preconscious layer we now call subconscious, it is where we can nearly picture what influences us. The unconscious is what we can sense but not picture.

C. G. Jung

Carl G. Jung made more of the self and accepted another dimension beyond the brain. The self in Jungian psychology is seen as one of the Jungian archetypes, signifying the unification of consciousness and unconsciousness in a person, some kind of ideal result state. Jung was interested in spiritual things and inner growth and described the self as the product of individuation, the process of integrating one’s personality. In Jungian theory, the self is only one of several archetypes, not a broad indication of a psychic state. Jung accepted the ego as the place of conscious identity, whereas his self is both the center and the whole of the total personality including consciousness, the unconscious, and the ego. He speaks of this self as the connection with the all, the source of dreams, prophecy.

"If I were one with the Self I would have knowledge of everything, I would speak Sanskrit, read cuneiform script, know the events that took place in pre-history be acquainted with the life of other planets, etc."

His self is the ideal, and quite similar the core I in my model, the state where one can access beyond limitations of place and time, where access to the Akashic is possible. The differences in the use of the words self and I are obvious.

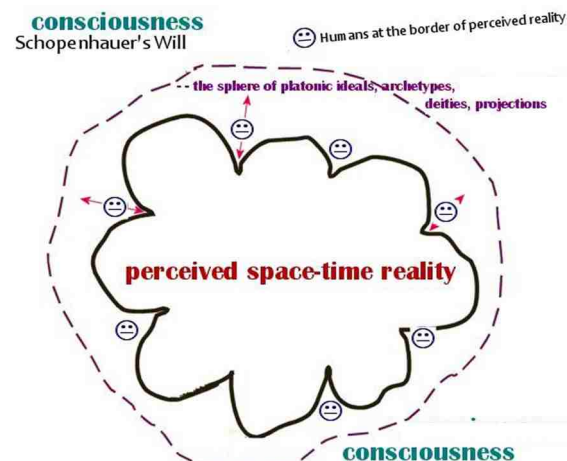
Freud and Jung have of course developed elaborated models that clarify where they see the different aspects of the psyche. The Freudian use of ego and super-ego and id doesn't really honor what the deeper layers of our psyche are capable of, it sees the id as the set of uncoordinated instinctual trends; the super-ego plays the critical and moralizing role; and the ego is the organized, realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego. Jung of course added the unconscious to the whole picture, and the notion of archetypes, and did see the role of mask (persona) and of hidden parts (shadow, animus). Both models are interesting but not very relevant in the context of this book.

They describe different axes, Freud more the vertical layers in the psyche, Jung more the relation with the other. This idea that there are two "levels" or subpersonalities in us is not new, we see this in most traditions in some form and when C.G. Jung talked about his Number 1 and Number 2 states he obviously refers to his outward, normal state (for him No. 1) and his inner childlike state (No. 2).

Personality and ego are terms used in many ways. Ego has, since Freud, a particular meaning but in general is seen as the less adapted side of the person-

ality, the dark side of what we show to the world. Some see personality as the total set of traits that define the way a person's behavior is perceived, how we come across, the particular set of response patterns (emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral) of an individual that makes one distinct from another.

This, however, ignores the fact that the person-



Schopenhauer's visualisation

image idea H.Gerding

ality perceived by others differs from that perceived by our self. Obviously personality has to be coming from the inside and manifests in the relationship with others, but are we really free from it when we are alone? Are we egoless in isolation, without pride, vanity, desires, frustrations, fear, anxieties or worries?

In summarizing these insights, it is accepted that nearly all people have developed a mask personality or assumed self program, that hides the original design in us. The mask or adapted personality is our conscious self. It is perceived as I and myself, the ego, but in fact it is a mode of being, a mode of operation and stimulus-response automatisms that dominates our thinking and behavior, but is not the real “self”. It works, has adapted to what parents, school and the world expect from us, is effective and usually quite “normal” but it is fake, constructed, and we are unconscious of its not being the real self.

The inner core, the real self is closer but also a bit different from the wounded child mode of being, as that “repressed program” is what became of the outer layer of the “Higher Self” or inner child in the process of creating the mask personality. It can be accessed and shows itself at times, I think this is where C.G. Jung’s Self, Shadow and Anima /Animus reside, in the subconscious rather than in the unconscious. When we have access to those repressed areas (accidentally, under stress or via therapy, illness, drugs or otherwise exceptional circumstances) we can consciously touch on the archetypes, complexes and traumas.

In what in general terms can be called the inner child mode we have at least a chance of working through those complexes and traumas, accept them and potentially integrate them, clearing our selves, uncovering the inner, hidden child. The state we then arrive at, sometimes with much effort, sometimes instantaneously and effortless, has been described as mystical union, lucid awareness, enlightenment, Satori, Samadhi, Gnostic.

There many words for this altered state of consciousness which cannot really be described by words. To get there one has to let go of the masks, the ego, but this is not easy, as practitioners of meditation, yoga or bhakti-practices know. Sometimes more extreme methods are used to arrive at this state, like fasting, the Sundance ritual and in modern psychotherapy approaches like regression, Arthur Janov’s Primal Scream or Grof’s holotropic breathwork. Modern approaches to sports are using more and more methods similar to what spiritual traditions have suggested, in order to prime the athletes for super-results.

Assagioli

Another approach, Roberto Assagioli's Psychosynthesis, also does work with subpersonalities but sees their source more in the unconscious. His egg-model of the psyche differentiates levels in the personal unconscious, but aims too much at the development of the higher self and is too complex for the purpose of this book. It is a development model but rather vertical, ignoring how we live a personality that is not I.

The notion of identity has also evolved. From a classic view of identity being rigid and very much related to religion and affiliation, it is now seen as more fluid, more adapting, more individual. It is now more about distinguishing one self, being different from the next, being special, certainly in the modern materialistic context. One is what one owns or does, mostly stuff, status, knowledge, sensitivity, taste, mostly things that distinguish one from others. The identity consisting in belonging to a group, caste or nation is less. Peer group association has given way to being special, individual.

Self-concerns (self-concept, self-esteem, and self-control) are very much the center of individuals' striving for well-being, material and immaterial goals and for making sense of one's life. Even though they are illusory, these conceptions of self and the world affect how we behave and move toward our goals in a constant process of mirroring, monitoring, judging, redirecting and changing. This again has far-reaching implications for what we perceive, feel, for our behavior, self-esteem, and dealing with the world. It is now accepted that identity is flexible and changing, the 2006 book by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen "Identity and Violence; The Illusion of Destiny" illustrates this.

In the approach I advocate our identity is like the self, moving between and in the various masks, with even more multiplicity and plasticity in what we show to the world. The goal of losing the self in a ritual context usually means letting go of the identity too.

I have indicated an unconscious part in the assumed self. This is not widely accepted, but in some way an unconscious part shines through all the self, so why not indicate it?

In Carl Rogers' theory he uses the expression "self concept" that excludes the hidden part: "people use the term self concept to refer to all the information and beliefs you have as an individual regarding your own nature, unique qualities, and typical behaviors."

Now the rather complex concept of self, me and I that I picture here, makes one think about what William James said in his in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) where he also makes a distinction between I and me. The main

distinction that James draws is between the self as known (or me) and the self as knower (or I). He interprets the axes in a mirrored way from my model, seeing the me-self as object and the “I” as subject. The metaphysical “I” beyond the physical being that does the thinking and can be seen as the subject of experiences has little relevance for James’ psychology.

He sees also three kinds of “me”, the “material me”, the “social me”, and the “spiritual me” but I see these more as stages in the development of a specific self-image.

The notion of subpersonalities in psychotherapy is fairly widespread but one sees it as a pathological state (identity dissociation), or as adaptations to changing situations with for instance a work self, a home self, etc. In some approaches one sees a person as having many selves or sub-identities and these are addressed with techniques like voice-dialogue with good effect. In the model with multiple masks it looks as if all mood changes or ways to deal with specific situations are related to mask shifts.

This is too narrow an interpretation. There is enough flexibility within a mask to adapt to changing situations, and in all masks we access the underlying inner child state with similar (unconscious) patterns. Eric Berne distinguished the personality’s ego states in this sense in his transactional analysis theory as Parent, Adult and Child. These states are accessible at any given moment, he said, and within a mobile feeling of self one can switch between them. I see them as present in all masks. As Berne uses his method in the context of social interaction, his Free and Adapted child seems to relate more to the differences between assumed and shown self than to the inner child self that I see.

George Herbert Mead developed the concept of the looking glass self, the idea that a person’s self grows only out of social interactions and the perceptions of others. Mead’s “self” is the part of an individual’s personality composed of self-awareness and self-image and how others view us but has a part which is independent of how others see us.

Even with all these subtly differing approaches and scholarly views, something is missing in our perception of the human condition, in how we perceive our psyche. Psychology, with Wundt, Pavlov, James, Freud, Jung, Adler, Perls, Maslow, Rogers, Piaget, Skinner, Grof and so many others has discovered a lot, but has modern science really uncovered more than what the Zen-masters, the Vedic Rishis, Plato or Plotinus understood? Were philosophers like Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty on a really new track with their exploration of phenomena (what presents itself to us in conscious experience)?

Would there really be a schism between the idealists and the realists if we truly understood what the Vedas and Upanishads and Advaita had already bridged? Were not Kant and Hume both trying to understand what is be-

yond empiricism and rationalism, trying to define or isolate deep reality from the perception we know is subjective at best? And didn't both touch on that vast realm of magic and transcendental knowing that we cannot perceive with our senses or rationalize with our mind, but do intuit it exists?

The meanings of self have changed and became more complex, more related to the other, the social but there is no clear definition. Who are we then, who is me? There are a myriad of models and views but none that suit my purpose of placing the ritual process in perspective. Philosophers, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and neuroscientists have come up with partial models, sometimes unrealistic and mere projection, sometimes useful and valid for particular situations. I have, alas, never encountered a theory or model, that offers me the overview I seek.

In modern times we have seen psychotherapy, psychology and a host of related disciplines evolve from philosophical debate to tools for self-knowledge and therapy. Psychological tests, personality type matrices like the Enneagram, Myers-Briggs indices, Big Five typology, Steven Paglierani's emergence approach, self-help programs, psychedelics, inner child and wounded child programs, primal scream, NLP, voice dialogue, one can spend a lifetime discovering oneself or what we assume is self, in most cases just being ego or ego-modes. That many of these only deal with the surface is a pity. In practice, they don't reach much deeper than adapting a bit the masks that we developed in dealing, coping and pleasing the early childhood situation or later trauma. This symptomatic approach works to some degree but ignores the true causes.

II - Appendix: Consciousness theories

In the chapter about consciousness I have briefly touched on some of the notions about what consciousness is. I concentrated there on my idea that at least human self-consciousness concerns the link between the normal sense reality and the extra-dimensional. As we can access the magical time dimension when we are in our inner me or ritual state of consciousness, we have access to other and more effective control loops than the feedback we use in the sense reality. This allows for true feedforward, we “know” the future and this becomes part of the reflection and mirroring process that yields consciousness and self-consciousness. In my view consciousness is a mirror process that connects the tangible with the intangible, in our psyche and in the extradimensional. I emphasize it is, certainly at the level of human consciousness, a process, which means it is a relationship rather than a ‘thing’.

There are however many other approaches and this appendix is for those interested in what science and philosophy has come up with concerning hypothetical consciousness explanations and models.

It’s a bit more than just summing up other theories, I couldn’t resist giving some comments. As I see the metadimensional, the overarching ultimate conscious all in a panentheistic perspective as something that could be called God, the separation between theology, physics and ontology gets a bit blurred. Creation, manifestation, God and awareness of reality, all are aspects of what is the greatest secret, consciousness, manifesting in and through time.

Filter, transmission or production model

One of the fundamental dichotomies in thinking about consciousness concerns the way it works. Is it a way to connect two worlds, or is just the way thoughts and awareness is produced in the brains, neurons, the physical world. The production model is the materialistic one, and it assumes we have just to unravel the working of our neurons and maybe find some quantum physical process and the riddle will be explained. On the other hand, if the brain act as an exchange of information (transceiver) between the seen and unseen world, filtering the massive amounts of perception data and creating something in the ‘mind’ realm, the possibility of at least a dualist reality is there. I personally prefer the word tuning, the brain (but rather the whole psyche wherever it is located or active) is fundamentally a tuning mechanism, allowing access to an inner (mind) and extradimensional realm, allowing two way communication with the extradimensional.

Is consciousness, as we normally experience it, nothing more than a survival mechanism or is it the ground of all being? In his book *The Doors of Perception* Aldous Huxley wrote:

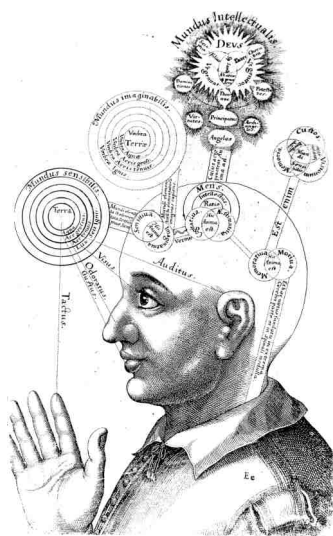
“Each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But in so far as we are animals, our business at all costs is to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet.”

This is one way to describe the filter theory of consciousness. Huxley was siding with Myers, Bergson, James and many others. They believed that there is so much information coming in and going around inside, that the brain is like a reduction valve, making sense input manageable, eliminating what we don’t need. But this also assumes that the real consciousness lies beyond that filtering and reduction.

William James used the metaphor of a lens or prism and in this view the image of a radio tuner or TV-set became popular, Bruce Lipton uses the image of the Mars Rover vehicle, where there is two way communication with the control team on earth.

The transmission model of the psyche, slightly more limited than the filter theory, does allow an explanation of how there can be a correlation between brain states and mental states without a cause and effect relationship between the two. Also there are neurological results showing that in certain states of consciousness the brain cells are less active while the level of awareness is very high. In a near-death experience (with low neural activity) it seems consciousness becomes independent of the brain, and there is a gain of function with expanded vision, access to wider knowledge in the universe, time control etc.

The other view, that consciousness is a product of the brain (in us and animals), the production theory or neural-to-mental theory sees the brain as making consciousness, and then there is no need for something out there, a higher intelligence, conscious dimension of divine inspiration. This is also called Neuro-reductionism or physicalism. A first step away from that is in



*Consciousness according to
Robert Fludd (1619)*

understanding we are not only our brain, but our whole body and theories as embodied cognition come into play. A next step, toward the filter or transmission theory, is accepting nonlocal capabilities, as I do and experience. This means nonlocal, space-time independence of consciousness, but of course here the definition of consciousness needs to be expanded and divided.

This all implies that the function of the primes, my hobby horse concept of extradimensional exchange, may be part of the brain functionality at neuron level, but I don't consider this very relevant in the context of this book.

Layers and levels

Consciousness is defined the quality or state of being aware of an external object or something within oneself (Merriam-Webster) but this is only the level of awareness or perception, the sentience. Thinking about those perceptions is another level, and thinking about the thinking a next one. Self awareness emerges somewhere in that hierarchy. But awareness in itself has also levels, what is the awareness of an elemental particle, an atom, a stone, an animal, a group of animals, the ocean, the earth, the sun, the universe or God. Quantum physics tells us we need observation to collapse the probability curve, but observation equals perception and is self-perception than consciousness?

Self reflection and sentience

Human self-reflection is the capacity for introspection, to look for our drives, our nature, purpose and inner self. This has been of interest from very early times, the earliest historical records show this. This reflection has led to notions about the differences between humans and what was out there, the forces or deities, that were usually seen as higher. The notion of an afterlife is very old, as can be deduced from burial rituals and we know from the Egyptians they had a complex notion of soul and afterlife.

Self reflection is also useful and essential in learning, we can learn from our mistakes and construct mental images about how to do things, but this is also noted in animals, so self reflection is not identical with self-consciousness.

Consciousness has not been recognized or named as such for a long time, it was equated to conscience and dealt with in morality, ethics and then mostly as in was related to the divine. That we can think and reflect was clear, Aristotle's description of us as animal with sapience (wisdom, understanding) was already pointing at an idea of consciousness. We are called Homo Sapiens since Linnaeus and sapience as qualities of judgment and wisdom is one of the ways to distinguish man from animal.

Feeling (sentience) and thinking are different, and yet so close, can we think without feeling, is thinking not always related to senses like seeing (imagination) or hearing (speaking, language), is our symbolic (semiotic) thinking not inseparable from how we perceive reality. This is where dual coding (the psyche and the body are always linked) and embodied cognition are pointing at.

Sentience as in dealing with subjective perceptions and translating them (reducing them) to qualia like “red” is a root consciousness process. It is distinct but not separate from other conscious processes like creativity, intelligence, sapience, self-awareness, and intentionality, but also influences the subconscious and automatic processes.

The notion of sentient being (experiencing subjective sensations) is well known in Eastern traditions, where this sentience also involves animals and even some mushrooms.

Descartes and Locke

Observation has long been seen as a number of distinct phases. One sees something is one, becoming aware a next step and then becoming aware of the thought as self conscious step.

As we observe our self and not only react to the image in a mirror or upon a confrontation but think from within about who I am, there is true awareness of the awareness. This is what John Locke observed as personal identity and Descartes put in his famous words:

“...And as I observed that this truth ‘I think, therefore I am’ (Cogito ergo sum) was so certain and of such evidence ...I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the Philosophy I was in search.”

Descartes did believe in God, and much of his work was theological concerning the nature of God, assuming God was rational. Rational thinking was what Descartes saw as divine, science was thus in line with his theology. Logical and mathematical treatments and repeatable sensory experience is the source of all authoritative knowledge. People like Leibniz, Arnauld and Malebranche were, in the late seventeenth century, very concerned with the attributes of God and how God influenced the world, why there was evil (the theodice) and whether even God had to obey some basic laws (geometry, logic) or was free (voluntarism) to create. Leibniz believed he was free and yet bound to create “the best of all worlds” exactly because he was almighty.

Spinoza

The Dutch philosopher and lens-maker Baruch de Spinoza was a Cartesian, in the sense that he believed God was beyond the anthropomorphical image of

the religions, he equated God with Nature (God or Nature is the same, although God exists also beyond nature/matter), a panentheistic notion. He however didn't see God, as did Descartes, as primarily rational. He noted that humans could only perceive spirit and matter (extension) and could have no idea of what God could be beyond that. He described our ethical job in life, where there is little free will, as to look beyond the surface, to introspect and not be fooled by our senses and drives.



Is the brain is a computer or not?

The interesting thing is that Spinoza is mostly cited for his ideas about freedom, that the main role of the state is to protect freedom (of thought and speech). His view of man as determined by God however left little real freedom and free will could only be used to accept God's intentions. It is obvious that his defense of freedom had more to do with how he himself was treated by his fellow Jews and the rabbis in Amsterdam than with his theological views.

Immanuel Kant did talk about self-consciousness.

"Man is distinguished above all animals by his self-consciousness, by which he is a 'rational animal'."

Humans as special: secondary consciousness

In what sense are humans different from animals. As I argued in this book probably far less than was assumed by the theologians of old. They rather likened us to the divine, their anthropomorphical notions of God or God assumed rationality, goodness and other virtues to be divine. That animals could be rational, have feelings, intuition, emotion was not in the books. These days we find out we as humans are far more animal-like than that we resemble the elevated notions ascribed to the divine. Even morality as in understanding good and evil becomes less of an exclusive human trait as we see that dolphins at times rescue humans for no rational reason.

The question what makes us human then centers on self-consciousness, beyond self awareness the capacity to know we are thinking and think about our thinking.

Nobel laureate Gerald Edelman came up with the term 'Secondary Consciousness', an individual's accessibility to their history and plans, and this has to do with an awareness of one's own consciousness. He sees primary consciousness as simple awareness that includes perception and emotion and a

‘remembered present’ like animals have. Secondary consciousness depends on and includes such features as self-reflective awareness, abstract thinking, volition and metacognition. In *Second Nature* (2007) Edelman defines human consciousness as being:

“... what you lose on entering a dreamless deep sleep ... deep anesthesia or coma ... what you regain after emerging from these states. [The] experience of a unitary scene composed variably of sensory responses ... memories ... situatedness ... ”

His theory of memory is built around the idea of plasticity in the neural network in response to the environment, and he suggests we make model brains and pay attention to how they interact with their environment. Edelman proposes a biological theory of consciousness, also material and not dualistic and based on his studies of the immune system and within Charles Darwin’s Theory of Natural Selection. He argues that human consciousness depends on and arises from the uniquely complex physiology of the human brain, where there are vast numbers of neurons and associated cells in the brain in many variations and with many connections in many layers. He sees consciousness as the result of the extraordinarily rich and complex morphology of the brain.

Introspection and Self-Awareness Theory

Self-Awareness Theory has a focus on self-awareness as a positive way to develop. It states that when we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values. This can be an intense process, for we might not like what we perceive, especially if we are in an agitated or otherwise emotional state. These internal evaluations bring more self-awareness and the opportunity to align oneself with one’s standards. During our life from childhood on self-awareness develops gradually and knowing oneself, one’s capabilities and limitations are part of maturation and of our general intelligence, we store (distorted and filtered) experiences in our long term memory where they form some self image, that is called upon to deal with actual situations.

Social identity

Our social selves are what I would call assumed selves but embedded in group interaction. Henri Tajfel and John Turner in their social identity theory introduced the concept of a social identity and status differences as a way in which to explain and even predict intergroup behavior. A social identity is the portion of an individual’s self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group.

Self-perception theory

There is the question what is first, attitude or behavior? Psychologist Daryl Bem developed Self-Perception Theory (SPT) as an account of attitude formation. It asserts that people develop their attitudes by observing their own behavior and concluding what attitudes must have caused it, he assumes behavior causes the attitude, we act or react in a certain way and then seek an explanation like an ex post justification. This explanation is similar to what a person would interpret from others' behavior, it's a rationalization. In the context of Libet's research this makes sense, in many 'routine' situation our system has already decided on action before we become aware of it, we don't act willfully. The argument against this elimination of free will is that there are situation where we do go deeper and contact a layer and a state where free will exists.

Global Workspace Theory

The whole complex machinery of the brain could only work if there is some kind of coordination, some mechanism to manage the lot of massive parallel distributed and specialized processors. Consciousness is a candidate for that role. The idea that consciousness has an integrative function was indicated by Francisco Varela as the "brainweb" (2002), a kind of memory management capacity that 'organized' access and exchange between brain functions that are otherwise separate. Such a central information function could have a distinct physical location but also be a process that can happen at different locations in the brain.

According to Bernard J. Baars consciousness would be the primary agent of such a global access function in humans and other mammals. It would allow to direct cognitive tasks to specific areas instead of involving the whole brain and mobilize working memory functions; there is no evidence for unconscious access to working (long term) memory. In 1988 Baars stated:

"consciousness is accomplished by a distributed society of specialists that is equipped with a working memory, called a global workspace, whose contents can be broadcast to the system as a whole".

Conscious events enable selective attention and almost all kinds of learning: episodic and explicit learning but also implicit and skill learning. Conscious perceptual feedback enables voluntary control over motor functions, and perhaps over any neuronal population and even single neurons. Consciousness is the gateway to the brain. This Global Workspace Theory may be thought of as a theater of mental functioning. Consciousness then resembles a bright spot on the stage of immediate memory, directed there by a spotlight of attention, under executive guidance. The rest of the theater

is dark and unconscious. Executive functions -the director behind the scenes- are also largely unconscious, often using the actor in the spotlight on the stage of working memory capacity to recruit and trigger specific functions

Memory is essential

Consciousness and memory go hand in hand. If we forget things very soon and just have short term memory and nothing gets stored in long term (working) memory, we have no reference, we cannot compare with the past, let alone introspect. If we can't compare and form an opinion, there is no meaning, so understanding how we store thing in memory and how we retrieve those memories is crucial. Whether memory and especially long term memory (short term is obviously trace based and can be analyzed with physical means) resides in the brain or is accessed by a tuner-like function in something like a cloud of knowing remains a big question. The essential role of memory however is beyond dispute.

Antonio Damasio said in 1989:

"Meaning is reached by time-locked multiregional retroactivation of widespread fragment records. Only the latter records can become contents of consciousness."

How we store or record things is a complex process. Working memory, where cognition happens, involves two kinds of sensory consciousness, the phonological loop (for inner speech and mental rehearsal), and the visual sketchpad (for voluntary visual imagery).

No problem

Some philosophers, such as Daniel Dennett argue that consciousness is not a fundamental feature of the universe and no more than tricks people play so that it appears nonphysical. In this way, Dennett compares consciousness to stage magic and its capability to create extraordinary illusions out of ordinary things.

Implicate order

The ideas of David Bohm concerning quantum effects that he saw as contradictory to relativity, assumed a more fundamental level in the physical universe, his implicate order from which arose the explicate order of the universe as we experience it. Bohm saw in the coherence of experiences, such as listening to music a manifestation of the implicate order. He pointed at the work of Jean Piaget, who claimed that young children have to learn about time and space but have a "hard-wired" understanding of movement, as it is part of the implicate order.

The way Australian aboriginals see time (their dreamtime is like a parallel dimension) and some Native Amazonians don't recognize verticals and

depth in photographs, are even more indications that much of our worldview is learned, programmed, cultural. Beyond this I think we do have senses and transmitters that connect to the implicate order or the extra-dimensional which I call primes.

Penrose-Hameroff

Roger Penrose has played an important role in our understanding of general relativity but has asked himself also questions about how things like platonic absolutes of beauty and morality fit into the new physics and our understanding of consciousness. He accepted that morality and consciousness are tied up but seems to have restricted his notion of consciousness to sentient beings (humans to start with). Looking for a special (self-)consciousness mechanism based on quantum processes in our human brain makes us more different and special than we probably are.

Roger Penrose came up with the suggestion that the brain is a quantum-level processor. With Stuart Hameroff he formulated the Orch OR (orchestrated objective reduction) model, placing the quantumjump mechanism in the microtubules in neurons. They see the connection to the basic proto-conscious level of reality as a biological process. Their theory is interesting, but not widely accepted. It does not really go beyond the materialist notion or touches the magical.

Microtubules are said to be way too big for quantum effects but recent research by Anirban Bandyopadhyay indicates they could play a fundamental role in pattern recognition and reduction of complex and large sets of sense data. He does show that parts of neurons (the microtubules) display a capacity for multi-bit electrical data processing (more efficient than semiconductor devices that do two states, 0-1 only). He studied them outside the brain and noted interesting hysteresis phenomena, how water influences the electrical characteristics and how there is some resonance so that combinations of microtubules seem to conserve the individual capabilities.

This points at the possibility of biological sourced computers using such microtubule to do very fast computing, of a limited nature like pattern recognition (reduction) of images, but at very high speed. Of course such processing is fairly fundamental in biological perception processes. The relation with consciousness is unclear to me, but Penrose touts his work as proving Orch OR.

Bandyopadhy's ideas support the notion that resonance is fundamental, also in cognitive processes. He does see the entire brain, starting from DNA and protein, to the largest structure as a giant oscillator. A resonance chain connects the atomic scale to the entire body with oscillations at different frequency bands.

NonComputable

An important point Penrose does make is that “Consciousness Involves NonComputable Ingredients” and that it would be impossible to construct machines to be better than our mind in the important matters, the non computational ones.

Penrose also developed the twister theory, that things (points in spacetime) don’t exist and that time is a fundamental process that happens to them, that existence is a the result of this process, by virtue of the meetings of the intersections of processes and thus secondary. This is totally different from what we normally assume, that things exist and time is a process that happens to them. However, it feels much closer to what I say: “Time is the carrier of consciousness, consciousness uses time to manifest things.” This brings consciousness to the fundamental first level. Time emerges as a process and existence (and thus space) as a result. Twister theory tries to formulate the laws of physics as processes and not as points existing in space and time. It might have some validity there; maybe there is something in between string and twister views.

Henri Stapp

Quantum theory requires, for formal mathematical consistency, some kind of quantum jump assistance (for the probability curve to collapse) and consciousness is a good candidate. I think it is a quality of the universe beyond the human incarnation. That is probably a bit too much for most of the materialist and anthropocentric scientists.

Concerning the link between consciousness, mind, perception and reality, many theories have been proposed, like that mind is an “emergent property” of active neuronal nets (related to the particle model and not to quantum physical insights), or that mind is the conscious “software” that manages the brain’s unconscious “hardware”.

Henry Stapp’s “quantum theory of consciousness” is based on Heisenberg’s interpretation that reality is a sequence of collapses of wave functions. Stapp believes that classical physics cannot describe the brain, and thinks that a quantum framework at a higher (deeper) level than the neurons in the Penrose-Hameroff Orch OR approach is needed for a full explanation. Stapp envisages consciousness as exercising top-level control over neural excitation in the brain. The element of conscious choice is seen as removing chance from nature, he sees quantum theory as informational in nature and quantum choices thus linked to increments in knowledge.

He points at William James’s view of mental life as “experienced sense”, as a sequence of mental perceptions. James already suggested that consciousness was a ‘selecting agent’ present when choices have to be made. Con-

sciousness is needed in the universe, because otherwise there would be no historical development, no progress, no direction, no becoming.

Real becoming necessitates temporal atomicity. But this presupposes teleology, and consequently, mentality.

According to Stapp, we live in an evolving cosmos consisting of a physical reality with the closely related but different mental aspects of nature. As a consequence mentality (a result of a teleological goal, a future), is no longer reserved for human beings and higher creatures. It comes down to the question whether elementary quantum events have a degree of creativity.

Henry Stapp's theory makes sense to me, as it allows (beyond his focus on the human brain) for consciousness to be part of all existence, playing a role in ordering the universe and creating negentropy, progress, structure. His top-level control in the brain idea however is too limited, and doesn't allow for mind to tune in to another all-encompassing consciousness process, that might use the quantum processes to make the link between the worlds.

Perception, reality, Mind-at-Large

The philosophical questions concerning consciousness are the age-old essential ones. Some are answered now with the help of the neuroscientists and modern equipment to study what happens when we think, perceive, and interact with reality. The materialists are still trying to find out what parts of our brain are involved in perception, consciousness, and cognition and what mechanisms of chemical and electrical interaction are at the root of consciousness and self-consciousness.

But this is the sobering conclusion: all the mapping, scanning, testing, and the array of theories trying to pinpoint what the brain does and is have not yielded real insights into what and where our mind is. Mind is more than brain; that is becoming clear, even to the strict reductionist. What we think is influenced by what happens elsewhere in our body, by processes and memories stored in our heart, guts, probably in our immune system, and ultimately in every cell of our body. Even as the 25000 genes in all our cells are the same, they are expressed differently in different parts of the body, they have a mind of their own one could say even as there are less specialized, undifferentiated stemm cells

We, and the universe, are holographic: the parts and the whole are one, all containing at least a reference to the all. In our body, where ancient Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine recognizes the whole in parts like the feet, the face, the ear, and the iris, this holographic unity is clear and cannot really be the result of DNA programming; there must be another epigenetic force that connects everything or DNA must have more functionality than science accepts.

For those who accept that there is another reality, another dimension where the mind operates, using the body and the brain only to manifest in space-time what is necessary for functioning, there remains the question of mind over matter. How does that go, and also in how far is the mind separated or connected, apart or a part of the whole, contained in the physical shape or extending to what?

We could, like many scholars have done, follow the historic lines of thinking but this is not a book about history, except that it is obvious that modern scholars and philosophers like Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, Huxley, and so many others heavily rely on what comes to us through history, from the East, the Greeks, the mediaeval scholars, Kant, the “enlightened” philosophers, and more recent people like Sheldrake, Damasio, and Alva Noë. Real breakthroughs, however, don’t come from looking over old statements and theories but by intuiting new views, explanations, models, and paradigms.

One of the lessons I get from looking into all these great theories is that they are usually not the result of straightforward mathematical and scientific reasoning and experiments but are more like intuitions by gifted people (that withstood falsification). Things that at the time could not be proven but turned out to be true or more true than the previous explanations. Are they educated guesses, or did these discoverers have some link to the future? Diderot called it the “*esprit de divination*” pointing to other and definitely less scientific methods to gauge the future.

Bicameralism

Self-awareness might be a fairly recent development in the human brain. The idea of “two-chamberedness” is a hypothesis in psychology that argues that the human brain once assumed a state in which cognitive functions were divided between one part of the brain which appears to be “speaking”, and a second part which listens and obeys—a bicameral mind. Julian Jaynes with his book *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1976) came up with idea that a bicameral mentality was the normal and ubiquitous state of the human mind only as recently as 3000 years ago. There are more indications that consciousness has gone through some jumps (singularities) and that older civilisations were aware of this developments, like Carl Calleman argues.

Instead of making conscious evaluations in novel or unexpected situations, Jaynes argues the person would think there was a voice or “god” inside giving advice or commands to be obeyed without question: one would not be at all conscious of one’s own thought processes per se. There is some support for his opinion in what some call schizophrenic experience.

In his view the ancients would hear voices they then recorded in myths, legends and stories, the more artistic ones would talk about their “muses”.

Jaynes defines consciousness as “that which is introspectable” and separates this from other mental processes, cognition, learning, and sense and perception which occur in all animals. The coordination between the hemispheres where the logical, analytical left hemisphere has taken over from the creative right could be, according to Iain McGilchrist, a better explanation for the historical shift Jaynes indicated.

Holistic Physics: Nick Herbert

We need to bridge the worlds, for leaving science and wisdom apart has created a society and a world going for self-destruction. Physicist and well known author Nick Herbert dares to go further, in his holistic physics he points at psychedelics as a tool to explore the basic structure of consciousness. In his 2002 essay on quantum tantra Herbert states:

“As the cornerstone of holistic physics, I assume that every quantum system has both an “inside” and an “outside”, and that consciousness in humans as well as in other sentient beings is identical to the inner experience of some quantum system. A quantum system’s outside behavior is described by quantum theory, its inside experience is the subject matter of a new “inner physics” yet to be developed. The size of the quantum system in the brain responsible for our familiar human form of consciousness can be estimated from subjective measurements of conscious data rate - how much information can you simultaneously pay attention to?

Nick further states that the quantum consciousness assumption, which amounts to a kind of “quantum animism” likewise asserts that consciousness is an integral part of the physical world, not an emergent property of special biological or computational systems, we live in an animated quantum world.



I like this notion of him, as it indicates that everything is conscious, although at different levels or frequencies, and that ultimately everything that is manifested is conscious at some level, or maybe being aware is a better word. A stone that falls on the ground but also elemental parts like fermions or bosons in that sense have not only consciousness but the ability to manifest, to make the quantum jump.

Nick Herbert

Now Nick predicts, because of the two-fold character of the quantum description, this quantum model of mind will have two basic types of subjective experience: a clear, determinate, computer-data type of experience (type-one consciousness) built out of realized (manifested) quantum jumps; and a fuzzy, indeterminate, ambiguous experience (type-two consciousness), an insider's view of some of the brain's vibratory possibilities. Here his ideas come close to what I see as the fundamental model of magical practice. To act magically, in the realm of quantum and thus indeterminate possibilities, we have to go to a deeper layer. Nick describes this as a conscious decision in the human mind, or in the mind of some non-human sentient being, to promote part of its ambiguous type-two experience to more unequivocal type-one status. When he states:

"Moving beyond quantum psychology, the realization that behind every visible quantum process lies an invisible psychic extension will result in a new kind of physics—I call it "quantum tantra"—in which human awareness becomes an essential component of every experiment."

It already points at what tantra in the original context (holy books about consciousness) means, a way to develop one's magical talent. And that quantum tantra might be experienced at best between two people, as Nick says, illustrates that he is a human being, not a science robot.

In his work he also hints at another aspect of ritual and magical work. He indicates that the joining of two centers of Heisenbergian potentia via an oblivious link (in quantum tantra entanglement) does not make any records. This new experience of insides-to-insides "essence merge" is a moment-to-moment impression that is immediately forgotten. Indeed the experience of multivalued potentia is of a kind that by its very nature must be forgotten (but will have lasting effects), since only single-valued experiences (quantum jumps) can be recorded in the brain or anywhere else in the world.

This sounds like one has to give up identity (attachment to the manifested). Maybe magic is the way we humans can bring back non local quantum effect back to the manifested, tangible reality.

Modern science now accepts that the observer of an event (or of all events) plays a significant role in the manifestation and so consciousness comes into play, but the science of quantum-magic has yet to be explored.

Field theories of consciousness

The field theories of consciousness are theories of the nature of consciousness, in which consciousness is conceived as being a field phenomenon like we use the term 'field' used in physics, having vector and tensor qualities.

Some theories see it as a physical field, others see it as outside normal spacetime, like I do.

Wolfgang Köhler developed, around 1940, a “field theory” pointing at electric fields as cortical correlates of percepts. His field theory was a theory of brain function, he didn’t use the word ‘consciousness’ nor proposed that there might be identity between brain-generated electric fields and conscious sensations.

Benjamin Libet held a field theory of consciousness. His Conscious Mental Field does not exist in any known physical category and cannot be measured by normal means. Based on my experience with divination and psi I would say it can be measured and with reproducible results, but not with physical means.

The electromagnetic (EM) field theory of consciousness (J. Mc Fadden, 2000) assumes that conscious perceptions (and sensations, inasmuch as they can be said to have independent existence) are identical with spatiotemporal electromagnetic patterns generated in the brain. It assumes thinking generates and leaves traces, that can be picked up. Roy John suggested that a resonating electromagnetic field might be ‘the embodiment of mind’ (John 2002). There is much research indicating that stimulation of the brain in various ways (but EM fields in this way are less clear than chemical and electrical stimulation) does generate thoughts, visions and has cognitive effects (apart from motor effects). This however could be explained in the filter model by pointing at the tuner function, the external stimulation changes the tuning.

Kurzweil’s notion of magic

Ray Kurzweil “The singularity is near (2005)” was briefly mentioned before but in fact his rather unique worldview deserves more attention. Although his ideas about downloading humanity into a future development of a computer-like system seem absurd and have met with wide criticisms, his view of reality and magic is an interesting one and far less materialistic than is generally assumed.

He even agrees with Spinoza’s, “God reveals himself in the harmony of what exists.” For him the magic of technology is transcendence and technology is evolution by other means, an actually accelerating continuation of the evolutionary process. He sees consciousness as the seat of “personalness,” as the ultimate reality, and also scientifically impenetrable. He poses questions like: What’s the problem with the so-called material world? Is the world of matter and energy not profound enough? Is it truly necessary to look beyond the world we encounter to find transcendence? There’s transcendence everywhere; as he sees it, one does not need to go to

an ornate dualist view that regards transcendent levels of reality (e.g., the spiritual level) to be not of this world. We can “go beyond” the “ordinary” powers of the material world through the power of patterns. Rather than a materialist, Kurzweil prefers to consider himself a “patternist.” It’s through the emergent powers of the pattern that we transcend. Consider humans.

“It is the immense, indeed transcendent, power of our pattern that persists.”

He also states:

“The pattern is far more important than the material stuff that comprises it. A pile of components is just an inventory. Ordered in an innovative manner, and perhaps with some software (another pattern), we have the “magic” (i.e. transcendence) of technology.”

Kurzweil accepts that precisely because these central issues of consciousness and reality are not fully resolvable by scientific experiment and argument alone; there is a salient role for philosophy and religion. However, for him this does not require a world outside the physical world we experience. He points out the paradoxical and profound nature of consciousness, how one set of assumptions (i.e., that a copy of my mind file either shares or does not share my consciousness) leads ultimately to an opposite view, and vice versa. He states that the universe - “all that is” - is indeed personal, is “conscious” in some way that we cannot fully comprehend but this does not require to go beyond the “mere” “material” world and its transcendent patterns.

The world that is, is profound enough and he takes the reality of a single photon as an example, where we encounter deep mysteries, the photon simultaneously taking all paths available to it, only retroactively resolving the ambiguities in its path. We notice the photon taking on the properties of both wave and particle, an apparent mathematical contradiction. Photons are part of the material world, and we’ve got trillions of trillions of them. Is the world of matter and patterns not profound enough, he asks?

Kurzweil steps away from materialism, denying that the issue of consciousness as a powerful natural design principle introduces any mystery into our investigations.

“One of the ways in which the universe of evolving patterns of matter and energy that we live in, expresses its transcendent nature is in the exponential growth of the spiritual values we attribute in abundance to God: knowledge, intelligence, creativity, beauty, and love,”

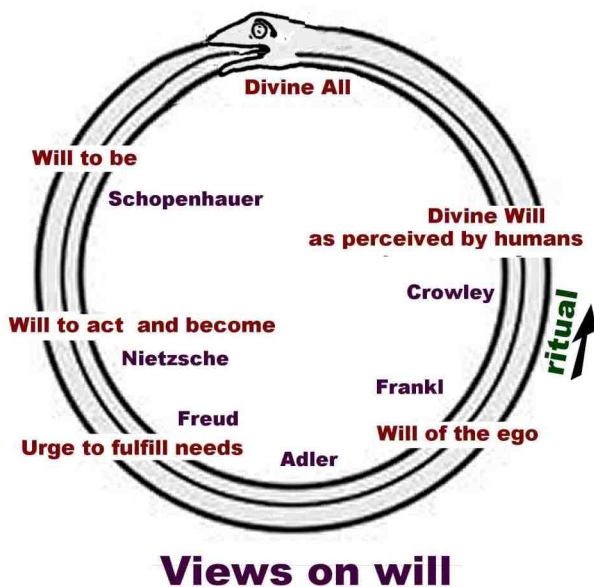
he says. That’s not so disturbing; maybe his future computers will help us understand ourselves and consciousness better.

III - Appendix: Will, causation, freedom

The issue of will and free will is such a broad subject and has been discussed all through the history of philosophy having links with causality, determinism consciousness, etc. that it deserves going into the various views that emerged. Even as the words magic or ritual are usually excluded from the theses and views of the philosophers and scientist, influencing the state of things, introducing new causes, manipulation fate is in essence magical, it means changing what is, creating something new.

In this appendix I look at the various view and try to indicate in what respect they fit into the simplified model of will that I use.

Are we victims of fate and just live our lives as God, nature, DNA or circumstance had it in store for us, or is life a university of consciousness, where we can make a difference, where we are free? This is the essential ethical question. Can we be held accountable for our acts, assuming we are able to deliberately make decisions? Does talking about good or bad makes any sense if we are not free, and if we have some freedom, when and how. An age old philosophical and theological question, very fundamental to our ethical stance, the legal system and a serious problem for the rational materialists who deny purpose and direction beyond some vague entropy notions to the universe. Some will say we are just preprogrammed to act out what's determined anyway, and there is only a kind of "contrat social" at the basis of law and ethics. I agree with Gurdjieff that most of the time most of the people are not free, in the sense that they play out their mask scenario's in an unconscious way. In the model with two time dimensions I present in this book, there is a magical time dimension where we do have freedom to manipulate time and thus reality, but to ac-



cess this dimension we have to get in a different state of consciousness, or becoming conscious and this alone could be considered an act of will.

The problem of free will in its broadest outlines is the question whether there are free acts, acts that are undetermined by past states of affairs and are not indeterminate as in being random fluctuations. Can we influence the present and thus the future is what concerns most models, my notion that we can also (magically) influence the past and hence the future is another step.

What brings change?

It has been noted that Newton's third law (every action has an equal and opposite reaction) is, in essence, a statement of determinism.

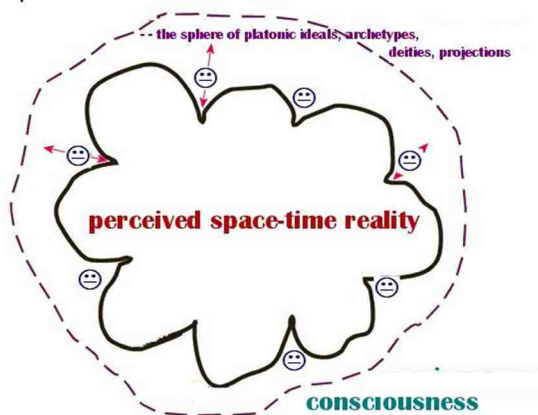
Free will is unnatural, or perhaps more accurately, supernatural or magical since its existence would violate the law of causation. A belief that the individual has free will is a belief the individual has magical or supernatural powers.

To change the chain of event, effect the state of things, we have to assume a cause, an origin of such a change. Causation has to do with the belief that events occur in predictable ways and that one event leads to another. The normal explanations of existence start with a cause. Here Aristotle paved the way for much of the later thinking with his four causes, the material root cause, the formal (functional) cause, the efficient cause (causation as we use the word, the first relevant movement that initiates an effect) and final cause (the end, the criterion of completion). The four were ordered by Thomas Aquinas as "final > efficient > material > formal" in which the first efficient cause was God.

Pure causality (there is always a cause, nothing happens by chance or by has to do with time, the chain of events, the predictability. There is the Laplace notion that everything has a cause and is predictable, the positivist notion that all can be explained and God is just an excuse for not

consciousness
Schopenhauer's Will

☺ Humans at the border of perceived reality



Schopenhauer's visualisation

im age idea H.Gerding

knowing how things work. The theological question is of course that strict causality assumes a causal chain back to a prime mover or first cause.

Causality as a more physical phenomenon found support in Pierre-Simon Laplace's thesis that if the current state of the world were exactly known, it could be computed for any time in the future or the past (if we knew all the physical laws and influences). Here the coupling of causality determinism (everything is decided) takes a firm hold. But then modern quantum mechanics learned that we are unable in many cases to identify the causes of actually observed effects or to predict the effects of identical causes, but arguably they are deterministic in some interpretations like in simply redefining determinism as meaning that probabilities rather than specific effects are determined. So the element of chance enters the stage.

Agent-Causality is the idea that agents (like a person) can start new causal chains that are not pre-determined by the events of the immediate or distant past and the physical laws of nature. In modern quantum-speak, can we influence the probability curve of manifestation?

Aristotle was one of the first to point at causality as well as agent-causality, he went beyond the idea that "every event has a (single) cause" and accepted chance and external influence, thus multiple factors responsible for an event, not only the past and necessity. Agent-Causality is the idea that agents can start new causal chains that are not pre-determined by the events of the immediate or distant past and the physical laws of nature. This possibility of break or a separate origin of a chain of events (autonomous agent causation) is essential for the notion of free will and responsibility.

Epicurus looked at atoms and assumed some "swerving" and thus new causal chains. For him, the occasional interventions of arbitrary gods would be preferable to strict determinism. Epicurus thought like Aristotle that human agents have the autonomous ability to transcend necessity and chance and are thus to be held responsible. Also Carneades and later people like Thomas Reid and many modern thinkers came up with ideas about agent causality. The quantum indeterminacy notion of course made clear that everything is probabilistic and thus randomness and chance play a role, in line with Aristotle's indefinite cause.

Dilemma

The dilemma of determinism on one side and randomness on the other of human freedom has not been solved, not even by modern quantum probability. The "random" movements of sub-atomic particles are only undecided random in the sense that no human measurement can account for or predict them. They are not random in the sense that they have no prior cause.

The free-will positions with respect to compatibility or incompatibility with determinism and indeterminism are varied and complex. Mostly they are seen as belonging to two worlds, two paradigms, and here my idea of two time dimensions offers a way out. Free will belongs to another (time) dimension and realm than the determined rational time of physical phenomena.

The Old Greek pondered about the free will question, Aristotle was one of the first to accept that there were also random chance actions next to the necessity (pre-determined causes) of events, but he also accepted Autonomous Agents as a cause of (new) things. The point was responsibility of humans for their act, as chance is uncertain and necessity destroys responsibility.

Agent causation is a positive answer to this, it assumes a relation that agents—human acting or thinking or rational substances—can have to events. This is opposed to event causation where events bear to (earlier or simultaneous) events, the logical sequence of things.

Not all the Greek were believers in free will, the Stoics harbored ideas of foreknowledge and pre-determination, but accepted that one can assent or dissent to an action.

A person's will is one of the most distinct parts of their mind, along with reason and understanding. It is one of the things which makes a person who they are, and it is especially important in ethics.

In Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* the concept of will is treated extensively. He accepts free will as an appetitive (carnal love, hunger, thirst, lust and desires) power, sees the will as moving the intellect, a rational appetite.

Thomas Hobbes criticized the medieval Scholastic (Schoolmen) definitions as being too rational, as we sometimes can will and do things against reason. He called the will; the act, not the faculty, of willing: the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof. He also accepted that animals have will.

Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke and Hume believed that the term free will was frequently used in a wrong or illogical sense, and differences between "will" and "free will" are due to verbal confusion (because all will is free):

Spinoza argued that seemingly "free" actions aren't actually free but determined because "internal" beliefs are necessarily caused by earlier external events we might not recognize as such anymore.

The two opposites, as David Hume put it, are in fact reconciled as all mankind has ever agreed in the doctrine of liberty as well as in that of necessity. He pointed out that actions are influenced to such an extent by pre-existing

motives, inclinations, and circumstances that there is a certain uniformity, one could say predictability. So he acknowledged that by liberty applied to voluntary action we can only mean a power, a choice of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will. Here we see already what could be an interpretation of the much more recent neurological experiments (like Benjamin Libet's) that even if unconscious processes in the brain are the true initiator of volitional acts, and free will therefore plays no part in their initiation, we can veto a certain course of action or unconscious decision as it surfaces. Libet himself argues conscious volition is exercised in the form of 'the power of veto'.

Kant's Good Will (of duty)

Immanuel Kant sees the dichotomy. He comes up not with a solution but with two viewpoints, one to view ourselves as members of the world of appearances – which operates deterministically - or as members of the intellectual world, when we think and decide about how to act. He argues that in the last case we have a free will and are thus morally self-legislating. He defends this because we cannot know the ultimate structure of reality, we cannot grasp the God's-eye perspective and have to accept these two worlds, one (noumenal) of understanding, freedom and practical reason and one (phenomenal) of appearance and speculative reason. Kant was an idealist, believing the noumenon (Ding an Sich) caused the phenomenon, while Schopenhauer believed them to be two sides of the same coin.

Concerning the will Kant stated that everything is qualified (relative to something else) with the exception of the good will. The good will is good in itself. Kant writes:

"A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, because of its fitness to attain some proposed end, but only because its volition, that is, it is good in itself. . ."

However as he claimed that all objects are mere appearances nothing whatsoever can ever be said about the thing in itself, why exclude 'good will'? And his argument assumes some direction, some "telos" or goal in good will and thus in creation, and that is hard to prove.

Kant starts from common sense morality to arrive at the supreme principle of morality, which he calls the categorical imperative:

"I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law."

in a different formulation:

"one should act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature."

Kant motivates his metaphysics of morals: “That there must be such a philosophy is evident from the common idea of duty and of moral laws.” The moral law must “carry with it absolute necessity.”, it is imperative.

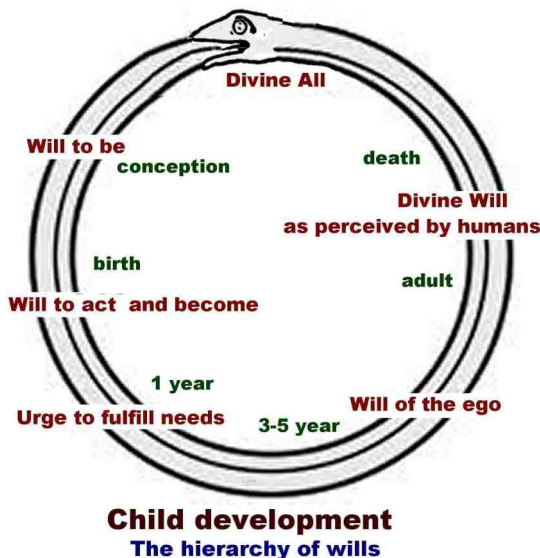
Kant seems to limit rational willing to rational beings able to act in accordance with the representation of a law or principle and to have ‘practical reason’. The capacity to reason has the purpose to produce good will. So there is will guided by inclination (also in animals) and a will guided by reason, the will that acts from duty, he argues. Actions only have moral worth and deserve esteem when they are motivated by duty. I see Kant’s position concerning to will then as “the will to duty” conforming to the categorical imperative. ‘duty is necessity of action from respect for law.’

For Kant, having a will is the same thing as being rational, and free will means having a will that is not influenced by external forces. Free will gives itself a law. different from the laws of nature, taking its own direction, autonomous. Kant’s “a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same”, not so different from Crowley’s interpretation of will.

Here one can note, that this idea about free will comes very close to what magic does, influencing the future, bending and manipulating the normal causality and string of events. But of course one would not think in those terms in Kant’s days.

Will to live, will to power: Schopenhauer

The esoterically inclined Arthur Schopenhauer, who influenced Nietzsche,



made the will a central issue, in particular as the “will to live.” It is what makes things move, it is the most fundamental aspect of reality, more fundamental even than being. Schopenhauer explained the universe as driven by a primordial and overarching will to live, resulting in all living creatures’ desire to avoid death and procreate. I feel his notion of will to live is close to the will to manifest, of a higher order than the Adlerian indi-

vidual 'will to live' (see below). Manifestation is how the overarching consciousness becomes visible and tangible (through time and then space).

Schopenhauer stated that everything in the world is nothing but an expression to the Will and depends solely on oneself. The world is in its whole nature through will, and through idea.

Schopenhauer argued that it is absurd to assume that phenomena have no basis, but he accepted we cannot know the thing in itself. Instead, he said we can know it by reference to knowing our own body, which is the only thing that we can know and experience at the same time as both a phenomenon and a thing in itself.

His view of the (greater) underlying will was not very positive, it being a malignant control of all phenomena. He saw human desiring, "willing," and craving cause suffering or pain. Our world and we humans are illogically, directionless motivated by only our own basic desires, driven by a continually dissatisfied will, continually seeking satisfaction. Mankind's duty is to fight this by chastity and asceticism, fighting our desires and urges.

Arthur Schopenhauer's view on free will and moral responsibility:

Everyone believes himself a priori to be perfectly free, even in his individual actions, and thinks that at every moment he can commence another manner of life. ... But a posteriori, through experience, he finds to his astonishment that he is not free, but subjected to necessity, that in spite of all his resolutions and reflections he does not change his conduct, and that from the beginning of his life to the end of it, he must carry out the very character which he himself condemns...

He is one of those philosophers using the concept of will to denote some innermost drive, a primary root essence not only in us humans, but in everything. He makes this like the almighty God or the all-consciousness, his will notion is in all and everything, it's a force of nature that happens to show up in man too. We are always wanting something, desiring, urging, in need of something, but this goes for everything, will in that perspective is the essential quality that goes beyond knowledge, it's Kant's "thing in itself"(noumenon). This was the basis for Arthur Schopenhauer's concept of the human will as being the desires, needs, and impulses in us. This however doesn't give us much freedom, Schopenhauer points out, for a posteriori we see that our freedom was nothing but perceived necessity, that changing one's conduct and character is impossible.

Arthur Schopenhauer said (On the Freedom of the Will):

"You can do what you will, but in any given moment of your life you can will only one definite thing and absolutely nothing other than that one thing."

His Will to Live or Will to Life (Wille zum Leben) is an inherent drive within human beings, and indeed all creatures, to stay alive; a force which seduces us into reproducing, having precedence over reason.

Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche also use the notion "will to power" (German: der Wille zur Macht) as a prominent concept in his philosophy, he sees it as "unexhausted procreative will of life." There is will to power where there is life and even the strongest living things will risk their lives for more power, it is stronger than the will to survive. He believed it to be the main driving force in humans, manifesting as ambition, the striving to reach the highest possible position in life, achieving status. "Desire for Power" (Machtgelüst) is the pleasure of the feeling of power (including cruelty, gift giving and love) and the hunger to overpower and domination, which he originally saw as limited to 'intellectual beings' but later, in "Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883) applied to all life. Nietzsche argues the idea of the "will to power" is to offer much richer explanations than utilitarianism's idea that all people want is to be happy, or Plato's notion that people want to be unified with the Good. He also broadens Darwin's notion of evolution, posing that the "expansion of power" is more important than adaptation and the struggle to survive.

Nietzsche aggregates everything, like he states (In Beyond Good and Evil) that philosophers' "will to truth" (the desire to seek absolute truth) is nothing more than a manifestation of their will to power.

His translates the metaphysical notion of both animate and inanimate matter as centers of force into matter as centers of will to power and it feels he in a way equates it with the overpowering metadimensional (God, consciousness or the all) like Schopenhauer does with his "will to live". He sees a physical universe of perpetual struggle and force, cyclical and returning to the beginning again and again.

"My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement ("union") with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on."

In his famous saying about the death of God Nietzsche expresses some longing for the days ritual had meaning:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to

invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?

F. Nietzsche

This doesn't mean that actually there is no God anymore but expresses a fear that the decline of religion, the rise of atheism, and the absence of a higher moral authority will lead to chaos, nihilism.

The Wills from Vienna

A distinctive use of the word will came from the psychotherapy schools in Vienna, where Sigmund Freud's called the lust and pleasure principle "the will to pleasure", avoiding pain and seeking gratification of needs, wants and urges but he accepted other drives like self preservation (the reality principle), the "compulsion to repeat" and a death instinct in a constant struggle with the libido.

Alfred Adler's individual psychology pointed at the "will to power". Adler considered an individual's freedom of choice as a fundamental factor in the decision-making process. His Viennese school of psychotherapy was called individual psychology.

Alfred Adler was influenced by Nietzsche's work as he wrote:

Nietzsche's "Will to power" and "Will to seem" embrace many of our views, which again resemble in some respects the views of Féré and the older writers, according to whom the sensation of pleasure originates in a feeling of power, that of pain in a feeling of feebleness (Ohnmacht).

Adler's wanted to build a movement by arguing for the holistic integrity of psychological well-being with that of social equality. His interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power was concerned with the individual patient's overcoming of the superiority-inferiority dynamic.

Victor Frankl pointed at the "will to meaning" as something beyond survival and gratification of basic needs. He felt that Freud's "Pleasure Principle" was lacking a human dimension. The main thesis of his philosophy: "one can live only for so long as one's life has a meaning." fits well with the increased feeling of nihilistic emptiness and existential vacuum of modern life.

"For too long we have been dreaming a dream from which we are now waking up: the dream that if we just improve the socioeconomic situation of people, everything will be okay, people will become happy. The truth is that as the struggle for survival has subsided, the question has emerged: survival for what? Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for."

In "Psychotherapy and Existentialism" he explains where his will to meaning fits in:

"We have seen that there exists not only a will to pleasure and a will to power but also a will to meaning. Now we see further: We have not only the possibility of giving a meaning to our life by creative acts and beyond that by the experience of Truth, Beauty, and Kindness, of Nature, Culture, and human beings in their uniqueness and individuality, and of love; we have not only the possibility of making life meaningful by creating and loving, but also by suffering - so that when we can no longer change our fate by action, what matters is the right attitude toward fate."

Frankl went against Freud and Adler in stating that:

"Actually, 'pleasure is not the goal of human striving but rather a by-product of the fulfillment of such striving; and 'power' is not an end but a means to an end. Thus, the 'pleasure principle' school mistakes a side effect for the goal, while the 'will to power' school mistakes a means for the end"

His logotherapy offered a new approach to psychotherapy. He was trying to expose and deal with the origin of the many ills of contemporary society, like boredom because of lack of meaning. His idea was to turn an apparently meaningless life into a genuine human achievement.

Logotherapy's central affirmatives are:

- Life has meaning under all circumstances, even the most miserable ones.
- Our main motivation for living is our will to find meaning in life.
- We have freedom to find meaning in how we think, in what we do, in what we experience, and even when we are faced with a situation of unchangeable suffering.
- We are mind, body and spirit. These dimensions of the self are interdependent. The key is the spirit. The spiritual core, and only the spiritual core, warrants and constitutes oneness and wholeness; it enables us to exercise our will to meaning, to envisage our goals, and to move beyond our instinctual and sexual needs to self-transcendence.

Logotherapy claims that work may be a source of meaning, direction, fulfillment, for many an important source of meaning, for some the only source.

Victor Frankl, who survived the concentration camps, was an inspiration for many and I like his ultimate lesson, learnt in the harshest of conditions: "The salvation of man is through love and in love."

Frankl argues the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as if it were a closed system.

In his autobiography Frankl writes:

“As early as 1929 I developed the concept of three groups of values, three possibilities to find meaning in life - up to the last moment, the last breath. These three possibilities are: 1) a deed we do, a work we create, 2) an experience, a human encounter and love, and 3) when confronted with an unchangeable fate (such as an incurable disease, an inoperable cancer) a change of attitudes. In such cases we still can wrest meaning from life by becoming witness of the most human of all human capacities: the ability to turn suffering into human triumph.”

and

“..... the striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. That is why I speak of a will to meaning in contrast to the pleasure principle (or, as we could also term it, the will to pleasure) on which Freudian psychoanalysis is centered, as well as in contrast to the will to power stressed by Adlerian psychology.

Viktor E. Frankl

The will to live and the will to die

There are situations, like when our life becomes miserable due to circumstances, we lose the sense of meaning or when we feel we will become a burden to others, that the will to die becomes stronger than the will to live. The will to live is visible at the level of existence and as a drive to fight for survival. The will to live is a platform for other drives and wills. It is, at the human level seen as an important and active process of conscious and unconscious reasoning. Hope plays a role here, as in other aspects of the will, as it concerns the future that we think will bring something.

Psychologists in general agree that there is the will to live, the will to pleasure, the will to superiority and the will to connection, there is less support for the will to identity or the will establishing meaningful personal responses.

The meat computer in our head

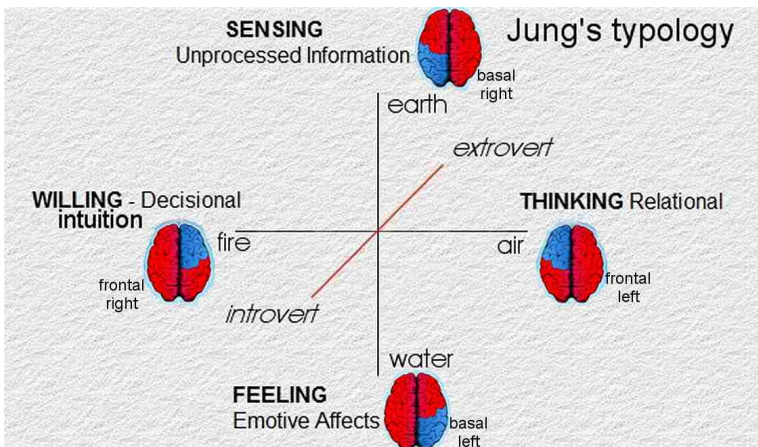
Modern science has looked at how our brains deal with decision making, how we arrive at action or no action, but the results have not really bridged the gap between the determinists and the free will believers. Based on research findings many modern (neuro)-scientists claim that what we think are conscious decisions are just brain programs beyond our control, we only have the illusion we make a difference, there is no free will. They point at experiments by people as Benjamin Libet with what is called the readiness potential (RP) signal that have proven that whatever we do has a causality (is the logical result of) in brain processes beyond (self)-conscious influence. We act because that's the way we are programmed, based

on input and memory and the notion of free will is then a post-facto rationalization. Libet himself left the possibility of free will, as he points at a kind of veto function, one could go against the unconscious decision at some point. Others point out that the readiness potential signal doesn't represent a decision to move, but that it's merely a sign that the brain is paying attention.

Neuroscientist Sam Harris believes that we are mistaken in believing the intuitive idea that intention initiates actions. Harris argues:

"Thoughts simply arise in the brain. What else could they do? The truth about us is even stranger than we may suppose: The illusion of free will is itself an illusion".

Some materialist thinkers, like Daniel Dennett see the results as proving that dualistic free will is unlikely. In 'Elbow room: the varieties of free will worth wanting' he makes the point that we don't even want too much free will, living on the automatic pilot makes a lot of sense.



IV Appendix Natural Law

In the chapter about karma and law I have discussed the relation between ritual and law and explained how I see natural law as a human interpretation of an extradimensional eternal principle of justice, or order, karma and thermodynamical homeostatis. I pointed out that we can only guess or interpret this in our human and rational perspective.

Natural Law is then not only a rational understanding or contract for survival, but hinges on the **Laws of Nature of the Extradimensional**, the rules in the otherworld. The perspective is that by means of accessing the extradimensional by way of primes (intuition) we can find answers to emerging ethical and legal questions concerning cyberspace, genetic manipulation, ecology, robotics and other issues.

The notions about law, natural rights and natural law of some older cultures like the Australian aboriginals, the Chinese and the Vedic Aryans were mentioned in that chapter. I also mentioned how Byzantium/Roman Law was codified by Justinian and its relation with natural law.

The development of natural law in our own culture however is quite a specialist subject, so I have dedicated an appendix to this.

Let me go back to the Greek. Plato believed important matters were the terrain of an elite, that philosophers were the only ones to run the state. But this view didn't last. The idea of the equality of men is what differentiates the Stoics like Cicero and Seneca from earlier Platonic and Aristotelian notions. Cicero in *De Legibus* states that:

"we are born for Justice, and that right is based, not upon's opinions, but upon Nature."

The natural law is then not the law of nature, it is a concept governing the behavior (and in some respects the thinking) of humans possessing reason and free will.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) wrote that there is an innate right that all people share, but that there is original sin, since Adam was kicked out of Paradise. According to Thomas Aquinas, natural law is the imperative to do good and avoid evil. What is good and evil is, in his view, derived from the rational nature of human beings. In his view a humanly made law is valid only insofar as its content conforms to the content of the natural law, a law has to be just.

The Church, in the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, states that the God given rational natural law supersedes common law and positive law. Luther was critical

about natural law, the Bible was his only valid source of law, the Anglo-Saxon (legal) world kind of followed him there.

Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), in ‘De iure belli ac pacis’ posed that natural law wasn’t depending on the existence of a God, human reasoning is a sufficient legal ground. This made him the father of Natural Law (pater iuris naturae) and established him as an originator of international law.

Spinoza

In The Ethics, a philosophical treatise written by Baruch de Spinoza, he discusses many things from the perspective of being a believer in the soul and the afterlife:

“The human Mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the Body, but something of it remains which is eternal.”

He was a great debunker of sorts, attacking Cartesian thinking and the limiting rationality of God, but also the theological views of his time. He sees God as being present in all, God is the natural world, a pantheistic view that was not acceptable to his Jewish fellows in Amsterdam, so he had to leave and live a fairly isolated life as a lens-maker.

Spinoza argues that the mind and the body are a single thing, a mode of God like everything else, that is only being thought of in two different ways. Human in his perspective, is nothing special, not a special Kingdom within a Kingdom and follows the same laws as everything else. Nowadays our understanding of the consciousness of animals and the understanding of the interrelatedness of everything makes his stance less deviant than it was then.

He questioned sensory perception, accepted reason as more accurate but his “knowledge of the third kind”, or “intuitive knowledge”, about the relationship with the all, the Nature or God is what makes him interesting for me.

His called uncaused, self-sustaining reality substance. At the root of everything (consciousness - thought and space - extension are attributes of the one organic substance system God) and this is much like what I call the metadimensional. I think his idea of time and space having no boundaries or beginning but just infinitely exist in moving might be what science will eventually find behind the Big Bang singularity.

The morality of Spinoza hinges on his notion that all thing strive to exist, as a “will to live”, even for the inanimate. He calls this appetite, and when we are conscious of it, desire and this constitutes good and evil. What one desires one calls good, what one dislike one calls evil. Now if I equate his will to live with the will to manifest and this is what consciousness ultimate does (via time and space) the ground of physical reality is consciousness and it is

in all and everything, but also beyond it as the higher order, the meta-dimensional.

His psychological insights are also remarkable, although with too much credit for the role of the mind and reason for my taste. If man understands (with his mind) his (externally caused) passions he can be free from their domination (that cause ills, unhappiness, lowered vitality etc.). He will understand the cosmic order and his own place in it and will have peace of mind. At the highest stage of knowledge, that of “intuitive knowledge”, man can understand everything, including God.

Natural Law in modern times, morality

As over time rights turned into laws, *Ius* turned into *Lex*, morality become also a matter of legal rights, the ones written down as positive law or assumed as common law. There are three types of rights: legal rights are those bestowed onto a person by a given legal system, while natural rights are those not contingent upon the laws, customs, or beliefs of any particular culture or government, and therefore universal and inalienable, originating in natural law. Social rights, like the right to trial by jury, are arising neither from natural law nor from positive law but, according to James Madison, from the social contract from which a government derives its authority. [

In modern times, people like Descartes, Arnauld, Leibniz but notably Kant have contemplated the order of things and whether we can recognize a divine plan or natural law. Kant didn't go much beyond the rational. He recognized cause and effect, the human limitation of space and time and thus of limited interpretation of the reality and the absurdness of speculation about the nature of God. He did come up with a universal moral law, the Categorical Imperative, but this wasn't much different from what many philosophers and religious leaders remarked before concerning how to treat one's neighbors.

The problem is that this can be interpreted to the extreme, if I accept I can steal or kill, others can too, but I can defend myself. So there is the need for a way to curb this, the notion of a constitutional state, a '*Rechtsstaat*', a civilized way to organize society and balance individual and common good. Kant was an idealist, he stimulated the idea of individual freedom, dare to think for yourself, *Sapere aude*, even as he believed the world was determined. Freedom is a necessary illusion for moral responsibility, his ethics was a balance between ratio and experience, freedom and responsibility. Kant claimed to derive natural rights through reason alone.

Natural rights, human rights

Natural law comes in two flavors. This has to do with the overlap between law and morals, the ‘Overlap Thesis’. There are moral theorists believing that there is some human choice underlying morality, different from natural law legal theorists, who claim that the nature of the world and of human beings point to all standards of morality. There are laws that follow logically from nature and rational deduction, but there are, according to the moralists some that derive from convention.

The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was concerned with the problem of social and political order: how human beings can live together in peace and avoid the danger and fear of civil conflict. He didn’t want to derive rights from “natural law,” arguing that (defined) law (“lex”) and (abstract) right (“Ius”) signify opposites, law concerned with obligations, while rights refer to the absence of obligations. Rights are prior to law, natural or institutional, but he was a pessimist in the sense that he saw the need for a sovereign power:

“Therefore before the names of Just and Unjust can have place, there must be some coercive Power, to compel men equally to the performance of their Covenants..., to make good that Propriety, which by mutual contract men acquire, in recompense of the universal Right they abandon: and such power there is none before the erection of the Commonwealth.” (Leviathan. 1, XV)

Commonwealth is his term for the political organization, the ruling system. His view was that there is either an unaccountable sovereign (deciding every social and political issue) or a “state of nature” that resembles civil war and offers only universal insecurity. Human nature is not bad, but some of us are bad and to defend oneself everybody gets infected with badness or at least selfishness if there is no ruler. He accepts that human reason can discern some eternal principles to govern our conduct, but they are laws given by nature rather than revealed by God and thus, in his view more right than religious norms or religious conscience. His view of natural law was basically with ethical connotation, they are logical results of understanding one’s own interest.

For Hobbes ethics is concerned with human nature, political philosophy deals with what happens when human beings interact. His ‘laws of nature’ (he listed 19) come down to either the Kantian “do as you would be done by.” and to a simple recipe. When there is no law (commonwealth) one has to fight for oneself, when there is, that constitutes the ultimate authority.

In the view of the present state of affairs in cyberspace, Hobbes’ position still makes sense, the USA assumes this sovereignty and police job out of fear for the chaos that would threaten all, the Armageddon justification. He

puts the two Phaedrus horses as opposing each other, or as Georg W. Bush said: you are with us or against us!

John Locke tried to limit the implications of Hobbes's stance and contemplated what the limits are to political authority and how do we ensure that our rulers do not trespass on the rights of their subjects? Over time, the notion of natural rights has changed, the divine origin was replaced by rational deduction but remains in many legal texts.

The common good as the aim

The greatest public or common good has been a rational way to describe the goal of the law. But this requires something like a general will, a collectively held will. This general will, as different from the particular wills is central to the thinking of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He looked at the form of association needed for the formation and expression of the "general will."

In 'The Social Contract (1762)', Rousseau argues that freedom and authority are not contradictory, since they are both based on the general will of the citizens. The individual citizen is thus only obeying himself as a member of the political community. A rational decision, no need for divine or natural law. This was different from the thinking toward the end of the 17th century when Nicolas Malebranche, a priest, still attributed the general will to God, who acts in the world through perennial "general laws" instituted at the creation of the world. To fight the deterministic tendency he accepted particular expressions of God's will like miracles and other occasional acts of divine intervention and grace.

Denis Diderot of the *Encyclopédie* (1755) transformed Malebranche's understanding of the general will into a secular concept but still in universalistic, abstract terms and still speaks of "Droit naturel" ("Natural Right"). Morality is based on the general will of the human race to improve its own happiness, necessarily directed at the good since its object is the betterment of all.

Rousseau made it less universal and more practical and political, the social contract is a reflection of the general will actually held by the people in their quality as citizens. They act and vote on the basis of one's sense of justice, not so much through public debate, but by consulting their individual conscience and this is based on both rationality and feeling, like the love for one's political community.

Rousseau assumed that in an ideal state, laws express the general will, the interest of the people. Breaking the law is against one's higher interest, the law forces one to be free. This is what parents tell their children, it's in your best interest that we punish you! But Rousseau saw this and pressed civil liberty and autonomy, not with giving free reign to government. His con-

cept of the general will implies a proscription against despotism as it is only legitimate insofar as it is subordinated to popular sovereignty.

As the economy became more and more important during the 18th century moral philosopher and early economist Adam Smith the market became part of the interest and the common good (commonwealth). He stated somewhat abstract that the interlinking of productive activities allowed by the modern market meant that “subjective selfishness” turned into a “contribution toward the satisfaction of the needs of everyone else.” But here not everybody agrees. The German Georg Hegel (1770 –1831) was not very optimistic about a society where economics were not ordered, the unfettered capitalist economy, he feared the general plenty would not trickle down though the rest of society. He believed it had to be mediated by a family or social body to which they belong to, acting according to *Sittlichkeit*, following the unit’s norms.

This is different from their role outside the unit, where they act in a more selfish market place role. His conception of the exchange contract as a form of mutual recognition played an essential role within the capacity of an over-arching framework of the state including some welfare help to provide the conditions for the existence of rational and free-willing subjects. Those subjects gains their determinacy in virtue of their place in a larger social, and ultimately historical, structure or process. Even the minimal contractual exchange within an economy is not to be thought simply as dependent on the wants and rationality of the partners alone, but is to be placed in a culturally-shaped form of social life.

Hegel’s “Ethical Life” involves “wrong” (the negation of right) and its punishment (the negation of wrong) and thus the “negation of the negation” of the original right, where the state has to take action, and his “morality” is an internalization of the external legal relations. Kant, in his ‘*Metaphysics of Morals*’ also employed the idea of the state’s punitive action as a negating of the original criminal act.

Hegel posed that if legislation is to express the general will, citizens must recognize it as expressing their wills; and this means, recognizing it as willed, and there is a need for a monarch’s explicit “I will” to seal this.

Unalienable rights

The Declaration of Independence state that “all men are ... endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”, but this didn’t prohibit slavery at the time. John Locke (1632–1704) emphasized “life, liberty and property” and included the Libertarian idea of the right of revolution against an unjust state, but Thomas Jefferson substituted “pursuit of happiness” in stead of “property” in the United States Declaration of Independence.

Natural law challenges or can challenge cultural or government laws, and possibly the divine rights of rulers and churches. These days human rights are often seen as self-evident, natural rights, the difference being that natural rights traditionally involve exclusively negative rights, human rights also comprise positive rights.

In social contract theory, “inalienable rights” are those rights that can’t be surrendered by citizens to the sovereign. Many historical apologies for slavery and illiberal government were based on explicit or implicit voluntary contracts to freedom and self-determination. By not being killed in a war a person accepted to be enslaved to the victor, in return for his life, was the reasoning.

One criticism of natural rights theory is that one cannot draw norms from facts. That something has been a factual situation, like hereditary rulership, doesn’t make it natural or just. What ‘is’, doesn’t make it ‘ought’. This was also a theological issue in the late 17th century. Is what God does by definition good, how to explain evil then, is the creation perfect beyond our understanding as Leibniz argued or is there evil beyond God.

The right to resist unjust government is considered an unalienable right. Georg Hegel based his theory of inalienable rights on the de facto inalienability of those aspects of personhood that distinguish persons from things and cannot be transferred to another person, like personality or substantive essence. These rights are related to moral responsibility.

Recent views

In recent times, we have the separation of powers (*trias politica*) from Montesquieu, but the discussion about what is or should be law has never ended.

In the 19th century natural law lost ground, laws were supposed to deal with the actual situation and circumstances. Legal positivism separated moral from law, positive (written) law didn’t need to be just or based in moral principles. This led to the German attitude of Law is Law (*Gesetz ist Gesetz*) with its fascist consequences. Newer appreciation of natural law came with John Finnis.

Legal positivism is the view that the law is defined by the social rules or practices that identify certain norms as laws. Jeremy Bentham held that the law is the command of the sovereign backed by the threat of punishment.

A proponent of what is called positivism, H.L.A. Hart argued that the law should be understood as a system of social rules. He sees law as a system of primary social rules that guide the conduct of law’s subjects, secondary rules that regulate how the primary rules may be changed, how disputes about them are to be adjudicated and how the primary rules are to be identi-

fied. Judges are the ones to identify certain acts and decisions as sources of law.

Legal positivism is based on three theses: the Social Fact Thesis, the Conventionality Thesis, and the Separability Thesis. Legal validity is, according to the Social Fact Thesis ultimately a function of certain kinds of social facts like formal promulgation by a legislature. These facts are based on a social convention, an agreement among officials. According to the Separability Thesis, there is no conceptual overlap between the notions of law and morality, this overlap does often exist, but is not a necessity. There can be immoral laws.

Legal realism and sociology of law understood the law as what actually is upheld, the actual practices of courts, law offices, and the police stations, rather than as the formal rules and doctrines.

Ronald Dworkin, in his legal interpretivism and criticizing positivism, states that law is not only based on social facts, but includes the morally best justification for the institutional facts and practices that we intuitively regard as legal. It feels much like what Kant posed, if we use the translation 'reasonability' rather than reason for 'Vernunft'. The moral truths underlying society, and these are not necessarily based on natural law, will come out only in specific cases, as then there is an actual, but best compromise and fitting interpretation concerning the interest of parties involved in view of the particular situation and the community morality. Dworkin's theory is 'interpretive': the law is results from a constructive interpretation of the institutional history of the legal system and principles are part of the law, the law needs to have integrity to be acceptable.

Lon Fuller stated that the only formula that might be called a definition of law is that by law is the enterprise of subjecting human conduct to the governance of rules. This view treats law as an activity and regards a legal system as the product of a sustained purposive effort. His notion hinges on the moral ideal of fairness.

John Rawls is a great proponent of justice. In his book 'A Theory of Justice' he sees justice as rooted in rationality with justice as fairness, the freedom to make choices. Impartiality is the result of the assumption of an original position, participants hide their interests behind veil of ignorance. Rawls was looking for a realistic utopia, based on agreed rules (contractualism), an overlapping consensus.

'The idea of this society is realistically utopian in that it depicts an achievable social world that combines political right and justice for all liberal and decent peoples in a Society of Peoples.'

Earth Religion Code of Conduct

Somewhat outside the legal system there are codes of conduct within certain groups or traditions with some value. The Earth Religion Anti-Abuse Resolution was written by Morning Glory Zell (on May 22, 1988) and subsequently adopted by virtually every Pagan and Wiccan Path and Tradition, starting with the Church of All Worlds.

Earth Religion Anti-Abuse Resolution

We, the undersigned, as adherents of Pagan and Neo-Pagan Earth Religions, including Wicca, or Neo-Pagan Witchcraft, practice a variety of positive, life-affirming faiths that are dedicated to healing, both of ourselves and of the Earth. As such, we do not advocate or condone any acts that victimize others, including those proscribed by law.

As one of our most widely-accepted precepts is the Wiccan Rede's injunction to "harm none," we absolutely condemn the practices of child abuse, sexual abuse, and any other form of abuse that does harm to the bodies, minds or spirits of individuals. We offer prayers, therapy, and support for the healing of the victims of such abuses.

We recognize and revere the divinity of Nature in our Mother the Earth, and we conduct our rites of worship in a manner that is ethical, compassionate and constitutionally-protected. We neither acknowledge nor worship the Christian devil, "Satan," who is not in our Pagan pantheons. We will not tolerate slander or libel against our churches, clergy or congregations, and we are prepared to defend our civil rights with such legal action as we deem necessary and appropriate?

V Appendix: theories about time

In the chapter about time I have left out a number of notions and theoretical models of time, time travel and entropy as they were not essential in supporting the thesis of two time dimensions.

Bergson, North Whitehead, Heidegger

A few thinkers were willing to question the nature of time. I mention Henri Bergson with his distinction of experienced time from clock time, and A. North Whitehead, with his process philosophy and reality approach that accepts events as due to the “ingression” of timeless entities.

Whitehead’s organic realism is characterized by the displacement of the notion of static stuff by the notion of fluid energy. He was trying to overcome the basic duality between man and the universe, seeing reality as analogous to an organism, changing and growing all the time. His God was an evolving God. Whitehead accepts and integrates psychic impressions such as emotions, beauty, love, and satisfaction in his notion of reality, and even accepts telepathy .

In his metaphysical view, Whitehead stated that space and time were to be seen as abstractions from extended events and thus experienced empirically. Time does not have any reality in nature, but is the property of a perceiver. In quantum physical times we now would say observer, and this again points to a close relationship between consciousness and time. His doctrine of the epochal character of time depends on the analysis of the intrinsic character of an event, considered to be the most concrete, finite entity, which he calls the “actual occasion.”

Others like Martin Heidegger and Ilya Prigogine (internal time) opposed the timeless concept of Being. The method pursued in Heidegger’s “Being and Time”, an influential 1927 essay about ontology (the study of existence), attempts to delimit the characteristics of Dasein (being there = what man is), in order to approach the meaning of Being itself through an interpretation of the temporality of Dasein. The essence of Dasein is thus not man, but it starts with man and the outcome of the progression of Heidegger’s argument is the thought that the being of Dasein is time.

Entropy and the arrow of time

There are deterministic and reversible phenomena, such as the motion of the earth around the sun: they have no privileged direction of time (and can be reversed). Irreversible processes have an “arrow of time”, are governed by the second Law of Thermodynamics and thus entropic. However, our

daily experience of the irreversible and creative dimension of life and our existence as humans observing and creating order goes against this entropic arrow.

The classical approach for irreversibility in isolated systems considers entropy as the basic quantity which, according to the second law of thermodynamics, increases in isolated systems as the result of irreversible processes. Entropy increases because probability increases. At a thermodynamic equilibrium complete disorder is reached, and the probability reaches a maximum.

When there is no equilibrium and instability, things change but according to Ilya Prigogine (*The Rediscovery of Time* 1983) we can then use internal time and accept non locality (the thing that surprised Einstein). He stated:

“Time is non-local topological time”.

Whenever the internal time exists it is an operator, and not a number. There can be many internal times, and time becomes an average time, combining contributions coming from all values of the internal time. In this sense, time becomes “non-local” - the present is a recapitulation of the past, and an anticipation of the future.

Prigogine then explains that future is not contained in the present for systems satisfying the second law of thermodynamics. Therefore, according to this description, states have an orientation in time. Time is now intrinsic to objects. It is no more a container of static, passive matter.

Time A and Time B theories: blocktime

Time as the subject of metaphysical dispute goes back to the ancient Greek philosophers Heraclitus (Panta Rei) and Parmenides. Parmenides thought that reality is timeless and unchanging (Being). Heraclitus believed that the world is a dynamic process of ceaseless change, flux, and decay (Becoming). It is impossible to step into the same river twice. Aristotle’s idea of time is as a uniform, linear, and infinite series of “now-points.” lies in between. The future is the not-yet-now, the past is the no-longer-now, and the present is the now that flows from future to past. Priority is always given to the present.

A way to look at what time means is the way in which events are ordered in two distinct but related ways, think about how we describe events in language. Events can be characterized as past, present or future, normally indicated in languages such as English by the verbal inflection of tenses or auxiliary adverbial modifiers.

This approach derives from the analysis of time and change developed by Cambridge philosopher J. M. E. McTaggart in ‘The Unreality of Time’. We can do that in a tensed way like “Something has happened, will happen,

etc.” and this is called (A-theory) or in a tenseless way (B-theory). The followers of the A-theory are also called presentists, time is seen related to the present, the now. A-theorists deny that past, present and future are equally real, and maintain that the future is not fixed and determinate like the past.

Alternatively events may, in the B-theory of time, be described as earlier than, simultaneous with, or later than others. B-theorists, the word eternalists comes close, see no difference in past and future, except the fact that we know much less about the future. Time goes on in the same way, just as an interval; something that aligns with the way modern physicists see time. The t in their formulas is relative and indicates duration.

The difference is basically a dispute about temporal passage or ‘becoming’. B-theorists argue that this notion embodies serious confusion about time. They tend to see time as part of space-time (fourdimensionalists) or as blocktime. The notion of spacetime and a 4D block universe (3D space and time in one set) doesn’t allow for the movement, the becoming that we perceive, the passage of time.

This is making the spacetime diagrams (Minkowski diagrams -)used to show how things progress - too static, not animated. When we think in four-dimensional spacetime and how an object moves along its world line as used in relativity theory the now is not there or just a point on the graph. However, modern physics seems to favor the block universe view.

The now of time for humans is a sword that cuts our freedom to act in two, the past as what is done and determined and the future where we can still influence things. We are forever in the “now”, in a way it feel as if we are moving through time in little now steps and always following the arrow of time toward the future.

The experience of the infinitesimal moment of Now as the sword that divides past and future (asymmetrical, with a different degree of freedom) is a psychological thing. The perception of time doesn’t show up in physics, at least not in the equations that are assumed to describe our reality. What matters is duration, the time difference, the now doesn’t figure. Time in our mind is, according to K. Gödel (quoted by R. Rucker) only a perception and not reality, we are confused as we only occupy a series of different givens interpreted as a series of realities. Givens are a person’s sensations at a given time.

Argüelles: The Law of Time

Now that the Mayan story of a new era, a new time frame starting in December 2012 has not materialized, we tend to discard the underlying logic and Mayan calendrical mathematical insights. There is however something to be learned from how the pre-Columbian Americans dealt with time in a

philosophical and practical way, especially as they seem to have organized their whole culture and rituals around their calendar.

In *Time and the Technosphere* (2002) Jose Argüelles explained what he calls the “Law of Time,” identifying two timing frequencies: one he calls “mechanized time” with a “12:60 frequency,” and the other “natural [time] codified at the frequency 13:20.” He claims that our normal 12:60 time frame has no roots in how nature cycles affect our biosphere, that we live in an artificial rhythm, clock time masking real time. There is a resonance with the distinction of having clock time and experienced time in the Henri Bergson sense. The lesson Argüelles draws from his studies is that the irregular 12-month [Gregorian] calendar and artificial 60-minute hour is out-of-step with the natural “synchronic order” and he suggests a more harmonious, thirteen moon, 28 day calendar.

Natural timing, in his view in line with the rhythms of the biosphere and earth-moon-sun system, will bring modern human civilization back on course.

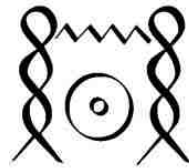
Yoga Time Travel

Fred Alan Wolf, a quantum physicist, in his book “the yoga of time travel” (2004) tries to bridge the views of the new physics concerning time with those of the Eastern sages (Patanjali and the Bhagavat Gita). He is a gifted writer and teacher, his books offer great insights and he makes the academic and bloodless equations and experiments come to life in wonderful stories and examples.

His focus in this book is on time travel and he explains, with many great examples and references to scientific models and discoveries, how that would be theoretically possible and how he sees in the old practices of yoga a way to achieve it. He sees two realistic (as in scientifically possible) types of time travel, the one jumping between the parallel universes of the 11 dimensional string theory model, using wormholes, negative energy and equipment yet to be invented. The other, what he calls extraordinary time travel, has to do with yoga or meditation.

These techniques, and he mentions that they involve letting go of the ego, are the core of many esoteric traditions, like Raja-yoga. It all is about controlling the mind (becoming the body beyond the mind that only hinders the direct experience of self) and entering the state of consciousness where we can jump and exchange our universe for a parallel one or even for the dimensionless (ego- and formless) divine consciousness state. In this way we can leave the limitations of space-time and become true soul and consciousness, as Patanjali already stated. Wolf’s approach here is coherent with what I see as the essential of the ritual (inner child) state, where the ego and masks are lifted and one can manipulate the ordinary reality of time and

place. In his view time travel is not magical and impossible, but part of what we are; if we let go of the prison of our limiting notions of time and space.



neheh (nhh)
"time"



djet (dt)
"eternity"

Egyptian two time dimensions

Although in modern times the idea of multiple time dimensions has not really been accepted, in ancient Egypt there was such a notion. Neneh and djet were two different concepts, associated with time and eternity. These concepts were not included in our modern way of thinking, they were seen as repetitive and redundant.

The neneh (nhh) notion of time is associated with the finite, serial clock time or periodic time measured in relation to cyclic nature like the days and the seasons. Neneh means 'cyclic time within the world of physical phenomena', the eternity of continuous, repeating cycles. The neneh hieroglyph resembles a rope that has been twisted and looped to make a chain pointing at the cycling motion of the sun as it rises up and sets down. The hieroglyph also resembles a standing-wave and the dual serpent energies as seen in the symbol of the Caduceus.

The djet (dt) is the other concept relating to time, it comes much closer to magic time or eternity (as no time) and is translated as "everlastingness", "changelessness", "continuing eternity", or "eternal continuity" and is about getting beyond or out of cyclic time. Djet "perfect time" is basically "No Time", timelessness expressed by the "serpent at rest" hieroglyph, also associated with the backbone or spinal column, which symbolizes the meditative state; 'resting' within the neutral point.

To the Egyptians each of these represented something concrete and distinct, and they were used in rituals, texts, and illustrations, as separate ideas but used together. Jan Assmann (*The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, 2001) speaks of them (in analogy with the 'united double kingdom') as 'united double time', where neheh, the imperfect time dimension is associated with change, Kheper, the One who Becomes, and djet, the perfect aspect of time is related to completion, Atem, the Perfect One.

The Egyptians according to Jan Assmann viewed "totality" as the opposite of finite and bounded. To them, the boundaries of totality were not contrasted with the unbounded, but with the "whole," with "plenitude".

Djet and neheh are symmetrical concepts and are almost always used together like in the act of ritual purification, pouring water jars containing the symbol ankh, or life, over the person being purified who was then said to be pure forever (djet) and ever (neheh).

Neneh is time which belongs to this earth, to celestial events, equinoxes, the movement of the sun and stars, as in repetition, measurement. Djet is of the otherworld, where time is not present, things unchanging in eternity and yet the Gods could change them, fixing time (in the future).

Our time perspective: Zimbardo

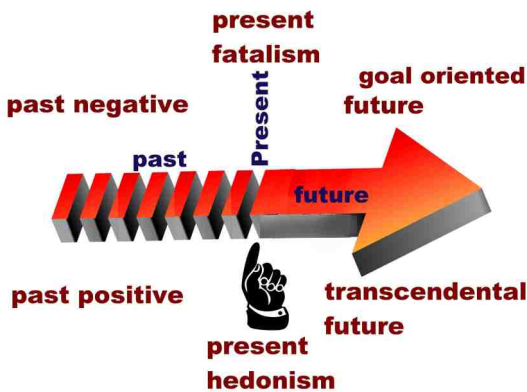
We all perceive time in a different way, we have a different attitude versus the past, the present and the future. This was first noted by Kurt Lewin.

Philip Zimbardo, the leader of the notorious 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment, developed an expanded Time Perspective (TP) theory based on these different psychological temporal frames. He claims our time perspective has a pervasive influence on our behaviour, our careers and lives. We pick up our specific TP by way of our education, social situation and institutional influences, but it is a very personal and individual perspective. He recognizes six orientations, a negative and positive for past, present and future. He developed methods to influence and change the TP. These techniques are also used in organizational context.

Zimbardo and Boyd (2008) observed that while people can be more oriented toward one or more of these time perspectives, they experience all of them on a continuum. In studies it became clear, that future oriented people, the ones who can defer gratification, will live smarter and more productive. A balanced time view, with a bit of all, seems to be the best strategy for a happy life.

My problem with Zimbardo's approach, which comes with questionnaires

How do we live with time?



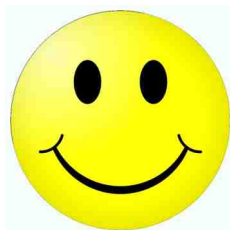
Philip Zimbardo's Time Perspectives

and has much support and data available, is that it foregoes the multi-mask model I have described in this book. We can have different subpersonalities or masks with different TPs and can switch between them, triggered by old memories or actual situations. The TP approach could work much better, if the TP orientation in the various masks would be evaluated.

VI Happiness; practical, chemical, spiritual

Rituals can be seen as aiming at what Americans see as a basic human right, the pursuit of happiness. Looking for paradise, heaven, or just hoping to make this month's rent; many people pray, light candles, go to church or perform their private rituals, using whatever ritual or magical technique.

The happiness they seek, however, is not well defined and ranges from very material to very spiritual. The word chemical is added as these days substances to enhance subjective happiness are widely available, by prescription or on the street. Nothing new there, rituals of old often used substances with similar effects.



I see the same elimination of the spiritual dimension in 'modern' thinking about happiness as I encountered in ritual. So this appendix about happiness offers an opportunity to try to bridge ancient and modern views of happiness. A new approach to integrate them is presented.

Happiness: interwoven with ritual

Feeling good or connected to the group or church as the goal or as the by-product of rituals makes sense. Relating happiness to the ritual process however involves more than just the psychological, again I can point at the three world approach. The magical aspect is mostly ignored in modern approaches to happiness.

This wasn't always so. The concept of happiness has a long history in philosophy, the old Greek, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas wrote about it in the context of virtue, hedonistic pleasure and theology, but these days the study of happiness has become a fairly materialistic and rational thing.

One looks at subjective happiness scores, mostly relating happiness to success and achievement in what is now called 'positive psychology', writes books about how to become happy with all kinds of suggestions, positive thinking or tries to explain the biological happiness in terms of chemical processes. The spiritual is reduced to self-realization or individuation, but most studies and theories focus on very mundane things like the relationships between affluence, religious affiliation, democracy, age, marriage, and at effects of dopamine, serotonin or oxytocine neurotransmitters on subjective happiness.

Classical thinking

The Greek knew that the body and emotions were linked. Their concept of the four humors, yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm, explained for them the differences in personalities among humans.

The Greek notion of happiness is not materialistic, but has to do with ethics, duty, virtue, living a true life.

Socrates suggested to keep interested in the truth, to make sure one's soul is as good as possible, honoring the (mental) virtues of prudence, temperance, courage and justice/(charity).

Aristotle argued that happiness cannot be identified with pleasure. Pursuing pleasure is futile, short-lasting, and he also noted that activity accompanies pleasure. He considered eudaimonia, translated as happiness but with a spiritual (daimon) tendency, to be the absolute aim of human thought and action, not being relative to other goals or qualities like wealth, intelligence, and courage.

Aristippus of Cyrene developed the philosophy of hedonistic happiness, arguing that the goal of life is to seek (extreme) external pleasure.

Antisthenes, the father of Cynic philosophy, advocated an ascetic life lived in accordance with virtue. A modest, peaceful and natural life, listening to the soul, dissolves the inner tensions and brings happiness.

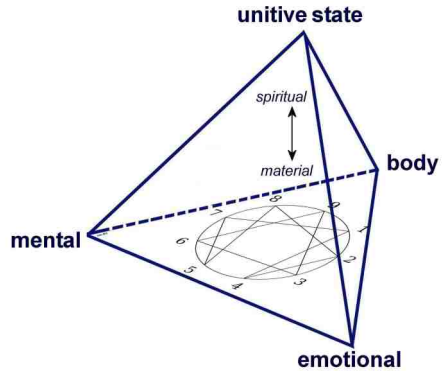
"Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little."

This quote from Epicurus also suggests a moderate, tranquil life, no excesses, a self-sufficient life surrounded by friends, a more rational form of hedonism.

According to Dionysus the Areopagite the human soul longs for God. This yearning can be satisfied only by the mystical union with God. Through purity (katharsis), enlightenment (photismos) and completion (teleiosis) one can reach the knowledge of God.

Authentic human happiness for the Roman Plotinus meant identifying with that which is the best in the universe. This is beyond worldly fortune and the physical world, and is open to every human being. He was one of the first to state that happiness is attainable only within consciousness.

The happiness tetrahedron



The truly happy human being would understand that which is being experienced affects merely the body, not the conscious self, and happiness could persist even in averse conditions. Very much like the Advaita Vedanta position of the East.

Marcus Aurelius also points at this subjective aspect:

“If you are pained by external things it is not they that disturb you, but your own judgment of them. And it is in your power to wipe out that power now.”

St. Augustine wrote a whole book about human happiness.

“all persons want to be happy; and no persons are happy who do not have what they want.” (De beata vita)

He believed the ultimate goal of all human endeavor lies in happiness, but not because of worldly goods, material wealth is perpetually subject to the fear of loss. Lasting happiness is possible only by living in God. It is in our love of God that we find permanent and enduring happiness. Augustine defined virtue as our best and deepest love of God.

“Virtuous behavior pertains to the love of God and of one’s neighbor; the truth of faith pertains to a knowledge of God and of one’s neighbor. For the hope of everyone lies in his own conscience in so far as he knows himself to be becoming more proficient in the love of God and his neighbor.” (De Doctrina Christiana)

Augustine’s thought on happiness concerns our vulnerability to the material things of this world:

“It is beyond doubt that the one cause of fear is either that we will lose what we love after attaining it or that, despite all our hopes, we will never attain it at all.” (De Diversis Quaestionibus).

Arthur Schopenhauer established a system of empirical and metaphysical pessimism, but as a way to happiness. He saw the world as unhappy:

“vale of tears, full of suffering. All happiness is an illusion. Life oscillates like a pendulum, back and forth between the pain and boredom”.

Jeremy Bentham’s ethics aimed at the greatest happiness for the greatest number (great-

Four qualities of life

	Outer qualities	Inner qualities
Life chances	Livability of environment	Life-ability of the person
Life results	Utility of life	Appreciation of life

from: Ruut Veenhoven (Four qualities of life)

est-happiness-principle).

Ludwig Marcuse believed that there are only some moments of happiness in life, but that great permanent happiness does not exist.

John Stuart Mill realized happiness is temporary, appreciated afterward but not experienced when too conscious:

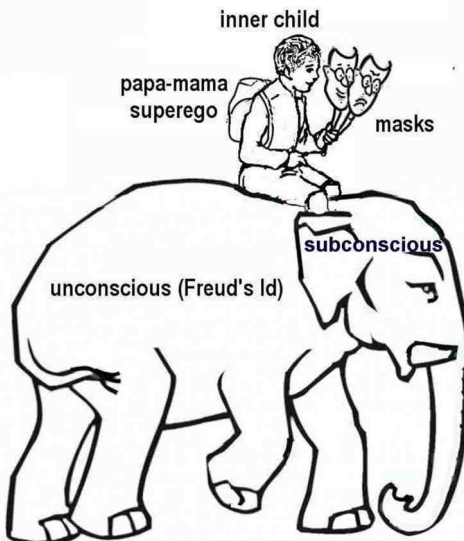
"But I now thought that this end [one's happiness] was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness[....] Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness along the way[....] Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so.

Viktor Frankl in *Man's Search for Meaning*:

Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself.

Friedrich Nietzsche wrote:

What is happiness? The feeling that power increases — that a resistance is overcome.



Does ritual bring happiness?

People like Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale believed in positive thinking. These days psychology is not only the science of pathological or otherwise less optimal functioning of the mind, but with positive psychology, thanks to Martin Seligman, Howard Cutler, the Dalai Lama and Jonathan Haidt a new perspective emerged.

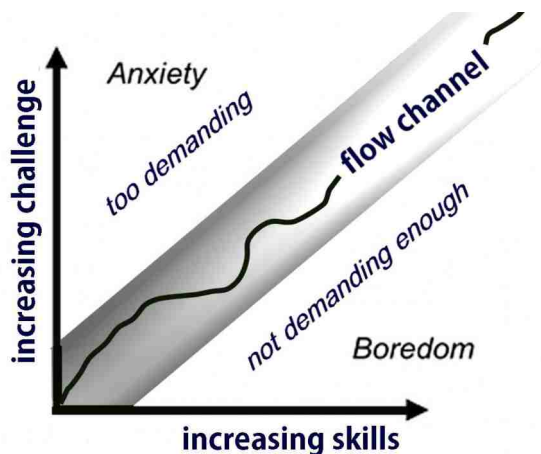
Modern psychology, it feels, now deals more with happiness in material sense and less with the mystical happiness.

Flourishing, success, there are different words for experiencing or achieving a state of contentment, connectedness, well being and peace of mind.

Positive psychology has opened a path toward not only seeing human happiness as the result of external circumstances beyond one's volition, but as something that can be systematically trained, manipulated and improved.

This positive vision is not without criticism. For one I think the extradimensional has not been given a proper place, the magical effects of positive thinking

are only accepted as a kind of rewiring the brain. Another objection is that it promises more than it delivers, that the wishful thinking is not enough to be happy in the real world. That reality often blocks this path to happiness is confronted by writers as Barbara Ehrenreich, who in her book "Bright sided" exposes the downside of positive thinking, like personal self-blame and denial.



Flow: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

In the context of ritual, achieving or receiving happiness seems to be one of the aims of performing ritual, in a very materialistic sense assuming worldly prosperity is a factor, or more spiritually trying to unite with the all. Again we can distinguish the three worlds, there is the mind happiness, the social happiness and the spiritual happiness.

The Happiness Tetrahedron

The various notions about happiness are not really linked to personality types. I think this is where a better insight in what an individual can do about their happiness mechanisms emerges. I think using a scheme like the enneagram offers the possibility to distinguish between the various inclinations and if a material/spiritual dimension is added (like in the happiness tetrahedron picture) one can see a Maslow kind of hierarchy in the vertical dimension. The illustration shows that the basic three modalities of body, mind and heart can be mapped this way, but other typologies could be used as well. The ultimate spiritual happiness like in the samadhi or satori state, or the Unio Mystica is then at the top. One could see this as being in the cen-

ter of the enneagram where the ego dissolved. It seems that deep spiritual happiness is only there in a non-self-consciousness state.

I believe that the various neurotransmitters active in happiness could be classified according to this picture, and resonance between the personality type and chemical induction of emotions could be established. See below at Chemical Happiness.

The problem here, as with all current typologies, is that a person has multiple selves (masks) with each an enneagram type. By looking at one mask and finding out what makes it more happy, one might ignore deeper layers and the inner child self.

Achieving or receiving

In 'The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World' (2009) by the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler the notion of happiness is sketched as something achievable, something we can exercise, a skill and ability related to conscious effort. That we have a genetic inheritance and actual living conditions that may or may not offer us much happiness is kind of ignored. The positive "can do" message with emphasis on good relationships, trust, a positive attitude, empathy and compassion makes for good book sales, but has little depth. The otherworldly influence, so significant in Lamaism with its rituals, saints and demons, is ignored.

Positive material happiness

Happiness experts like Ruut Veenhoven see rituals as life chances, offering advantages in psychological and social well-being and thus helping along happiness. This is a practical view, they acknowledge the positive effects like in personal (peak) experiences, group identification and the sense of meaning, see the danger of sometimes oppressive religious communities, but without the spiritual dimension. Veenhoven argues, based on his global research into subjective happiness that:

"The term happiness exists in every culture, it's universal. Happiness, meaning the extent to which you enjoy your life, is the same everywhere".

The terms 'happiness', 'quality-of-life' and 'well-being' denote different and overlapping meanings, concerning values, merits or states of being.

Ruut Veenhoven's research is mostly about the subjective quality of life. In 'The four qualities of life' (2000) he orders the various concepts and measures of the good life. He proposes a scheme based on the differentiation between life 'chances' (potential) and life 'results' (outcome), and between 'outer' and 'inner' qualities. He uses the indications in this scheme to clarify the various notions.

- » Livability of the environment is about quality of life and well-being, welfare, level of living, the biotope.
- » Live-ability of a person covers notions like adaptive potential, health, efficacy, potency, fitness.
- » Utility of life covers notions like meaning of life, transcendental qualities.
- » Appreciation of life covers subjective well-being, life satisfaction and happiness in a limited sense.

He concludes that quality-of-life can not be measured comprehensively, only in a very broad way and he has compiled happiness statistic from all around the world in a “World Database of Happiness”.

Happiness, in his definition, can be measured only by asking people how much they enjoy life, and this brings happiness close to the idea of satisfaction. The danger he sees is that ‘quality-of-life indexes’ mix up satisfaction with possible sources of satisfaction, like income, social contacts and health. He argues that the more general question about how one feels, how one enjoys life as a whole, is more relevant and clear.

Veenhoven sees rituals as a life chance factor in the livability of a culture quadrant in his scheme.

Happiness Hypothesis

Jonathan Haidt, in his book “The Happiness Hypothesis”, uses the image of the elephant and the rider, the conscious mind trying to steer the mostly unconscious and stubborn elephant with its own drives and needs. The elephant moves automatically and this frees the rider from a lot of routine decisions, but also limits the perception of reality.

This image feels like a combination of Freud’s image of ego and id, but it doesn’t honor Plato’s notion of the psyche as the driver of two horses. I have added some elements to Haidt’s unruly elephant and the driver on top, who only picks up part of the reality out there because of his masks and his upbringing. The drives sees a reality or rather thinks and constructs a personal and not always happy version of the reality, Haidt calls this “thinking makes it so.”

Cognitive Bias

We are not able to get an objective answer about how happy we are, just how happy we think we are. This has to do with our self image, our assumed selves are our false selves, biased in



many respects and with unconscious blind spots.

The study of cognitive biases maps our mental blind spots. We think we are looking for the truth, but often we are confirmation and affirmation seekers. We tend to believe what the people around us believe and we keep up with the

Joneses. We are more looking for security, authority from others and simple explanations than for truth, and this constitutes a happiness trap. Unhappiness is often the result of frustrated unrealistic expectations, of misjudging reality and false perceptions.

Happiness Formulas

Haidt/Seligman: Happiness = S + C + V

(S) consisting of our genetics and history
plus the more or less fixed conditions (C) of our life,
and then the freedom we have in voluntary (V) or discretionary activities.

but as things change (dynamic in time) a delta is added

$$H(t) = S \times C \times \Delta V$$

$$H(t) = \Delta(S \times C \times V)$$

or happiness = freedom to change

Happiness formulas

Haidt came up with a formula for happiness, also used by Martin Seligman:

Happiness = S + C + V

The capacity for happiness is the result of a set (S) consisting of our genetics and history plus the more or less fixed conditions of our life, and then the freedom we have in voluntary (V) or discretionary activities. Happiness equals your Natal Set point (what you came with), plus your life Conditions, plus the Voluntary activities you choose to engage in.

The genetic factor accounts to something between 30 and 50%, based on twin studies, but modern insights like epigenetics indicate more plasticity in this factor. The actual result of the programming of the DNA is influenced by the environment.

The freedom factor V is considered the most important factor to influence our happiness. There are many suggestions and short-list like Seligman's PERMA (in "Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being"). The acronym stands for Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement.

There are other happiness formulas like:

- Jimmy deMesa's $H = G + (DH + C/3) + 3R$ "Happiness" (H) is equal to your degree of "Gratitude" (G) plus the fulfillment of your own personal "Definition of Happiness" (DH) plus your level of "Contribution" divided by 3, plus attention to the "3 R's" of life (3R), which are Relationships, Rules, and Regrets. Here gratitude - a focus on the positive

aspects of life - is used, as inversely proportional to unhappiness. Contributing to the lives of others is an essential component of happiness for everyone.

- ❑ Another one comes from Todd Kashdan whose advice is to “Stay curious, live in the moment and look after your health”. Feeling Good = $(M \times 16 + C \times 1 + L \times 2) + (T \times 5 + N \times 2 + B \times 33)$. The factors are: Live in the moment (M), be curious (C), do something you love (L), think of others first (T), nurture relationships (N), and take care of your body (B).
- ❑ Scott Adams’ Happiness Formula is $:) = \text{Health} + \text{Money} + \text{Social Life} + \text{Meaning}$

The ones above and some similar ones have received much attention, but are rather static. The dynamics of happiness, as being both a process and a state, are not well represented. A state of happiness doesn’t last long, we need new stimuli all the time. The Hawthorne effect in motivational studies is well known, we constantly need new stimuli or incentives for motivation.

My version of the happiness formula would therefore to use a (Δ) sign to indicate the time factor, but using the Haidt formula. I would also not add up the factors, but multiply them as they mutually influence each other.

$$H(t) = S \times C \times V$$

The factors S and C are more or less stable, but of course one can change the conditions of one’s life a bit, so we could add some freedom to those factors too.

$H(t) = S \times C \times V$ or simply that happiness is related to how much we can influence things, but the effects have diminishing returns. The first drink of water when thirsty makes you happy, the second already less.

A happiness formula like Haidt’s or my adaptation of it may work for aggregated situations and groups or even nations, but offers less for the individual.

Individual happiness is so dependent on the life scenario of the soul, the assumed selves (egos) and the sub- and unconscious factors that the very general suggestions in the happiness literature may work or not.

The situation is similar to dietary suggestions, there is some value in the general approaches, but individuals are very different and even if something works for a short time, often there are no lasting benefits.

For individual happiness suggestions I developed the happiness tetrahedron described below.

Hedonism

Happiness and pleasure are related, doing what you like, hedonism, may bring happiness but it’s not guaranteed. The paradox of hedonism (Henry

Sidgwick) is that pleasure can only be acquired indirectly, or inversely, that pleasure and happiness cannot be reverse-engineered. To achieve happiness, one cannot seek happiness directly, one must motivate oneself to do things one likes, seek activity and relate to pleasant others and things. like music, arts, sex. Health and happiness are mutually beneficial, and there is research (Happy People Live Longer, Bruno Frey, 2011) indicating that happy people live 14% longer, increasing longevity 7.5 to 10 years.

One of the questions concerning happiness is whether working on happiness from the outside or the inside is better. Just as in the case of health, both approaches can have positive results, but one has to be careful not to focus on symptoms rather than deep causes.

The same applies to whether one should work on individual or social happiness. Both are important and influence each other, for both there are certain minimum levels of comfort.

The flow

The concept of ‘flow’ as advocated by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is part of the ‘positive psychology’ insights. Flow is a state of consciousness accompanying an activity that generates genuine satisfaction. During such intense experiences one feels strong, alert, in effortless control, unselfconscious, and at the peak of one’s abilities. In a flow state one is completely immersed in an activity with intense focus and creative engagement.

“The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, 1990)

Csikszentmihalyi argues that happiness is not a fixed state and does not simply happen, but must be developed and cultivated by setting individual challenges that are neither too demanding nor too simple for one’s abilities. This is a dynamic process, one grows in skills and handling challenges. Optimal experience is something we make happen, he says.

The key to flow is mind-control: in the flow-like state, we exercise control over the contents of our consciousness rather than allowing ourselves to be passively determined by external forces. The essence of flow is the removal of the interference of the thinking mind.

There is a funny contradiction here, he mentions both control and unselfconsciousness. I think that the notion of getting into an inner me or ritual state explains better what happens in such a flow situation. In ritual there is the same paradox, the need for conscious effort to dissolve the ego and become unselfconscious.

In flow, most of the brain's available inputs are devoted to one activity and this results in a different perception of time, ignoring discomfort, and focus. Again, the parallel with the ritual state is obvious.

Flow points or flow state can be experienced in yoga or in what Buddhists would call mindfulness, satori or deep meditation. The activity there, however, is not directed outward, but it is inward concentration with no bodily or emotional effects, but the same peak experience and self-forgetfulness.

The difference is that such spiritual practice assumes that the optimal mind is at rest and in peace, while Csikszentmihalyi believes the normal state of the mind is chaos. He writes:

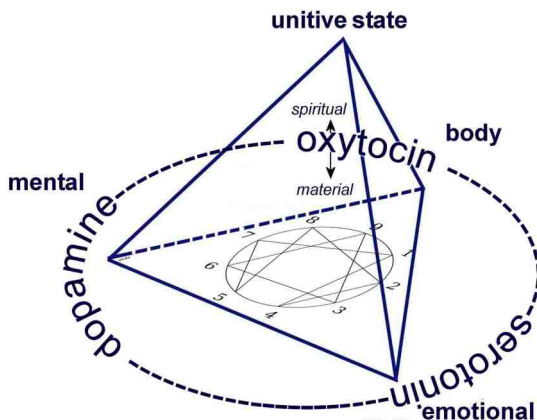
Contrary to what we tend to assume, the normal state of the mind is chaos ... when we are left alone, with no demands on attention, the basic order of the mind reveals itself ... Entropy is the normal state of consciousness — a condition that is neither useful nor enjoyable.

This is not exactly Eastern thinking. The Zen “chopping wood and carrying water” is not exciting or challenging and yet considered virtuous and happy.

Csikszentmihalyi identifies a number of elements in achieving flow:

- There are clear goals every step of the way.
- There is immediate feedback to one's actions.
- There is a balance between challenges and skills.
- Action and awareness are merged.
- Distractions are excluded from consciousness.
- There is no worry of failure.
- Self-consciousness disappears.
- The sense of time becomes distorted.
- The activity becomes an end in itself.

The happiness tetrahedron



Csikszentmihalyi sees achieving a flow state as something under voluntary control. One can become autotelic (self-directed) by:

- Setting goals that have clear and immediate feedback
- Becoming immersed in the particular activity
- Paying attention to what is happening in the moment
- Learning to enjoy immediate experience
- Proportioning one's skills to the challenge at hand.

Martin Seligman extends Csikszentmihalyi's work in making a distinction between pleasures and gratifications. Pleasures are states that have clear sensory and emotional components, gratifications are marked by energies that demand strengths and allow to lose self-consciousness.

The problem I see with positive psychology is it suggests happiness moments can be achieved without much effort, and that being unhappy is a matter of not taking care. One needs to build a reasonable confidence in one's own powers to be successful or happy. This carries a hidden message. Being unhappy is your own fault, quite a verdict for those in a situation they have little control over.

Happiness (and unhappy) moments sometimes just happen, caused by accidental circumstances or consciousness states we don't understand or control.

The chemical happiness

It is often not clear whether happiness is an emotional qualifier, a state of consciousness, a process or qualification and whether it's a subjective or an objective description. In individual cases it obviously is subjective, but has a relationship with objective biological qualifiers like dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin levels, skin resistance, brain wave frequencies, etc.

The field of neuroscience argues that happiness is the result of electrochemical reactions in the brain brought on by stimuli of the senses or drugs. Nobelist Francis Crick's hypothesis is that :

"you, your joys and sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated neurons"

Quite a materialistic opinion, little room for the extradimensional here.

On the other hand, psyche and brains do have an intimate relationship. There obviously is a kind of reward system in the animal and human brains (in the nucleus accumbens) that regulates the release of pleasure-inducing chemicals like the neurotransmitter hormone dopamine, associated with feelings of happiness and other moods.

Some hormones are survival oriented. Endorphin, the body's natural morphine, is triggered by physical pain and can cause euphoria. Dopamine happiness is the result of success, it's triggered when you get a new reward and gives new energy, new stamina. Oxytocin happiness is an emotional and trust induced substance, it facilitates bonding between mother and child, and between sex partners or with like-minded people. Serotonin regulates mood, appetite and sleep and can act as antidepressant. Serotonin happiness is triggered when you feel important, in control. The hormone cortisol is the result of stress and is a negative factor, eating away at the hippocampus and attacking memory functioning. There are other hormones, like progesterone and testosterone, active in other aspects of happiness.

The brain only releases happy chemicals for specific aims and for a limited time. Of course the relation between psyche and brains works two ways. What you think makes the brains react and what the brains feels, through electric or chemical stimulation, the psyche experiences.

This means, for the materialist sciences, that we can trick our brain to cultivate positive states of mind, given the right combination of stimuli. Of course these hormones and chemicals are to be balanced, just adding one or cause more production of one of them may disrupt the balance.

This means that once we understand the neural bases of happiness, gratitude, resilience, love, compassion, and so forth, those states can be induced by external stimuli or we can exercise being in those states to train our brain. The neurotransmitter norepinephrine for instance is related to gratitude.

I have added a ring of neurotransmitters to the happiness tetrahedron illustration to indicate that some of them resonate with some enneagram types, in combination or alone. This is the individualized chemical path to happiness. I believe that more research in what for instance psycho-active substances like psilocybin or MDMA do, would help to clarify the mechanism of happiness, especially in relation to the various personality types.

Happiness in the cyberage

In a world where practical and physical human contact, with the postman, the baker, the doctor, priest, physical friends and the political establishment is increasingly replaced by new media, virtual social networks, Facebook, Skype, chat or email contact happiness might be jeopardized. Many people now rely on often illusionary circles of cyberfriends, the old time cohesion of society and having intimate friends is replaced by superficial cloud contacts. This contact virtualization will probably increase, driverless cars and logistics, robot policemen (Google makes robot-soldiers), automated health-monitoring and treatment are on the horizon. Privacy and the learning possibilities of failure are, if you don't want to be exposed to NSA

screening, limited to computer gaming. All our social interactions will soon be public property.

I think that new cyberspace and physical rituals are important to counter this assault on happiness, but I fear rational science and materialistic economics will not easily accept this option.

Happy people, a dream

For some, and I subscribe to this notion, life and whatever it brings is a perfect and necessary lesson, but many don't thank, but blame chaos, Fate, God or whatever they believe to be the source of all for what is bestowed upon them. Blaming God is one of the ways to escape one's own responsibility for happiness.

I once (March 1, 1997) had a dream, in my Hilversum home, about happiness. I was in the dream, sharing a kind of vessel or vehicle pace with a group of people, some of them I knew, some not, but seemingly there was nothing special. But the vehicle was in the air and looking out I could see the earth and we were moving toward New York, as suddenly the image kind of expanded, bringing me into an altered state of consciousness, and the whole vehicle and I moved into a dark nothingness. I noticed some devilish figures, somewhat blue and laughing, not unfriendly but interested and affirmatively nodding at me. And then I got back into that vehicle, but the group energy had changed, very slight but there were other detail like a flower here or there, a bow tie, smiles, some of the group were happy now!

This was an *aha-erlebnis*, in this dream I saw happy people amidst the others, and they went around and mixed with the "normal, the unhappy ones. Then a game or rather a ritual started, the people dived into two groups, it had something to do with where you came from, the one group were people from Amsterdam. In the middle of the room a kind of wall of pillows and mattresses was made, and the game was that the one group had to act "Happy", the others "unhappy".

The Amsterdam folks were the "happy" ones, that was traditional someone remarked. The purpose of the game was to teach the participants, how to be happy in a kind of role-play, by assuming a happy/unhappy role within the group, that consisted of happy and unhappy ones. The happy ones were the ones to show the others how to be happy and there was something about fake it till you make it.

When I woke up, I realized there are happy ones among us, that I have met some of them, and they were important role models in my life. These people were "real" in a special way, not overly kind or comforting, but in touch with their soul, and recognizing and honoring the inner soul, the divine flame in me. This is why the traditional "Namaste" greeting of the Nepali

always touches me, to recognize and honor the divine in the other is a sure step toward happiness.

Now those among us, who believe in life as the perfect path toward unity are the happy ones, they made this an inner truth, even as their life might look difficult for others. This “Guild of the Happy” as I like to call them, has no organization, but a clear mission and an important one. Living and radiating their happiness is their special path laid out for them. They are the living proof of the care the universe (God) has for all of us.

This is a Guild where everybody is at the same time apprentice, journeyman and master, and where it’s the task of the master to reveal this, in an interpersonal way, not as a mass event.

The transfer of this awareness, the knowing of the heart, the Gnostic truth, is less a matter of words, it’s the transference of love, inner truth, at another level than the cognitive.

Talking about happiness I realize I am getting very close to love, a subject however that is so wide and so much part of all that I trust the reader will recognize love as a perspective underlying all of this book.

VII - The ritual matrix

A ritual matrix can be small or very large. In order to get some idea of how different aspects and parts of a liturgy influence the three worlds, here a rather long list is compiled with data. The interpretation of the result would require even more comparative data but this matrix gives an overview of how a matrix could look with some fairly general readings.

	Description ritual action participant perspective	set	setting	magical- correspondence	group energy step
planning					
	purpose	10	60	30	60
	people - officiants	30	50	20	250
	materials	5	10	25	30
	liturgy choice	40	50	10	20
	garb	20	40	20	12
	astrological timing	12	30	60	3
permissions					
	permission proprietor	5	10	0	1
	permission devas	30	20	55	14
preparation					
	fysical space-location	5	10	5	40
	spirit. cleansing space	10	30	20	12
procession					
	out of circle	15	25	10	140
	cleansing participants	40	40	5	50
	intention participants process.	60	30	10	400
	in the circle	10	45	10	800
dedication					
	circle - space	10	20	85	40
	physical (cornflower etc.)	30	40	0	400
	virtual circle opening	10	20	10	90
invitation					
	entering circle	10	40	10	220
	union-participation of all	30	45	5	1400
	spirits & directions	5	10	90	50
	blessing	5	10	30	200
	salt-water-incense	15	30	5	300
effect of					
	clear purpose	20	50	17	900
	isolation from world	10	40	25	400
	unwelcome audience	-10	-50	-40	-120
	welcome audience	10	20	30	250
	physical tools & implements	25	5	50	30
	garb - costumes	30	10	5	200
	liturgy - scenario -order	30	10	50	2100
	focus and intention	20	30	50	3000
fire					
	preparation	5	45	10	20
	lighting	10	20	80	120
	symbolic immolation	30	40	0	240
	oblation	5	10	90	200

Word					
	invocations	10	15	50	140
	Incantations	10	30	10	20
	creed	40	50	10	20
	Homily, sermon	15	50	5	10
	Intercessions- adoration	5	10	5	5
	Thanksgiving	20	30	95	110
Songs					
	group songs	15	35	5	5
	call & recall	30	35	10	22
	performance	5	30	0	3
Dance					
	group	20	15	30	90
	constellation-choreogr.	10	15	15	1200
	performances	10	30	25	10
gift-offerings-sacrifice					
	to cover expenses	10	80	0	0
	devotional offerings	25	5	40	130
	magical offerings	10	20	55	500
	virtual group (pledge)	10	50	5	5
	virtual personal	50	10	20	110
	sacrifice bodily	90	10	90	210
Devotion					
	meditation	25	40	20	15
	prayer silent	20	25	10	10
	prayer group loud	30	40	10	25
	prayer loud individual	40	90	5	10
	silence	30	110	250	180
sacraments					
	confession	40	10	50	300
	charging	10	15	50	120
	Transmutation	10	15	15	120
	Eucharist (transubstantiation)	25	30	40	60
communion					
	officiants	10	30	50	40
	participants	20	30	50	20
	participants taking part	250	600	0	400
	Bacchantic Dionysian	25	25	0	200
closing-thanking					
	participants	25	25	5	2
	deities	5	10	95	40
	circle closing	5	30	0	5

data obtained by divination

VIII - PSI-matrix: a comparison of psychedelics

This matrix gives the characteristics and dimensions of various psychedelic substances (C=Cannabis, E= Ecstasy MDMA, A=Ayahuasca, L=LSD, P=Psilocybin, M=Mescaline, K=Ketamine, Al = alcohol) in a relative numerical relation (1-100 some exceptions). The values are not absolute. They are indicative, general and approximate values, individual experience

<u>Entheogen</u> qualities	C 30,	E 64,	A 40,	L 66,	P 68,	M 30,	K neg,	Al 24
Oceanic/mystical	C 20,	E 45,	A 65,	L 55,	P 50,	M 30,	K 90,	Al 8
<u>Empathogen</u>	C 17,	E 60,	A 25,	L 16,	P 35,	M 42,	K 12,	Al 35
Stimulant	C 8,	E 48,	A 15,	L 27,	P 36,	M 70,	K 10	Al 65
Hallucinogen	C 34,	E 15,	A 75,	L 55,	P 68,	M 40,	K 85	Al 5
Visual effects open eyes	C 17,	E 18,	A 25,	L 40,	P 35,	M 22,	K 77	Al 28
Auditory effects	C 37,	E 30,	A 20,	L 45,	P 70,	M 47,	K 10	Al 15
Olfactory effects	C 25,	E 20,	A 17,	L 25,	P 25,	M 24,	K 35	Al 15
<u>Kinesthetic</u> effects (tactile)	C 25,	E 40,	A 25,	L 45,	P 35,	M 15,	K 80	Al 40
Sensory effects (arousal/sexual)	C 56,	E 25,	A 18,	L 37,	P 60,	M 40,	K 12	Al 40
Clairvoyance	C 4	E 10,	A 22,	L 34,	P 46,	M 36,	K 60	Al 12
Oracle quality	C 25,	E 30,	A 47,	L 62,	P 38,	M 28,	K 80	Al 26
Magic quality Q10enz=66	C 35,	E 20,	A 30,	L 30,	P 36,	M 43,	K 16	Al 13
Body awareness self	C 15,	E 45,	A 50,	L 60,	P 42,	M 28,	K 60	Al 40
Body awareness others	C 28,	E 60,	A 30,	L 24,	P 56,	M 22,	K 8	Al 60
Lifting boundaries/psych armor	C 25,	E 85,	A 55,	L 24,	P 38,	M 20,	K 2	Al 18
Ego dissolution	C 10,	E 18,	A 25,	L 10,	P 13,	M 22,	K 77	Al 8
Out of Body potential	C 16,	E 26,	A 40,	L 20,	P 23,	M 18,	K 46	Al 10
Suggestibility	C 28,	E 55,	A 13,	L 28,	P 25,	M 54,	K 2	Al 64
Reality assessment; driving etc.	C 20,	E 65,	A 6,	L 30,	P 25,	M 47,	K 2	Al 5
Dose (for adult 80 kg/170 pnd))	C 8 Thc,	E 125,	A --,	L 0,0,	P 35 pure,	M 55		
Onset (timescale relative)	C 4/75,	E 70,	A 30,	L 55,	P 40,	M 25,	K 30	Al 18
Peaking (time)	C 10/85,	E 90,	A 70,	L 70,	P 55,	M 80,	K 150	Al 55
Duration of plateau	C 22,	E 45,	A 80,	L 58,	P 40,	M 45,	K 90	Al 25
Duration of altered sensation	C 43,	E 70,	A 110,	L 75,	P 50,	M 38,	K 140	Al 27
Duration of mood C <u>hange</u>	C 68,	E 35,	A 90,	L 15,	P 35,	M 60,	K 60	Al 40
Physical discomforts (onset)	C 10,	E 26,	A 100,	L 60,	P 60,	M 38,	K 25	Al 4
Risk of addiction	C 66,	E 30,	A 15,	L 10,	P 45,	M 66,	K 120	Al 70

Positive mood effects after 24 hrs	C 16,	E 68,	A 50,	L 16,	P 72,	M 4,	K 26	Al 8
Negative mood effects after 24hrs	C 42,	E 12,	A posit,	L 15,	P 27,	M 65,	K 17	Al 60
Positive body effects (healing) 24h	C 20,	E 15,	A 45,	L 8,	P 30,	M 15,	K 8	Al 12
Negative body effects/exhaust 24h	C 25,	E 34,	A 4,	L 18,	P 36,	M 45,	K 45	Al 45
Effect on heart	C 35,	E 18,	A 50,	L 58,	P 35,	M 27,	K 70	Al 14
Effect on liver (negative)	C 4,	E 20,	A 70,	L 12,	P 55,	M 39,	K 15	Al 70
Use as psychotherapeutic tool	C 45,	E 85,	A 30,	L 53,	P 40,	M 20,	K 5	
Booster effect (same dose 3 hrs)	C 60,	E 70,	A 55,	L 14,	P 30,	M 20,	K 35	
Effect on brain, memory (negative)	C 32,	E 44,	A 25,	L 37,	P 58,	M 28,	K 32	
Effect on pancreas (negative)	C 30,	E 15,	A 37,	L 28,	P 19,	M 16,	K 26	Al 50
Effect on kidneys (negative)	C 14,	E 28,	A 42,	L 18,	P 20,	M 20,	K 36	Al 60
Food sensitivity general	C 12,	E 25,	A 65,	L 5,	P 25,	M 23,	K 4	Al 25
Food sensitivity to MAO	C 20,	E 30,	A 80,	L 12,	P 70,	M 16,	K 2	Al 3
Food sensitivity to protein	C 12,	E 8,	A 35,	L 8,	P 25,	M 15,	K 3	Al 10
Chakra 7	C 22	E 23	A 16	L 20	P 47			
Chakra 6	C 65	E 44	A 70	L 58	P 34			
Chakra 5	C 77	E 55	A 24	L 30	P 64			
Chakra 4	C 70	E 35	A 57	L 30	P 30			
Chakra 3	C 48	E 20	A 24	L 30	P 35			
Chakra 2	C 28	E 27	A 29	L 66	P 40			
Chakra 1	C 15	E 3	A 65	L 25	P 32			

riences might vary. These data are given for research and scientific purposes only.

IX Hindu and Vedic Fire Worship

Fire played and plays an important role in the religious manifestations of the Indian subcontinent and in the Mesopotamia cultures, which have influenced the Vedic culture in India. Although the old Zoroastrian religion only survives in the Farsi community in parts of India, the worship and use of fire in rituals are quite essential in Hindu life. The vast majority of the Hindus engage in religious rituals on a daily basis at home, notably tending the home fire, the *agnihotra*.

These are usually more compact and less elaborate versions of the extensive Vedic rituals. There are many life-cycle rituals and sacraments in Hinduism, some discussed earlier in this book. Here we concentrate on fire-rituals.

Agni: the divine fire

The use of fire as a means of worship is very ancient. Agni is the Godhead that is called upon, then considered being the Chief of the Gods. The fire rituals are described in elaborate detail in the Vedas and the Brahmanas. The Rig Veda opens with:

*"I praise Agni, the chosen
Priest, God, minister of sacrifice..."*



Vedic ritual (J. Houben)

The deity Agni is the Lord of the Fire in the Vedas. He is the oldest and most honored God. Although part of the trinity of Agni, Vayu, and Surya, he is also all three at the same time and the oversoul of the solar system. He symbolizes the mental, being the overlord of that area.

Pujas, small fire rituals honoring a specific deity, are very common in the Hindu faith. Hinduism is a wide religious umbrella, with many branches. The pujas accompany the many events, feasts, and commemorations that are part of the Hindu life and liturgy. A *havan* (North India) or *homa* (South India) is similar to a puja in the sense that these are common modes of Hindu worship.

These fire rituals use a sacred fire and are symbolic forms of communication with the Gods. The words “havan” and “homa” each derive from the Sanskrit root hu, meaning to offer, to present, and to eat. The pujas and havans are simplified fire rituals compared to the elaborate ones from the Brahmanas and Vedas, but with the same basic meaning and with simpler sacrifices, like rice.

A havan ceremony involves a priest, a host(s) and guests sitting before the kunda (fire-altar) while mantras are recited and various items such as ghee, rice, herbs, foodstuffs, and other items are placed or ladled into the fire. Mantras are recited to ask the fire (Agni) to accept and pass on the prayers and offerings to the intended deity or deities. A puja can be part of the procedure, aimed at different Gods and combined with havans.

The classic Hindu/Vedic Agni-rituals in India are much larger and last sometimes as long as 12 days and have 17 priests. They have massive offer-



ings, huge constructions and altars for the sacrificial fires with sometimes a thousand bricks, specially made implements, vessels, tools, and careful preparation and training of the pundits (hota(r)s) involved.

They are very costly and are, in modern times, rarely performed.

Not many are still familiar with the liturgy, and the tradition is slowly disappearing, as the written texts are not sufficiently clear to stage such a ritual without some experience.

Finding, making, transporting and maintaining fire was of great importance in the life of the semi-nomadic Vedic man. The fire is central in most Vedic rituals, among them the simple twice-daily Agnihotra that is also part of the Hindu tradition.

Vedic tradition

The role of sacrifice in the Vedic tradition is essential; it was their way to connect the personal and the impersonal, also a way to ever renew the religion, as a personal sacrifice defies dogma and stagnation of a faith.

The Vedic fire rituals (related to the Vedas) were elaborate events with many priests and a complex liturgy involving multiple fires, the sacrifice of horses, cows and goats as well as throwing milk, but also gold, gems and other precious items into the fire. Part of it is the preparation of a special drink, called soma. What exactly the soma was, with what herbs it was made, is lost. It is assumed to have been a psychedelic concoction.

Sanskrit and anthropology scholars like Frits Staal and Jan Houben have studied these rather extensive and long rituals and even had them specially performed. There have been some recent performances of these rituals, but the tradition is in danger.

The Vedic rituals use Agni as the main communicator and were not performed at a fixed place like a temple or church. In line with the semi-nomadic pastoral culture of the early Aryans they were held in the open air, with new (stone) fire-places and altars being constructed for the occasion.

The style of these rituals fitted the lifestyle and ecological possibilities of North-West India at the times, the Aryans invaded India around 1900 BCE.

Their way of using the forest might have been detrimental to the ecology. It may have been a factor in forcing them, later, to change their lifestyle to sedentary agrarian with fixed villages and temples.

The Hindu faith, with much variations, has evolved from the Vedic roots, but still honors the original hymns and scripture, the Vedas. These were originally transmitted only orally, and only written down much later, sometime after 300 CE.

The newer Hindu rituals are called Agamic, referring to the Agamas. Those are a collection of Sanskrit, Tamil and Grantha scriptures mostly about temple construction and creation of idols, worship means, philosophical doctrines, meditative practices, attainment of sixfold desires and four kinds



Vedic ritual (J. Houben)

of yoga. This as fitting the later development of the culture. There are many, many variations in Agamic denominations in Hinduism.

Vedarambha, Hindu investiture of Sacred Thread (Janai)

In the life of a Hindu boy, especially of the higher castes, the dedication to a teacher and the Gayatri-Mantra is a very important ritual. It is a male rite of passage with formal and physical signs, the boy then becomes a true Hindu, with rights and obligations.

It brings one of the most important mantras, the Gayatri Mantra (dedicated to the Sun) to his life. It also often involves Upanayana or taking the child to the teacher, the guru, for further spiritual education. The Sacred Thread he receives is an outward sign of dedication (to follow the rules) and the formal commencing of studying the Vedas (Vedarambha). It is performed in the eighth (Brahman caste), eleventh (Kshatriya) and twelfth (Vaisya) years of the male child calculated from the date of conception.

The Gayatri mantra is about Savitur (the sun) and is the most powerful of the Mantras. The Initiation into it is called 'Brahmopadesa'. It's supposed to lead to the realization of Brahman (the Supreme Reality).

Along with this mantra the Guru (Acharya) imparts his Shakti (power) to the child; hence the spiritual teacher and the disciple are connected by means of a silken cloth over their shoulders at the time of the initiation into the Gayatri mantra. The procedure starts with cleaning and a water ritual and then a Havan, a sacred fire ceremony where the student participates by making oblations with ghee into the fire.

One of the mantra's makes clear what the purpose is:

"I am offering this abuti (oblation) to add to the burning flame of the Yajna (holy fire) that is mighty in nature and present in all the created beings and objects of the world. As this fire blazes forth with the samidha (wood-fuel), so may I shine with wisdom, knowledge of the Vedas and of Brahman (God) and may I be endowed with vigor, long life, progeny and wealth. Grant long life to my Acharya and to his sons. May I be enriched with high intellectual power. May I not be arrogant to anyone. Grant me prominence, vigor, divine merits and food and grains."

The important role of the fire is also clear when the boy, with a little holy water on his hands, holds them near the fire to warming it and then puts it over his face and on the head., saying:

1. *This fire is the preserver of the body. May it preserve my body.*
2. *This fire is the giver of life. May it grant me long life.*
3. *This fire is the giver of brilliancy. May it grant me brilliancy.*

4. *Whatever gets exhausted in my body, let this fire replenish that.*
5. *May Savita grant me wisdom. May the goddess Saraswati grant me wisdom.*
6. *Let the teacher and preacher, wearing garlands, give us knowledge.*

The student also offers prayer to the fire with a mantra directed to the Gods.

May Agni, the Self-refulgent God, give me wisdom, progeny and strength, May Indra, the almighty god, bestow upon me the favor of wisdom, progeny, and properly developed organs. May Surya, the all controlling god, grant me wisdom, progeny and brilliance. O effulgent and powerful Lord, grant me effulgence, power and prominence.

The Acharya teaches the Gayatri Mantra to the student:

“Om Bhurbhuvah Svah Tatsavitur arenyam Bargo Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat.”

The student is given a girdle and a wooden staff, a deerskin to sit on, one pot to hold water, and two small pots. The student accepts the staff saying:

This staff that I hold, I accept it specially for the attainment of long life, knowledge of the Vedas, for adherence to my vows, for disciplines and strength of continence.

Pravargya Jyotistoma ritual

This is one of the larger and older Vedic fire rituals. Prof. Jan Houben has been so kind to let me use his video material of such a Vedic ritual and explained many details in an interview we did for my television channel Kleurnet. I refer to his explanations here.

Jyotistoma is a yajna (set ritual) meant for the elevation of the yajamana (the host) to heaven, i.e. the Loka or world of the gods. It's a complex procedure with lots of priests doing all kinds of things, but the main liturgy is as follows.

The sacrificer (yajamana) of the Jyotistoma is the host, the one who can be seen as the one who ordered (and pays for) the ritual and will have the place of honor. On the first day of the Jyotistoma, after his morning Agnihotra, he formally invites the priests to perform the sacrifice for him. Among the priests the hota is concerned with recitation and hymns of the Vedas, the adhvaryu takes care of practical matters, the udgâta is the chanter of hymns set to melodies (sâman) drawn from the Sama Veda, and the Brahman is the superintendent of the entire performance.

The sacrificer then transfers (ascends) the energy of his own daily Agnihotra onto a fireboard and fire sticks (the Aranîs), the same from which once his household Agnihotra fire was “churned.” The sacrificer

then takes these Aranis and walks toward the newly erected fireplace, together with his spouse and the sixteen priests, while reciting the first hymn of the RigVeda.

In the sacrificial area, the first fire of the Jyotistoma sacrifice is lighted by pressing and rubbing the fire board and fire stick against each other, making a new fire. The whole sacrificial area is laid out according to the detailed ancient instructions. It has three fireplaces, the Garhapatya or Domestic Fire, Ahavaniya or Offering Fire, and Daksinagni or Southern Fire

There is also Rajasandi, the King's Throne for the Soma stalks, Samrad-asandi, the Emperor's Throne for the Pravargya vessels, methi and mayukhas, the peg and pins for the cow, the calf, the she-goat and the lamb, a khara or mound, Uttaravedi altar and nabhi.

The ritual procedures are at first performed in the Pracinavamsa or "hut directed eastward." The whole thing centers around the preparation of the soma (holy beverage made of herbs). On the day immediately preceding pressing of the herbs (minimally the fourth day), the ritual activities move to the Mahavedi, or large offering space, that has been measured out with much precision, taking the sacrificer's length as a measure. The fire is transferred in procession from the offering altar in the Pracinavamsa to the Uttaravedi, the altar in the east of the Mahavedi offering space.

Soma

The Mahavedi, where there are small constructions to protect the pressing and sieving of soma and the reciting, is the place where the pressing of the Soma, the offering of the Soma to the Gods by oblation into the fire of the Uttaravedi, and the consuming of the remaining Soma beverage by priests takes place. The place has been made comfortable by spreading soft grass to serve as seats for the Gods and for the priests. All this clearly indicates that the soma of old had some inebriating or hallucinogenic effects, but the knowledge of the correct kind of herbs used then are lost.

The Vedic texts suggest in poetic language that Soma brings wakefulness, alertness, and euphoria. After the soma consumption there is a final bath and then the materials used for small coverings are burnt. The fire of the altars is then ascended (virtually transferred) to the Aranis and the sacrificer takes them home.

Soma is the name of the mysterious plant or herb from which a beverage is pressed and supposedly has a certain effect on the mind. The plant and drink are worshiped as Gods.

The Mithra drink Haoma is pressed in a way which is similar to the way of pressing Soma and a similar poetic image is used. The Soma as god has become an independent entity, apart from the material basis in the form of the pressed juice. In the hymns that are now more and more identified with

Soma, he appears as a god that provides a clear mind, that finds the light and a way out of distress, dispels diseases, gives fame, happiness and richness. The chants (Samavedic Samans) are effective in bringing about an altered state; they are full of rhythmic melodies, patterns of repetition with variations, etc.

The name Jyotistoma is equivalent to Agnistoma, which is the basic form of a group of rituals that will be called Jyotistoma in the broad sense of the term.

Pravargya

The Pravargya is an oblation ritual in itself. It is never performed on its own, but always in the context of the Soma-sacrifice, for instance in the form of the Jyotistoma. The most important object in the Pravargya is a pot of clay filled with clarified butter (“ghee”) and heated on the fire.

When freshly milked cow and goat milk are added to the boiling ghee, an impressive pillar of fire arises. It’s a kind of pyrotechnic effect that is intended to help associate the heated pot with, among other things, light and the sun, as the associated songs also indicate. In the next stage hot milk and yoghurt (dadhi) are offered into the fire from the pot. Finally, the participants (sacrificer and priests) consume what is left after the offerings. The Pravargya ritual is full of symbols which suggest intimate relations between the cosmos, the ritual, and man.

A number of verses recited in the classical Pravargya derive from the so-called Riddle Hymn of the RigVeda. A close study of this hymn has shown that the hymn may be subdivided into parts which are applicable to specific episodes in the classical Pravargya ritual. The relation between the classical Pravargya and the Riddle Hymn point to an “initiatory” character of the Pravargya, which also expresses itself in various other aspects of the Pravargya.

Modern performances of Vedic rituals

The first large performance of a soma-sacrifice which can rightly be called “modern” is the Agnicayana organized by Frits Staal in Kerala, India, in 1975. The tradition of Vedic rituals had become quite weak, and without the encouragements and support of Staal and his team, the ritual would probably not have been performed.

In this performance it was necessary to take into account all kinds of new circumstances not referred to in the traditional rules of the ritual. The ritual was to be filmed, and extensive sound recordings were to be made. The media paid much attention to the sacrifice, and there were strong protests

against the killing of sacrificial animals; at the last moment it was decided to use vegetarian substitutes for these.

The successful performance by Staal stimulated also traditional Brahmins to engage again in the organization of large Srauta rituals. Since then, some more elaborate Vedic rituals have been performed and more films have been made to preserve the tradition.

Literature

Given the fact that there are thousands, probably tens of thousands of studies and titles about magic and myth, the number of publications about fire and especially fire rituals is much less. In fact, there are surprisingly few books about the subject. Earlier in this book a number of relevant and influential sources are mentioned.

Again I have to point to Frits Staal, as he did one of the most extensive studies into specific fire rituals in the Vedic/Hindu context. His book ‘Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar’ is a classic. It describes in great detail the agnicayana ritual, of Vedic origin and dating back to nomadic times, the significance of Agni, the way the altar is built, the implements, the ritual enclosure, the priests and their roles, and how the ritual is staged- mostly based on an April, 1975 performance of this ritual.

This 12-day ritual in the Vedic/Srauta tradition involves animal sacrifice and has three fires. In the second volume of his book, Staal offers his own and others’ perspectives on this ritual, the archaeological context, references to other traditions, and translations of various sutras.

Staal was interested in linguistics and in the way a language was organized and grammar developed. He denied that rituals have meaning and this started a heated debate among ritual theorists.

In “Rules without Meaning” Staal suggested that mantras predate language in the development of man in a chronological sense. Mantras are a combination of Pali or Sanskrit words intended to bring about an altered state of consciousness. He argued that there is evidence that ritual existed before language, and that syntax and the development of language was influenced by ritual. I agree with him there.

X - Holy Mass - Eucharist; a classical ritual

One time I was, by chance, attending a Holy Mass consecrated in the presence of not only a Cardinal but high officials from other religions, in a grand cathedral in Antwerp, with a lot of pomp and circumstance, a great choir and devout congregation. Quite a happening and as this was in my early days of experimenting with magical settings, I decided to take a seat nearly in the middle of the cathedral, a strategic position.

As the service progressed I realized that the officiating priests were not really on par, not realizing what the magical part of their service really entailed. So as consecration was about to happen, I decided to use my own powers to help “charge” the wine and bread. This sounds preposterous, and was certainly obnoxious and sacrilegious, but I knew that nobody would notice my little sorcery act. Charging substances is quite a normal practice in magical context and even though I could not be close to the bread and wine (usually we use our hands like the priest does but might not recognize it as a magical routine) I knew how to use intention and attention, and the setting was great!

The effect was interesting, especially after the officials present and the congregation partook in communion. The sanctity and spiritual frequency of the whole lot really took off. It even led to some disturbance to normality, for

as the whole lot was leaving the church in a kind of procession they intuitively made three rounds instead of the single circumambulation the liturgy indicated.

Now of course the gaiety and happiness I perceived could have been projection, I may have been witnessing what I believed, rather than what others experienced. Nevertheless it showed me what setting can do, and how my mindset and the whole context could work.

This experience awakened my interest in how the Roman Catholic Church has kept its traditions alive even while the belief of many has waned, and



Elements of Mass

	mind set	communi- ty setting	magical effect	weight relative	chakra focus
Introitus-preparation : ritus initiales					
Procession	10	80	10	1	5
Greeting, Blessing	30	60	10	2	6
Confession, Act of Penitence. ask for Absolution, forgiving sin	50	40	10	5	4
Litany: petitions, asking for help from God, Maria, saints	40	60	0	1	5
Kyrie: The Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy)	10	25	65	15	5
Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water:	30	60	10	3	1
Gloria in excelsis Deo (Glory to God in the highest)	40	50	10	9	7
Collect, a moment of silence and a prayer of purpose	50	40	10	3	3
The liturgy of the Word - Liturgia Verbi					
Liturgical Readings: readings, psalms in between					
Scripture, Old Testament -profetic passages about Christ	40	35	25	12	5
Reading from Acts or Pauline epistles	40	25	35	3	3
Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation	50	50	0	2	7
Scripture Bible, Nwe Testament	60	40	0	14	2
Preaching, homily, a sermon	40	60	0	13	3
Collection, contributions of money given by the congregation	30	70	0	11	4
Credo: The Creed, Profession of Faith:	25	50	25	22	5
Oratio: Commemoration of the Saints, prayers for departed	45	55	0	3	1
Intercessory prayers for church and often, earthly rulers.					
Liturgy of the Eucharist Liturgia Eucharistica					
sometimes open only to believers in good standing					
Washing of hands	25	55	20	2	1
Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts	20	60	20	9	4
Prayer over the offerings; Offertory	20	60	20	2	6
Prex eucharistica - Eucharistic prayer					
Sursum Corda	40	45	15	12	6
Sanctus /Benedictus exclaiming "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord"	30	40	30	12	7
Epiclesis: calling the Holy Spirit	30	40	30	16	2
Canon: anaphora (holy oblation). Consecrating	15	50	35	35	7
by recalling the words and actions of Jesus at his					
Last Supper, the bread and wine His Body and Blood					
offered in remembrance of his Passion					
Doxology, lifting up the paten with the host, Amen	40	35	25	4	4
Lord's prayer (Pater Noster)	40	35	25	12	5
Prayer for peace (Ritus Pacis) The sign of peace exchanged	50	40	10	4	6
Agnus Dei -Lamb of God (Breaking of bread - Fractio Panis).	45	40	15	7	1
Holy Communion					
The priest receives the communion of bread and wine	10	80	10	16	4
The congregation receives communion	90	0	10	22	4
The Concluding Rite - to carry the Gospel out to the world					
Announcements	10	90	0	0	5
Blessing	40	60	0	3	2
Dismissal ("Ite, missa est")	50	50	0	1	3

how their sacraments are so moving for the devout. To show how the three world model works in analyzing a ritual I will therefore use the example of the Eucharist or Holy Mass, a well know part of the Christian liturgical routine. It is, in its general form, a ritual with a well established liturgy and ritual matrix.

The Holy Communion of the Christian religions is also called the Sacrament of the Altar, the Blessed Sacrament, the Lord's Supper and it is a Christian sacrament or ordinance. It is a re-enactment of the last meeting of Jesus with his disciples and done in accordance with Jesus' instructions recorded in the New Testament. The word comes from "eucharisteo", giving thanks.

Mass is a ritual of sacrifice and adoration, of propitiation (mercy, forgiving of sins) and petition (asking for grace and blessing, also in a material sense like health). Many things have been said about the Holy Mass. Undoubtedly it is a solemn, well staged ritual with much specific wording and movements but at the same time there is much debate about details. There are many variations among Christian churches, and arguments as to whether the sacrificial character is real or just symbolic.

Looking at it from the outside, the most obvious intention is to remember and celebrate the human sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The eating and drinking of consecrated substances that are supposed to be the body and blood of Jesus is somewhat macabre.

However, by using the archetypical Human Sacrifice combined with energetically charging substances that are consumed, the Holy Mass brings together very strong magical technologies into one standardized event with the odium of eternity.

The magical act

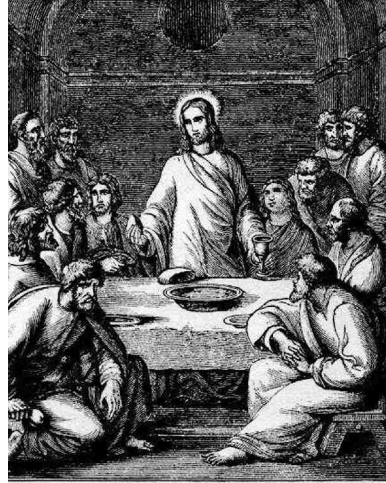
The Eucharistic Prayer is the central act of the entire celebration, it begins with a prayer dialogue between priest and people and then the Sanctus, an acclamation of the holiness. The Canon is the most solemn part of the Mass, it means "the rule" and indicated this is the eternal, never changed part, time ceases to exist, all is now as God comes to earth at the words and acts of the priest. To indicate this moment, a server rings the cymbal or the bell three times. The priest begins the Canon by bowing low. he kisses the altar, to show that he is united to Christ, Who is about to offer Himself.

The Institution Narrative and Consecration recall the words and actions of Jesus at his Last Supper, which he told his disciples to do in remembrance of him. In the consecration or transubstantiation the bread and



wine are changed in the sacramental body and blood of Jesus Christ. The priest performs this by placing his hands over the Chalice and Host, the subjects of sacrifice, symbolizing the transference of sins so that the sacrifice would be a victim offered in penance for sin and indicates that Christ gave His life for our sins.

Showing the host, the supposed to be the body of Christ to the people is done in a specific way, elevation them high up. This is accompanied by the words 'Ecce Agnus Dei. Ecce qui tollit peccata mundi' (Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world).



In comparing this central part to the way substances are “charged” in many magical rituals and by many spiritual people there is little difference, clearly there substances or objects are being given a special energy, attention and intention.

It is clear that the liturgy of Mass prepares both priest and congregation for the magical moment, brings them in the required ritual state by words, posture and acts. The whole setup, supposed to be identical through the ages, is about focus, about letting go of individuality, stepping out of time (joining with what happened 2000 years ago) and becoming the impersonal performer of the sacrament, within a sequence that one knows by heart like a mantra (sound) and mudra (hand positions). It is duly internalized and can be performed in a meditative state.

Of course for devout Christians comparing the consecration to the charging of a substance or object in a “heathen” ritual form other traditions or in a healing context feels like sacrilege. Would such a comparison take away from the special value of the Holy Mass?

Let me state that I believe that the Christian Mass is an exceptionally well designed ritual, adapted and honored over time, combining strong elements in an effective way, where the quality of the officiator is not decisive for the outcome, he can follow the liturgy and render an acceptable “performance”.

I do think that over time some crucial understanding got lost, liturgists were more concerned with words, details, theological disputes about the sacramental qualities that looking into the magical quality. The work of C.W. Leadbeater in the liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church is an inspiration in

this respect, he understood much more about energies and correspondences than most theological eminences.

The songs and hymns

The Church has even understood that too much repetition would be boring and has introduced variations in texts and songs. The fixed songs and texts are called *Ordinarium Missae*: Kyrie · Gloria · Credo · Sanctus · Agnus Dei · *Ite missa est*, the changing parts are the *Proprium Missae*: Introitus · Graduale · Alleluia / Tractus / Sequentia · Offertorium · Communio, while the readings from the Bible also change daily.

The use of incense, candles, the imagery and layout of a church as the place where Mass is held, all helps to increase the effect on mind, community but also the magical effectiveness. The church in a way becomes a place for the initiated, having received the sacraments they understand the symbolism, they are part of the mystical union with Christ. The partaking in Mass has mystagogical value, helping the faithful to enter the deep reality behind the liturgy.

The magical quality

As for many the Holy Mass becomes a routine, devoid from the true contact with the spiritual, we can see it as an empty ritual, a ceremony; some heritage that we honor but without much efficacy beyond the psychological (well being, part of a group) and community (social effects).

This however, doesn't need to be true for all, there are still many people who experience the spiritual connection offered and priests who recognize their important role in providing an interface between the worlds.

Of course there are differences, probably a Mass consecrated by a very holy and dedicated person in a very inspired setting in a beautiful church at an auspicious time will yield more effect than one with less "quality". The whole setup however offers a reasonable chance of ritual efficacy, even if the conditions are less optimal and as such it is not a wonder that this has always been a core part of religious life for the devout Christian.

The ritual matrix of Holy Mass

If we take the various parts of the Holy Mass and look at what their effect is on set, setting and magical correspondences, or in other words how they influence the mind, the community and the spirit world (God) a matrix can be set up.

I give here, in the form of such a matrix with the main components of Holy Mass listed, an outline of the structure and give values for the relative im-

portance for set, setting and magical effects. To come up with the relative importance values and the weight (how the one element ranks versus the others) I use a pendulum technique. This of course leads to a subjective ranking but with the advantage of yielding numbers to look at the various influences and effects, it's a quantitative comparison.

These divined values only intended to illustrate the approach. As I explain in the appendix about using a pendulum, the exact numbers are not so important, it is in constructing a matrix that hidden deep relations often come to the surface and bring new insights.

This approach also makes clear how a ritual matrix can be established and what it could contain. The Mass, as it probably incorporates many elements of earlier rituals (notably the Mithraic and the Jewish Passover meal) offers a good overview of a general ritual. What is missing maybe is the social, the celebration at the end, the fertility part, where in Dionysian fashion the orgiastic element would be. In early Christian communities, there was an Agape or Love Feast prior to Mass, where food and wine were consumed, probably to excess as even Paul mentions this (1 Corinthians 11:20-34). The practice was later forbidden, maybe some took its meaning too literally, there must have been hippie-like folks even then. Having coffee and cookies after Mass these days is a way to fill in the missing part, the Agape meal shows up in some traditions, even in Freemasonry.

The exclusion of any reference to sex in Mass is in line with the Church tradition (at least in the Roman Catholic Church) of having only celibate male priests. The interesting part is that the female/male union is replaced by the union of people and church as in a holy matrimony, the union with the Holy Spirit replaces the more earthly union between people. In that way the second chakra is honored in another way but not excluded. The fertility comes in at a higher level, a bit like the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz of the Rosicrucians, far beyond the physical union.

Holy Mass is a great example to show how rituals were staged, long before we would analyze things in psychological terms. It survived, was adapted, changed but still there is a lot of the original energy. To indicate how it is set up and what factors play a role, I give a set, setting, magic and chakra focus table to illustrate how and where the focus and effects of various part of the Holy Mass are. This table is a subjective (divined) estimate and maybe not more than a personal estimate. It's a matrix with a lot of information, some is logical, other number are surprising but require some deliberation to see they do make sense..

The perspective of the matrix obtained here is that of the participant, the person in the congregation following the Mass, not the priest. I am also following the general Catholic approach, which sees Mass as a sacrament, with more than the symbolic value assigned to it in Protestant Churches. I

have taken the common elements, sometimes elements are specific to an event or time of the liturgical calendar but are included here to show the whole matrix of the Mass.

Interpretation

Quite a bit of data, and as you can see, the intuitive notions come through in divined numbers. The conclusions as to what is really important are in line with the traditional interpretations, like that the consecration and the communion are the most important. The other elements are important in building up to those central moments. What important in rituals is the emotion line, the same as in performances and movies the audience has to be led toward the high points, by gradually building the energy and also taking care of a come down after the peak. In theater performances there is the well know peak just before intermission, an a great final scene, in rituals similar emotion curves can be recognized and are part of a good experience, individually and as a community.

The energy and efficacy of the magical part is, as has been explained before, depending on how deep the officiator and the attendants can let go of their ego, how deep they dare to go in submission. For this things like security and anonymity, the possibility to kind of disappear in the group mood and actions are important. In Holy Mass this is done in an effective way, the priest becomes, after the sermon, more or less an anonymous officiant, he stands there representing the church as an institution, not as an individual but as a servant. This is one of the reasons why facing away from the people during the crucial moments of consecration, facing the Lord rather than the people is magically a better situation than the modern way of looking at the congregation, *ad populum*.

In the liturgy the emotion line is clear, there is a gradual buildup of the weight of the elements, the plot thickens. The emotion line of the whole sequence, the way the scenario is set up and cognitive and non cognitive elements alternate is brilliant, especially in the traditional liturgies. There must have been great ritualists in the Church, the more modern versions lost something, they are maybe more people-friendly and aiming at social cohesion but lost the magical efficacy and mystical quality. The variation in focus, in different positions (standing, sitting, kneeling), in song energy, the way different (sense) types are addressed (sight, sound, body), the use of smells, mantra like prayer, combining top-down (as in the sermon) and peer level (*credo*) to prepare the people and the priest for a sacred moment.

Look at how clever the Mass is also used as a tool to keep people in their place (as sinners and as separated from the sacred altar), and how over time things like social hierarchies became part of the setup, with rich folks having their own benches, one doesn't have to be a believer to see that here a

powerful ritual has emerged, even if only looked at it in the psychological and social perspective.

I have indicated a weight factor plus chakra focus. This weight varies per individual but I try to give a general idea. Subjectively, everybody has special moments. For me the memory of my father singing the Credo, standing next to me remains a strong anchor, even as I realized later he wasn't such a good singer and out of tune. That he stood out from the others was only perceived as special because he makes hearing a credo for me even now a small journey back in time.

The above matrix is subjective but shows some interesting trends, what struck me was the variation in chakra focus. Even a fairly basic element like water (1-st chakra nature) is used, by charging (for that is what holy water is) it very old magical practice is honored. In fact the whole transubstantiation at the consecration is a charging process. The Catholic Mass is still a magical ritual, full with powerful moments and (borrowed) magic. It's ritual at its best, even when nowadays attendants and priests might have lost the meaning of all the elements.

The magical focus of the Mass cannot be denied, this becomes clear when we compare it with for instance the Protestant version. In "The Lord's Supper" the sacramental character is less (Reformation was decidedly anti-magical) and the weight of the corresponding canonical act drops to 10.

I used Mass as an example of the approach I use to study rituals. A lot more could be deduced by looking at rituals in this way, especially comparing different intentions and liturgies but also by looking at what certain psychological types would consider important, how the perspective of the priest would be, if a mass by the pope would yield more magical weight, etc.

The purpose here is just to show how this method works and inducing others to divine their own lists and matrices. If enough people would do so and compare their results, as has been done with the Bovis-scale for water, a better understanding of how a ritual matrix works and of ritual efficacy could result.

XI - Lucidity, blueprint of the psyche

Can the theories and hypotheses presented in this book be made practical? Can the insights in what the psyche is and what rituals are and do, how they relate to how we act, feel and think, be used in creating ‘new’ rituals or therapies (which are rituals in themselves) that offer practical benefits?

I believe so, at least for some of the notions and ideas I have presented. In this appendix I will explain a methodology I developed and have used concerning the model of the psyche outlined in this book. It's a quick way to scan the structure of the psyche, pinpoint the various masks and selves and identify problems areas, and is mostly a diagnostic tool.

It is not only an application of the model of the psyche, but hinges on the capability to use special techniques (divination, kinesiology) to perceive beyond the normal. This is not unique, many therapist and doctors use such intuition, but it's usually not done in a very systematic way.

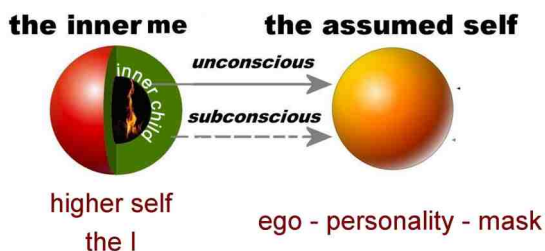
In the Lucidity approach, described briefly here (more in www.lucsala.nl/lucidity.htm), I use divination to arrive at what could be called the blueprint of a person's psyche.

There are many ways to look at the psychological profile, character or type of a person, but most take a long time and use complex rational ‘scientific’ methods with often lengthy questionnaires. They mostly work from a model and theory that is limited in that it recognizes only the normal dimensions, ignores the multiple and dynamic character of personality masks or assumes a stable self-image.

Methods and typologies like Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, Big Five, Zimbardo Time Perception, NLP, classical psychoanalysis and even astrology do indicate a certain type and behavior, but not the switch between masks or subpersonalities. I appreciate and use what they have to offer but these systems but don't really point to fundamental solutions and just offer symptomatic patches, I called this surface therapy. They deal with one's personality stumbling blocks and nasty patterns, but rarely touch the deeper layer. These methods often give no more than superficial insight in what a person assumes to be his or her self or is willing to show.

Especially the enneagram personality type approach is a great tool, has internal consistency and offers great insights, but the way it is usually applied only deals with our dominant person-





ality, not with the deeper structure of our psyche. Eli Jaxon-Bear is one of the few who pointed out, and he based this upon his Advaita notions, that it basically tells you who you are not, your false self. The enneagram is thus potentially also a tool to see the deeper self,

the hidden true me, but is not usually applied in this sense.

The whole picture

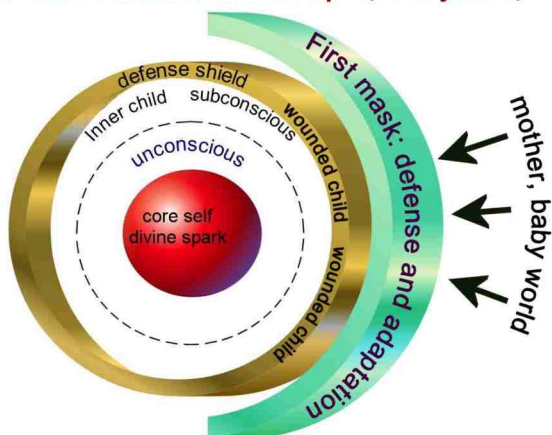
My interest has always been to look beyond the mask, beyond the assumed self-image.

I wanted a methodology that would allow me to quickly scan the psychological structure of a person, identify problem areas and would also suggest and evaluate ways to deal with those. I needed a diagnostic tool with enough detail to identify not only symptoms but also root causes, and would point at methods or approaches for treatment or therapy.

I decided to use a divination tool to come up with answers and profiles beyond that. This is not uncommon in alternative medicine, methods like “Touch of Health”, Kinesiology or Manual Muscle Testing are widely used. Divination with a pendulum is similar, except that the subject/client then is not the diviner. This limits the projection (unconscious manipulation) from the side of the subject, but of course transfers this problem to the diviner. I am an experienced dowser so I know the limitations and dangers.

I gave the method that I developed the name Lu-

the first defense builds up (1-2 years)



Sample Lucidity Form no data

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Indicators	Inner Child	Mask 1	Mask 2	Mask 3
How much in this mode (percent)				
Where in this mode (location/activity)				
General health in mode				
Spiritual frequency (awareness)				
IQ Intelligence in this mode				
Social Quotient				
Happiness level				
Main cause of unhappiness				
Chakra Focus main energy focus				
Weakest chakra - organ				
Breath rhythm/tempo in mode				
Time Perception (past-present-future) in pos/neg				
Purpose of life				
Main problem/main talent				
Age/looks differential				
Sexual orientation				
Sex-love coupling				
Sexual realisation				
s/m tendencies				
Autism				
ESP				
Depression tendency				
Food/digestion focus				
Acidity (pH)				
?				
add				
Individually relevant indicators				copyright L. Sala 2014

idity: it brings light into situations that are often rather dark and unclear. What I present here, notably the forms, are not the definite version, as it still changes and improves over time. This is a ongoing process. The name is also a play on words, my first name is Luc(ius). There exists also a Lucidity Institute in the USA that researches lucid dreaming.

The root of the approach is differentiating between the multiple sub-personalities or masks. We are a combination of selves, we have more masks or characters. I explained this in the chapter about the psyche and self.

Each sub-personality (character/mask) we have is different, with different talents, behavior, bodily functions, intelligence etc. The problem is that one perceives oneself as a coherent, undivided person.

This poses a problem, but also points at the solution. In the differences between the sub-personalities often lies the key to the cause of inner struggle, the saboteur, inner discourse and psychological problems, even illnesses.

To acknowledge that there are more masks in a person beyond the well known false/true self (inner me/ego) dichotomy is already quite different from most current thinking, so I had to find words that would be easy to understand. I use mask or sub-personality, but it's not the perfect choice, I admit.

Transpersonal therapist Manuel Almendro uses the word character to describe the various modalities, but sees them not as coherent pattern, as separate individuals, more as specific pattern of what he calls fractals.

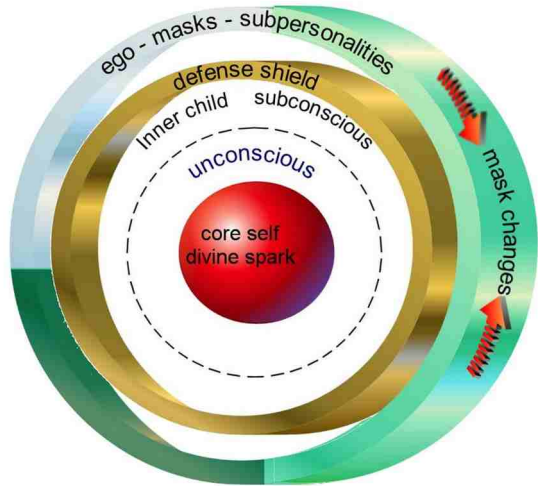
Anyway, whatever the indication or word, I am talking about different ways someone deals with the world around. Different in many ways, but not perceived as such, maybe only noted as moods or tempers.

I realized I could make list of characteristics for each mask to identify differences and distinguish them as separate identities.

Procedure

For many it's a bit embarrassing to be confronted with what is easily perceived as a split personality, one immediately thinks about multi personality syndrome. Overcoming this defense, making clear this is not abnormal, is a first step in the procedure. It is essential to get across that everybody has these multiple subpersonalities, although usually there is a dominant one.

So in the Lucidity approach this is the first step, explaining this situation. Sometimes this is easy, sometimes the person finds it hard to accept there are so to speak more people inside of him or her. Diagrams, examples of



A model of the psyche
with shifting subpersonalities

people they know and sometimes some support from relatives or friends, who normally know the moods or modes, are helpful in this stage. A certain trust and belief in the system has to be established.

Based on the more or less accepted notion of an inner child and personality or ego (masks) I normally can explain to the subject, the person being analyzed, what I will be doing. The challenge is to get the person to understand that he or she is not only the assumed self (the ego image), but that there are more subpersonalities or characters inside and expressed in behavior.

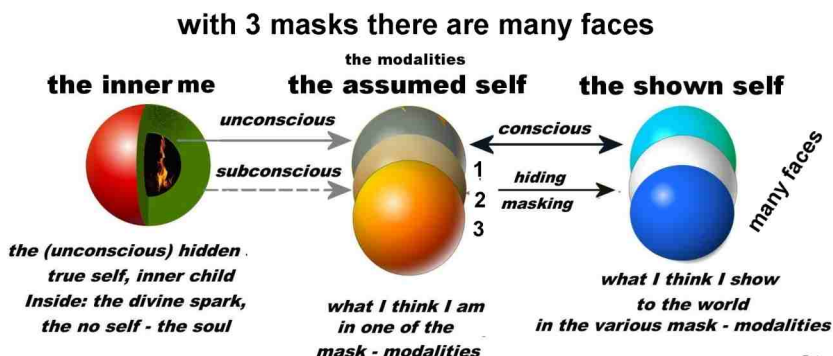
Once this is understood, the work can start, first establishing how many subpersonalities exists, how dominant they are and in what situations they are shown (active). The approach I use is not unique, methods like Voice Dialogue or PsychoSynthesis also address parts of the whole, but take a lot of time and don't deal with multiple masks the way I see them - defense mechanisms and armor as the result of traumatic experiences.

I can do this work without the person present, I can even do it for deceased people where I have some resonance with (like I met Steve Jobs in person), but prefer a one-on-one presence, as some feedback facilitates the process.

Here an important point needs to be mentioned and made clear to the subject. Many of us are more complex than just one inner child and one personality (ego/mask). I estimate some 70% of the people I estimate) we develop more personalities or sub-personalities. Usually this is because of traumatic experiences, such as abuse, accidents or diseases. Situations where the normal mask cannot handle the situation and a new defense is needed.

I tend to describe these as additional masks or characters, a workable generalization. Usually the first mask is dominant in the sense that it is 'worn'

The many me-images in a multi-mask psyche



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Explanation indicators

Indicators	Meaning and (some) possibilities	copyright L. Sula 2014
How much in this mode (percent)	The time in this mask made, including sleep	
Where in this mode (location/activity)	Work, home, nature, social activities, sex, sports, study	
General health in mode	Very healthy = 0, normal 3-5% , over 30% see a doctor	
Spiritual frequency (awareness)	Chakra 1-5 sequence levels 0-16-43-60-120	
IQ Intelligence in this mode	124= small business 126 = university, 130 = very smart	
Social Quotient	100 = normal	
Happiness level	0-100	
Main cause of unhappiness	Relation, money, purpose, respect, being seen, parents, work, God, emotion, goal, experience, education, travel, bewitched.	
Chakra focus - main energy focus	Seven chakras & brain, body, emotion	
Weakest chakra - organ	Chakras, liver, heart, kidneys etc.	
Breath rhythm/tempo in mode	Different modes, different breath, bloodpressure, heartbeat	
Time Perception (past-present-future) in pos/neg	Positive past, negative past, hedonistic present, fatalistic present transcendental future, goal oriented future (Zimbardo TP)	
Purpose of life	Material, relations, serving, adventure, learning	
Main problem/main talent	Creative, business, admin, exact, music, people, future, plants, animals, therapy, language, humor, spirituality, sex, psi.	
Age/looks differential	Looking older or younger than age	
Sexual orientation	Not only straight or gay, but level of bisex	
Sex-love coupling	Same partner monogamous or adventurous	
Sexual realisation	Level of having lived out fantasies	
s/m etc. tendencies	Sexual aberrations, often indicators for traumatic experiences	
Autism	0-100, more than 15 is serious	
ESP	Psi-talent, telepathic, sensitive	
Depression tendency	0-100, more than 15 is serious	
Food/digestion focus	Which factors: quality, cook, tempo, environment, company	
Acidity - pH	Acidity, indication of skin problems, osteoporosis	
?		
plus		
Individually relevant indicators		

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most of the times, additional masks can worn a lot or hardly ever, and depending on circumstances. When there are a lot of masks, usually the 'small' ones can be ignored. They are remnants of special circumstances that might never or rarely happen again.

The aim of the process

The goal of the Lucidity approach is to establish what modalities (subpersonalities/ masks) there are in a subject, how they compare with the inner child or core inner me, and what differences are substantial enough to cause specific behavior, diseases, imbalances and so forth. The differences between the various masks, characters or self-modalities are especially significant, they are the cause of many a psychic and somatic issue.

I will start the Lucidity diagnostic process with a more or less standard form, but may have to add additional indicators. This form, see example, is a table where the various characteristics of the inner child and one or more masks are listed in a logical order, starting with some basic features like intelligence, general health etc. I arrive (with a pendulum) at subjective (but repeatable and consistent) data or readings for the various indicators. There are obviously differences between what I gauge and how it's perceived by the subject/client. This is because the readings I get are based on my internal calibration, I get numbers that are repeatable by me and consistent but I don't always know or understand the scale. It's learning by doing.

If necessary I give the corresponding reading for people they know, myself or a public figure, to help the subject see where he or she stands. It is important to stress that the masks (egos) are not negative. Usually they form an effective way to deal with the circumstances and situation we were born into, we could not do without this ego system.

When I give readings (numbers) about social quotient, spiritual frequency, time perspective, etc. it is also necessary to build up some rapport. The subject has to see that the numbers make sense, that there is some truth to what I gauge. I make myself vulnerable by sharing details about myself, using me an example and touchstone, this is part of the process.

Gradually the items on the list go from superficial toward less obvious hidden characteristics, but it is important to continually check the results with the person to build some confidence. The process is not just a laboratory or questionnaire check, it is an interactive search for the deeper truth about a person. The best results are obtained in interaction, in a process of feeling and growing mutual awareness.

In following the list of characteristics on the form (I do give a copy or the original to the subject) the person becomes gradually aware of his or her modalities, sees where they come from, and maybe remembers traumatic experiences. It's a process of elucidating the structure of one's psyche. Often it's enough to point out where and what the differences and inner paradoxes are to start of a healing process. Healing or a solution starts with understanding the underlying mechanism, once "the light goes on" and people realize the cause of certain problems they change their self-image and often healing happens without further intervention.

It helps sometimes to explain the model in computer terms, like that there are two or more software programs (the personalities), running the same hardware (the body). Although I detest the notion that the human mind is nothing but a meat computer, the idea that the same body (with many auto-

matic programs) has different but internally consistent ways of interacting, reacting and dealing with the world is useful.

Following the list I not only explain but gradually show that the same body and brains (and automatic and autonomous systems of it) by being in these different modes not only display different responses, but there is a different ego or (sub) personality. This is a mask, but with its own IQ, sexual preference, ultimate goals, level of happiness, social patterns, responses and needs but also with shortcomings, malfunctioning and diseases specific to that personality or subpersonality. In short, I try to make clear that the outer personalities (mask or masks) and the inner child state are not only superficially different modes of being; they are fundamentally different.

The standard form printed here is only the first step in the process. As the matrix takes form more specific questions come up, and the standard form gives way to a more specific list. The process becomes more personal and the dowsing turns into a dialogue. Questions and answers follow in a process of finding solutions, going forward and back, retracing earlier reading data, especially data that seemed erratic before but can now yield new insights and perspectives. Gradually the person starts to recognize the various modes, and becomes accustomed to the idea that one can switch between modes and that the inner child mode offers different and important options for dealing with life. There one can discern the true path and scenario of the soul.

I believe that the fundamental differences between child and masks are the cause of many, if not most, dysfunctioning in body and mind. We might, after all, have developed defense mechanisms that once were useful, but become a burden to the health of mind or body. We are different in the different masks, for instance we might have a different time-perspective (TP) as Zimbardo uses it, a different enneagram type etc. It would be great to use such more general indicators, find out what enneagram types we are in the different sub-personalities, but would require that the client could handle such aggregate models.

Understanding the differences between the subs is a first step in trying to see what effect they have. This leads to diagnosing and eventually suggestions for remedy or therapy. It's the subject that in fact 'feels' what's wrong. Becoming aware of the differences and their roots in one's life or past is a very important process.

The standard list/form I use is the outcome of many sessions and has changed over time. As one could make a nearly endless list of personality traits, of functional parameters and characteristics that could differ between child and mask or masks, it is important to limit the work to those that are the most significant.

partial Lucidity Profile Steve Jobs

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Inner Child Mask / Ego
(true self)

explanation and possibilities

Percentage time	30	70	<i>normal = 1-3% in inner child (sleep)</i>
Prefer. location	home	work	<i>most likely displayed</i>
IQ	151	124	<i>110 = nl normal 124 college 126 = university</i>
Soc Quotient	450	20	<i>100 = normal</i>
Spirit freq.	130	16	<i>chakra 2 = 16 chakra 3 = 48</i>
Health alg	Nu 0	0	<i>100% = perfect 0 = deceased</i>
Sexual awareness	16	4	<i>chakra 1 = 0 chakra 5 = 240</i>
Magical awarenss	600	10	<i>chakra 1 = 0 chakra 4 = 60</i>
ESP	40	10	<i>extra sensory perception</i>
Trauma-source	karma 250	step father100%	<i>father/mother/family/school/church</i>
Weakest chakra	4th	3th	
Talent	Future	Children	
Feeling happy looking for	20 respect	40 relational	<i>0-100 scale</i>
Autism	2	12	
Depression tendencies	20	0	
Sexual orientation	99% hetero	99% hetero	<i>0-100 scale</i>
Sexual potential	11000	4000	<i>Normal plm 11000</i>
sadism/masoch.	20/15	90/0	
purpose of life	material	relations	
sex/love coupling	50	0	<i>100% is total coupling</i>

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Obviously there are indicators in the list that are more practical, general and informative than others. The problem with all these data, as anyone who has gone through the medical system knows, lies in the interpretation. How is one to define what is healthy, what is ill, what is disease, what is a problem and what a talent, what is normal?

A different approach

In the normal (allopathic) medical world one can also do a lot but there the data obtained (blood test, laboratory test, psychological test, MRI scans, etc.) are in most cases limited to one mask mode or modality. Interpreting those data ignores that the person while being tested could be in a mode that's just not relevant. Think about having a toothache in one mode, but

when sitting in the dentist chair the pain has disappeared miraculously because one has changed into another mode/mask.

Obtaining data from the inner child mode with the standard medical and therapeutic methods is possible but difficult. Patients can be drugged into their child mode or otherwise regressed into that state. Some people have more easily access or trained themselves to be there and use this state in artistic expression, as a healer, clairvoyant etc. Later in life the inner child sometimes gets more liberated and the original me, the child that we once were, is showing more.

Normally however (and apart from some inner child work specialists)in therapy or medical treatments no attention is given to the parameter differences between child and masks.

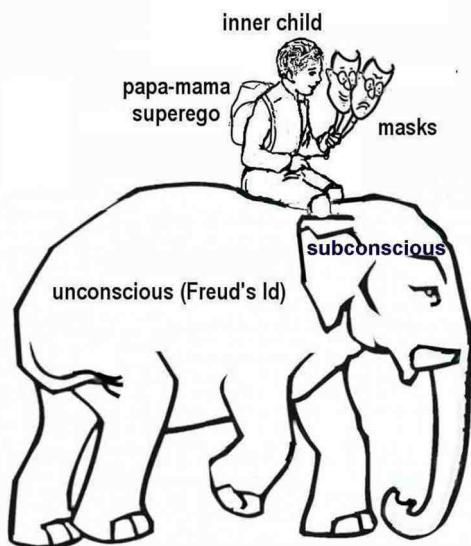
Because I believe those differences are the most common cause for malfunctioning or complaints, this limits the effectiveness of normal medical diagnoses and treatments.

Two or more personalities or modalities

I come back to the notion of multiple subpersonalities. The word “personalities” or even subpersonalities is a bit strong and makes one think of Multi Personality Disorder, or Dissociative Identity Disorder. It is nevertheless used here to indicate those programs, modes, characters or subpersonalities we often see described as the conscious personality, as opposed to the true self, shadow, wounded or inner personality, many words are used.

Each mode, which is experienced by others as a separate character, has its own breath pattern, intelligence, social qualities, sexual orientation, sexual preferences, talent pool etc., sometimes quite different.

Each mode draws upon and accesses their own “bag” of experiences, traumas and reflexes built up in our lifetime and stored in the body and the mind. This means that in one mode one can see a specific experience as traumatic, in another mode as just a



nuisance. In the one mode one can love the parents, in another hate their guts.

The switch-overs between masks happen very fast, the triggers for that are hard to catch or pinpoint. We ourselves and others may notice the resulting changes in symptomatic behavior, moods, stance. The switch from one mode to another happens unnoticed, but comes with a changed behavior.

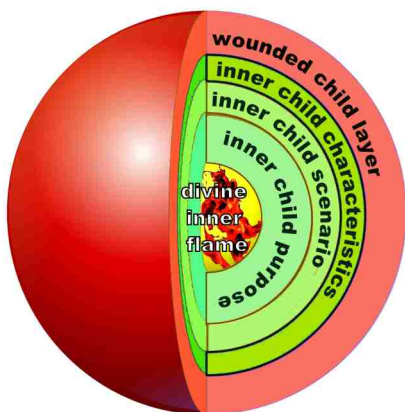
Making all this conscious is the way to integrate the mask(s), for this is the best we can achieve, it's not about only going back to the child mode. Becoming aware of certain patterns we can then adapt a bit, evade the effects, find cognitive solutions. Many therapies like NLP and the many behavioral approaches are effective in changing some aspects of the (dominant) mask, and adapt it to what the external world expects or requires. They can be effective in better coping with day-to-day situations. These adaptations however are superficial, they change at the level of the mask, the self perception and cause changes in behavior, but not the deep roots.

They do NOT really change the person inside, the inner child and the higher self. In fact, by dealing with some symptoms that are only symptoms of deeper fundamental problems in the psyche, they sometimes keep the person away from becoming aware of those deeper problems.

There are many similar therapies that can be used with some effect, the underlying roots however are not addressed in such symptomatic approaches. Only in the inner child mode, where the ego is dissolved, can we consciously address the root issues. By looking at the causes of the effects and relating them to the bag of experiences and traumas, the then wiser and more pure inner child can integrate them. Integration is the goal, not denial of the mask or masks, they are useful tools to deal with the world, but need to be applied in the right way.

The defensive character of our mask(s) already points at the problem, that therapy is only effective at the root level when the subject is in an inner child mode. This however requires the same from the therapist or healer.

It's not identified as such, but words as empathic, feeling, comforting, are often used to indicate therapists who can access such a mode and join their



**Layers of the
Inner Me or Higher Self**

clients in “being there”. Many ritualistic ways of healing by shamans etc. require that both healer and healer access another state of consciousness and enter a deeper level.

A fluid relation between the various modes, not denial but conscious integration is crucial in growth toward wisdom. It takes a lot of work however, sometimes illnesses and suffering, to liberate the inner child and develop it along the spiritual awareness axis. Our mask states still can and will be triggered unconsciously but we can learn to recognize the signals.

We might then discover that it is the deep connection to the higher self and divine oneness that underlies it all. Again it is clear that therapy and ritual are just two sides of the same coin. In ritual we also have the possibility, to reach the inner child state, which I sometimes call the ritual state, a special state of consciousness.

This explains why there are rituals and why there will always be rituals, for they are effective ways of healing and accessing deeper exchange nodes (primes). Rituals are acts, and therefore reach deeper levels than just language, but this is recognized in modern psychotherapy, as it was in shamanic healing through the ages. Our traumas, stress, frustrations and “buttons” are stored both in the body, as every cell and organ has a memory too (embodied cognition), and in the psyche.

Steve Jobs: an example

As an example of just a small part of the Lucidity approach I give some data about Steve Jobs. I have met him a few times, so there is a connection. In his inner child he was very creative, very smart, but this disappeared in his normal mask, his ego. He was raised by ‘red neck’ foster parents and had to adapt to their way of being. One could say he took over their personality. Not very nice, he was the worst boss one could imagine. But then, also because he experimented a lot with new age technologies (and mentioned LSD as a life-changing experience) he was able to connect to his inner child mode and be ‘there’ quite a bit of the time.

This is exceptional and since he had all this talent in that mode, he could (at home) use it to come up with great ideas, look at products and feel. He wasn’t a happy trooper and the differences between his two modes of being were sizeable, so there must have been internal unbalance. The mask-personality wasn’t nice at all, he mistreated people around him, was strong-willed and not very social, a bit autistic. By studying the numbers one can get an idea what kind of person he was, but also that, hidden from the world but accessible in a conscious way, he was a genius. A large difference in IQ, usually because of adaptation toward the family level, is usually

a source of much worry, but in Jobs' case he also had quite a bit of karma to deal with.

The mask characteristics are, in my opinion, not a given (nature) but a result of nurture (education, conditions of growing up) with at most a limited genetic (DNA) influence. This also means that I believe the characteristics of this mask personality are not fixed but can be changed or developed.

The wounded inner child

The true self, the perfect child in us that protected itself by building the mask or masks but got wounded and damaged in the process, is always still there. It is however hidden behind our defense patterns against abuse, pressure, bad conditions, lack of love, lack of touch, all human beings have picked some of these from the tree of abundant trauma. One could say that they did so with perfect understanding and by free will, their souls made the choice for incarnation in this life and with these parents, they created or picked the ingredients for the resulting mask or masks. From this perspective one could see the development of the mask and the lifelong struggle to come back to the higher self as the human condition, the storyline of one's destiny. And if we see that even in the same family and with the same bouquet of potential trauma and abuse, different kids pick different masks, this supports the assumption that the soul, the ultimate driver of our body-mind-spirit, is in charge of all this.

Our higher self, the core of original inner child, is the connection with the divine spark in us, is in essence a part of the divine. It connects, unites, does not separate, does not discriminate. It has those divine virtues, love, humbleness, patience, compassion, courage, wisdom, is creative and is where we communicate with the otherworld by way of the primes.

Subpersonality, not a willed state

This subpersonality or modality model I propose is somewhat different from Roberto Assagioli's notions of Psychosynthesis and the usual view on how subpersonalities work. There they are usually seen as functional adaptations to situations, like work, relationship, fights etc. In that view, a person can have many subpersonalities and sub-identities, which are supposed to kick in when needed, more or less under the control of the will. I believe, with quite a different perspective, that the various behavior modes or masks are formed in childhood or because of traumatic experiences we couldn't handle, and the subs will kick in because of triggers that remind us of the original experiences. They are thus involuntary but once recognized can be somewhat controlled.

Lucidity and its limitations

The methodology I use and developed, the Lucidity method, is based on the assumption that we can by divination measure even intangible parameters, differentiate them for the personalities or masks and so indicate potential inner conflicts. The method has been used and validated in hundreds of cases, not only by me, I have trained others to work in a similar way.

The problem with the method of course is that is subjective and uses a measuring technology not accepted as scientific. Yet most professional will agree that understanding, measuring and analyzing the parameters of the ego-system and the underlying inner child yields valuable insights for therapy and healing.

Here the notion of relative scales is important. It is not essential to use a scale or calibration that is universal, as long as one can repeat the outcome of even a subjective measurement. If I call a certain painting beautiful I can give it a rating, let's say 8 (out of 10). Now another painting is less attractive, so I give it a 6.

What makes this a practical approach is that later I can classify paintings based on this scale, on the condition that my subjective scale still holds and I would give the paintings the same value or ranking when repeating the evaluation. Consistency and repeatability can make a subjective scale and ranking practical and effective. Even esoteric notions as enlightenment, level of awareness, happiness and in fact all dimensions of our human "being" can in such a way be represented by numerical values. Those values are subjective but repeatable and give a deeper insight in how our psyche-body-mind works.

I use numbers and quantitative data, being a physicist by training. For the purpose of finding the important differentials between child and mask modes it would probably suffice to indicate whether there is a significant difference at all, without needing to put a number to it. For instance IQ doesn't need to be very precise, just knowing that in one mode one is smarter or less smarter is enough.

The disadvantage of quantitative data is that the client is easily triggered into disputing them, thinks him or herself more intelligent, happy, healthy or whatever and quarrels about what everything means. On the other hand, some leeway in how hard the data are usually leads to a meaningful discussion about what is at issue, and becomes part of the awareness process that the Lucidity Program in essence is.

I argue people can have different IQs, sexual orientations, time perspectives, etc. in different (sub)-personalities.

Analysis of the numerical data for normally intangible and vague qualities like spiritual resonance, emotional EQ, sexual orientation, happiness, beauty and much more also gives insight into:

- . how the psyche develops
- . how ego and personality in growing up and experiencing the outside realities diverge from the original soul/ higher self scenario
- . how the resulting differences yield valuable insights into one's mental and physical health and happiness.

Now the advantage of using an intuitive method like dowsing is that one is not limited to obtaining data about the more or less superficial mask(s), but also about the inner child and this opens up the possibility to compare. There are also no limitations of time, one can dowse characteristics as they were before, even for dead people. One can find averages, peaks, and correlate them, it's a miraculous way to work. I have done this for many years and with many people, and gradually developed a shortlist of those characteristics that are most significant and useful in diagnosing root problems. This shortlist, amended, expanded and rearranged many times, has evolved into what I call the Lucidity profile; this is a matrix that compares a number of essentials for the inner child, the mask - and if applicable - the subsequent masks. Not every item on that shortlist or profile is relevant for a given person. It only matters if a substantial difference is detected between mask(s) and child.

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