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A Critique Of The Law Of Attraction

I will begin this article with the presentation of my so-called *Recipe for New Age Charlatans*. I will emphasize, that I have made this recipe long before reading about The Law Of Attraction. Here it is:

The Recipe For New Age Charlatans

*New Age's background in the postmodern intellectualism, and the use of subjectivism and relativism, seems to make New Age think, that anything go within this environment (read my article **New Age and The Postmodern Intellectualism**). It is therefore no surprise that speculators of all kinds have discovered how easy it is to make money within this environment. Not surprisingly you see, that many of the new gurus often have a background as businessmen.*

If you are such a budding guru I will give you a simple recipe for success. Read a few New Age books, take some picks, copy and paste, mix it together. Write a book, or make a website. Then tell a story about that you have received a new and revolutionary theory in a vision, or by channeling a divine being. Use a scientific and/or biblical sounding language. Say for example that your theory is proved by newer theories within quantum physics. Pepper your theory with quotations from the wisdomtraditions in ways so that it seems to be supported by these. A good idea is also to take a new name, something exotic.

Anyone within the environment will swallow it. But be prepared for critique from people outside the environment.

Introduction

I won't hide that the concept of The Law Of Attraction is the worst I have met within New Age. The following article is therefore going in depth with the concept. It is actually composed by three articles:

1) The first is a general introduction to the "spiritual" movie the Secret, which is a central cause of, that the concept now is so famous.

2) The second article investigates the concept through the three central stages in true spirituality, namely critical thinking, investigating the shadow, and the spiritual practice. This article also shows in depth why quantum physics not only doesn't prove The Law Of Attraction, but actually disproves it.

3) The third article investigates the tragic incident with James Arthur Ray, who is a main guru within the Law Of Attraction. In October 2009 it namely all went wrong on one of his seminars, where he held a simulated Native American rite in a so-called sweat lodge. The incident shows, that the laws of the universe maybe not is following the magical thinking of The Law Of Attraction.

First article: A Critique of the “spiritual” movie The Secret

The Secret is the latest American produced concept about, how you can exploit spirituality in order to achieve power, money, and success. It is a “spiritual” movie (New Age movie – and now also a book – actually hundreds of books), created with the best modern moviedramatical effects (like the movie over the book *Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown). The founder of the Secret is Rhonda Byrne, an Australian television talk-show producer. The movie is launched – by the way like a number of other similar New Age products – with that Rhonda Byrne, one day at the end of 2004, discovered the secret laws and principles behind the whole of the universe, and therewith made her able to see through the secret behind everything, that has made the world's large geniuses so brilliant and successful – including the greatest thinkers, scientists, artists and philosophers. She was surprised, why nobody else had discovered this, and will therefore share the secret with us.

The Secret is both something new and something old. It is something new in the sense, that it is based on management theory. It is something old because it, by first view, talk about ancient spiritual/universal laws. However these laws become distorted to fit together with the management theories.

It is shortly told a giant manipulation-project, which purpose is to scrape so many money to itself as possible. The circulation of the idea happens via multi-level-marketing structures - that is to say: sales networks, which are built up in a pyramid structure – the ideas that also lie behind the illegal pyramid games. Furthermore the movie is being supported by American TV-shows such as Oprah Winfrey Show and Larry King Live (read more about Oprah Winfrey in my article **New Age and The Postmodern Mass Media Propaganda**).

The central concept in The Secret is ”The Law of Attraction” – that is to say: if you think in compliance with this law, then you can attract a successfull life as it fit you.

This is because, as the movie says, that your thoughts directly *creates* the world, including the physical world. Everything that happens to you of negative or positive, is in other words due to your own negative or positive thoughts. You therefore have to change these negative thoughts with more positive thoughts. Here the movie, in compliance with the wisdomtraditions, mentions concepts such as love, truth, beauty, freedom etc. But suddenly in the next moment some *quite* other examples on "positive" thinking are mixed in.

Here is one of Rhonda Byrne´s own examples on positive thinking: If you as a female has a problem with being too fat, then you just have to turn your back to fat people, because then the sight of them will not affect your thoughts. Fat thoughts namely make you fat! The "positive" in Rhonda Byrne´s example on positive thinking, is in other words an Egoistic ideal of beauty devoid of any kind of ethics.

The movie is coming with a number of similar examples on, that its *own* concepts of positive thinking are equivalent with pure Egoistic thinking. In addition to this the movie also has some messages to sick, weak and poor people, which is as ethical problematic. Sick, weak and poor people are namely told, that their disease, weakness or poverty are their own guilt, because they think sick, weak and poor thoughts. The examples on, how they instead shall think, are as absurd as Byrne´s own example: for example are cancer-sick people told, that they miraculous can heal their disease by watching funny movies in three weeks, or by having send a few *Gratitude-stones* from LA. But not enough with that. In an interview with Newsweek Rhonda Byrne is asked, if the victims of the genocides in Rwanda in 1994, then had attracted this destiny themselves, what she answers on with confirmation. This she must, otherwise the movie's thesis are not valid (today she has stopped with giving interviews).

The way in which law of attraction devotees explain why they ignore the suffering of other people is simply grotesque. What they have introduced in their "pedagogy" is namely the so-called **sensitivity ethics**, which follows the subjectivistic and relativistic pedagogy about, that cognition and moral not only have to become psychologized and subjectified, but also emotionalized, since it is the individual´s feelings, wishes and needs, which determine the moral quality of something. Moreover that the moral has to be therapized, so that it can be considered to be a personal defect, and not a social problem, or the responsibility of others, if you are suffering (read more about this pedagogy in my articles 1) **New Age and The Matrix Conspiracy**, 2) **Psychology and New Age**, 3) **New Age and The Heredity And Environment Ideology**, 4) **New Age and Radical Feminism**, and 5) **A Critique Of Sensitivity Language (Giraffe language)**).

This pedagogy claims about itself to be a “loving, tolerant, nonjudgmental, therapeutic permission to be different.” Moreover it claims, that it is a new interpretation of spirituality, which is changing the “negative” philosophy of traditional views of karma (as if your interpretations, like magical thinking, then also changes these laws). If you are suffering, or if groups of people are suffering, for example as the victims of the genocides in Rwanda, well then this is because you, or they, have wished it themselves, and the loving law of attraction devotee will allow you to have these wishes, without judging. And this creates a freedom from responsibility, a freedom from having to think deeper over the things, which are a result of Old-thinking. But this is more due to how the heredity and environment ideology of our culture have removed our sense of responsibility.

To hear the law of attraction rhetoric is as surrealistic as Marshall Rosenberg’s (the creator of giraffe language) phrase: “Would you rather be right, than happy?” (see my article **A Critique Of Sensitivity Language (Giraffe language)**)

The whole thing has nothing whatever to do with spirituality, nonjudgment and ethics. It is an anti-spiritual, prejudiced and anti-ethical ideology, that has its roots in the subjectivism and relativism on Western universities, and not in the spiritual traditions. This ideology has caused a total collapse of intellectual standards, and is creating a kind of intellectual apartheid regarding other people and cultures (see my articles **New Age and The Postmodern Intellectualism** and **New Age and Radical Feminism**).

The thought falls for a *Reductio ad Absurdum* argument. Any psychopath, multiple murderer or tyrannical dictator would namely love the thought. Just try to use the idea on the German mass extermination camps under Second World War. The idea would actually be very useful in order to justify crimes in this style. It is, as mentioned, a way of thinking that is completely devoid of ethical thinking – that is: a psychopathic way of thinking (see my article **A Critique Of Coaching**).

You can bully any critic with it. It is as surrealistic as reading George Orwell’s novel 1984. It implies that for example the practice of the Tibetan Tonglen practice, where you train compassion with other people by receiving suffering and giving compassion, is the same as judging other people. It implies that for example critics as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and advocates for human rights, are living in denial and prejudice.

In my article **New Age and The Matrix Conspiracy**, I show how traditional spirituality, and ethics as such, in The Law Of Attraction, is turned upside down. I call this aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy for The 666 Conspiracy. It is Satanism in

practice, purely and simply. In my article **On Finding Your True Calling**, I also show that what traditionally was called deadly sins, today, in general, not only in the Law of attraction, has been turned into virtues.

All of it reeks of the management theories' coaching preaches about winner- and loser mentality, and therefore about the ideals of consumer capitalism. Its use of science and spirituality are simply tools of propaganda and manipulation.

The movie/book uses a long line of the greatest geniuses of history to confirm its theories (from Emerson to Shakespeare, from Plato to Lincoln, from Victor Hugo to Newton and Beethoven) – as well as that all wisdomtraditions also are used to confirm them. But these people become – just like the wisdomtraditions - systematic abused by taking their statements out of their right connection, and twisting them in order to mix them with the movie's theories.

The thought distortions, which the authentic spiritual traditions try to explore, change and restructure, are namely in the movie directly used to manipulate with. Meanwhile I don't think the creators of the film do this fully consciously. I actually think that they believe in the idea. They are just extremely uneducated and naive. Without any philosophical or scientific training. And in this they remind about a lot of other New Age worshippers.

Like many other New Age directions (illustrated in the New Age movie *What the bleep do we (k)now?*) The Secret wallow itself in the philosophical viewpoints relativism/subjectivism – that is to say: philosophical viewpoints, which can justify the management-theoretical idea about, that it is not facts, but the best story, which wins (your thoughts directly *create* the world, including the physical!). Here the movie uses – again like many other New Age directions – Einstein's theories of relativity, as well as quantum mechanics, to "prove" its theories. But again like many other New Age directions, these scientific theories are on the worst distorted.

For example it is a sophistication to assert, that Einstein's theories of relativity should imply, that there is no objective or true description of the physical reality. This is a confusion of physical relativity with epistemological relativism, which corresponds to a similar misunderstanding of quantum mechanics as subjectivistic. The quantum mechanics is not subjectivistic in the sense, that it is the human consciousness, which produces the phenomenons. It is not the consciousness of the physicist (the subjective), which makes the electron behave as a wave. It is the macrophysical (material) experimental devices, which affects the electron in such a way, so that you unambiguous know, that if you work with this type of apparatus, then the electron will always behave as a wave.

In the same way the theories of relativity, epistemological seen, give no background for any relativism about, that "*everything is relative*". The seen does *not* depend of the eyes, that watch, when it comes to physical phenomenons, neither in quantum mechanics or in relativistic physics.

As mentioned I will in the next section show how quantum physics directly disproves The Law Of Attraction. You can read more about the abuse of science in my articles **New Age and The Heredity And Environment Ideology**, **New Age and The Postmodern Intellectualism**, and **The Pseudo-science Of New Age**.

Furthermore there is the problem with the psychologizing of the wisdomtraditions' philosophical element. The movie's followers for example meet critique – again like many other New Age directions - with a crying lack of philosophical insight and understanding. Most New Age followers namely have psychology or psychotherapy as background. And this despite, that The Secret's performers/followers manipulative sign themselves with all kind of titles. Here is some examples from the book (which, by the way, also is quite revealing): "philosopher, lecturer, author and creator of true wealth, prosperity, and human potential programs," (James Arthur Ray), "moneymaking and business-building expert" (John Assaraf), "philosopher, chiropractor, healer and personal transformation specialist" (John DeMartini), "metaphysician and one of the top marketing specialists in the world" (Joe Vitali), "a nonaligned, trans-religious progressive" (Michael Beckwith).

I would especially like to see their diploma as philosophers. Where philosophers give critique, and meet critique, via objective arguments, the critics of the movie/book usually are met via various forms of psychologizing, and therefore, when you speak about philosophical issues, subjective argumentation.

Philosophy does for example not speak about the contents of the motivations of each individual person for using the movie, but about a common problem. The objections against the critique typically say, that when the individual of good will uses the movie in order to understand, then it is okay. Philosophy will to this answer, that if this "good will" contributes to the circulation of a common problem - then it is of course not ok.

Another, psychologizing, objection against the movie's critics, is, that it - rather than answering the critique via objective arguments - analyzes the personal motives of the critic. Here again is used an arsenal of subjective argumentation, as for example that the critic wishes to offend the freedom of speech, that he will prevent people in expressing their views, that he is intolerant and arrogant, that he is an advocate for a

totalitarian ideology, that he has a problem with his feelings etc. etc.; that is: arguments that go after the man and not the case; an old philosophical fallacy (*ad hominem*), because the man's personality is completely irrelevant with reference to the case, which is being discussed (see more about such insults in my article **New Age and The Postmodern Intellectualism**).

Law of Attraction devotees certainly haven't experienced any real inner spiritual transformations (for example in the chakras), because then they would know that they can't escape their own shadow, their own negativity, or the world's negativity, through magical thinking (read about magical thinking in my article **New Age and The Postmodern Mass Media Propaganda**).

But the movie's followers often use examples on, that they, after having started using the movie's principles, have begun to attract money, boyfriends, power etc. – in proof of, that the movie then is right. This is actual more a proof of, that the movie's basic ideal is pure Egoistic thinking - because, after all, black magic also works. And psychopaths also have a peculiar ability to attract power and money.

That you are able to attract, and realize, some Ego-oriented wishes, are in other words *not* a proof of, that you therewith live in compliance with the universal laws. The universal laws are namely ethical in their essence. They are basically about justice. Let us therefore try to look deeper into, what it is for kind of universal laws the movie mentions.

“The Secret,” according to the movie/book is, as mentioned “The Law of Attraction.” And, defined clearly and simply, this “law,” (as certain as the law of gravity) is that our thoughts always attract what they are about and bring them to reality. Think about wealth, and you will become wealthy. Think about that new car you've always wanted, and it will come to you. Think about getting a good parking spot on the lot, and one will open up for you. Think about your ideal weight (really, dwell on that number, write it on your scale), and you will attract that reality to yourself. (All of these are real examples in the book.) Rhonda Byrne is glad to report that since deciding her “perfect weight” is 116 pounds, she has moved to that mark, and nothing moves her from it, no matter what she does or eats.

Now here is how “the law of attraction” actually works, according to The Secret: “Thoughts are magnetic; and thoughts have a frequency. As you think, those thoughts are sent out into the universe and they magnetically attract all like things that are on the same frequency. Everything send out returns to the Source. And that source is you.”

As Mel Lawrenz says in an article (*The Secret-Revealed*): “Now here’s the bad news: whatever happens in your life is the result of what your thoughts have attracted - the good and the bad. Appendicitis? An auto accident? Poverty? You have brought it on yourself.”

And Bible verses are quoted in the book, as if the book was about something holy. Lisa Nichols, motivational speaker and one of the contributors, notes that: “in Proverbs it talks about “so a man thinketh, he is.” In Matthew, it says “if you ask and you believe in your prayers, then you will receive it.”

And then there is James Arthur Ray, author of *The Science of Success: How to Attract Prosperity and Create Harmonic Wealth Through Proven Principles*, who says, “Here’s the question I want you to consider - do you treat yourself the way that you want other people to treat you?”

Mel Lawrenz continues: “Does that sound familiar? It is a twist, a pretty severe twist, of one of the most universal principles of life called the Golden Rule, which Jesus described as “do to others as you would have them do to you.” So this tried and true egoless principle of life (“do to others...”) becomes the ultimate form of self-centeredness (“treat yourself...”). Oh, and by the way, you can attend James Arthur Ray’s seminar, his “harmonic wealth weekend,” for a seminar fee of a mere \$9600. Somebody has figured out how to attract wealth to himself.”

(As mentioned, I will in the end of this article investigate why it all suddenly went wrong with James Arthur Ray).

The Secret would lead you to believe that you are entitled to whatever you want, and you have the power within yourself to gain it. The book says: “Begin right now to shout to the universe: life is so easy. Life is so good. All good things come to me.” And “You deserve all good things life has to offer.” “You are the creator of you, and the law of attraction is your magnificent tool to create whatever you want in your life. Welcome to the magic of life and the magnificence of you.”

Very different from the message of Jesus: the first will be last and the last will be first; lose your life and you will find it.

And in this we find the confusion of *The Secret*. It is all about the Ego, for the Ego, obsessed with the Ego. Even Newsweek magazine offers this ethical critique: "On an ethical level, *The Secret* appears deplorable. It concerns itself almost entirely with a narrow range of middle class concerns -- houses, cars, vacations, followed by health and relationships, with the rest of humanity a very distant sixth."

Now, let's look deeper into the proclaimed Law of Attraction. In accordance with the authentic spiritual traditions the movement of time is a power, an expression of energy, which follows some laws. This power moves in wave-movements, pendulum-movements, in situation-movements, as well as in circulation-movements. The universal laws of energy in the movement of time are known as Tao, The Dharmalaw, Karma, Destiny, Hubris-nemesis, Logos, The will of God, etc.

As the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, then the Now's regularity in the function of the energy, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into an equivalent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part *not* is. At first this implies, that each part come to appear as part of a polarization-pair or a pair of opposites – just like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly this implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is to say: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego's evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes finally will swing over in their opposite extremes. Another aspect of this regularity, or another way to describe this regularity is: energy returns to its starting point (it is this law The Secret calls The Law of Attraction, but which becomes twisted to fit the management theories' ideals of success). And since everything in this way only works correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that you actual can say nothing about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness for the emptiness (‘sûnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite certain purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints which ignorance has created.

In accordance with the above universal laws of energy it is correct, that the thoughts and mind of Man are participating in creating the world, even the physical, but not in the way the movie indicates it, yes, the movie actual directly commits Hubris.

You can in short not use these laws as you want to; that is: through positive thinking (magical thinking).

The eternal circling around your own dreams, desires, success etc. will in other words be contra-balanced through the opposite categories. As mentioned The Secret here expose itself and its followers for the possibility of Nemesis.

An example: as soon as your thoughts spread themselves too much out in an extreme, the energy-system compensates by seeking to bringing itself back to the balance of the middle. The system does this by seeking over towards the opposite extreme (for example from perfectionism to feeling of fiasco). That is: through a contrabalancing, a compensation. The energy works as a pendulum. The more energy, which is invested in the one extreme of a pair of opposites, the larger the swing in the opposite direction becomes.

Now, if you test the management theories in relation to this law, then the law will say: the ideals about power/perfectionism/success only exist in relation to their opposites, namely powerlessness, fiasco, loss.

If you are extremely occupied by your own success, the system will seek to balance your thoughts by bringing them over in the opposite extreme, namely the powerlessness and the fiasco. It is therefore evident, that these modern ideals about being a success and a winner are participating in creating a swing over in stress, anxiety and depression.

What applies for the individual person, also applies for the collective and for nature. You can therefore also watch these laws of energy in groups, societies, world-images, yes, in the whole of mankind, as well as in the Universe.

Today the Ego-extreme is reflected in countless fields. Too much energy is invested in armament. Too many atomic weapons. Too much pollution. Too unequal distribution of the riches of the Earth. Too unequal distribution of the food and fruits of the Earth. And first of all: too many people are too focused in their Ego; they accumulate energy to their Ego, to oneself; or to the family Ego/the company's Ego/the national Ego.

Now, if you look at the energy-law, then this is the energy in its one extremity. With necessity the energy will swing over in the opposite extreme. And this will not happen in a silent way, when you consider the enormous moment which is in the actual extreme, and it will happen very simple: through pollution of the environment, through disease (aids, cancer and else) through warfare, terror, crises, inner mass psychotic collapses, and through natural disasters.

The Ego has always - in accordance with the authentic wisdomtraditions - been the worst *prevention* for the opening in towards the Source. Nobody, who has been studying the wisdomtraditions, can be in doubt about this. It is therefore astounding, that a movie/book as *The Secret*, with its extreme Ego-worship, are able to make spiritual seeking people believe, that it is based on the innermost secret of the

spiritual laws. It is the direct opposite. But it is followed by millions of people over the world, and the teachers are worshipped like gurus, though they often are dressed in expensive silk-suits. It is difficult to make a google-search without being confronted with adds for The Law of Attraction. And if you haven't met it yet you will for certain, because this movement is only in its beginning, and therefore still has not met much criticism.

I sometimes have to pinch myself in the arm when I see, in what degree this movie/book, under the concept of revealing the secret behind true spirituality, is on the program at most New Age therapists and counsellors, and increasingly also in the whole of the coaching and management industry. As we have seen it with NLP (another New Age product) we will therefore probably soon see the movie/book as fixed curriculum within schools, folk high schools and continuing education.

No, if you want to see a spiritual movie, that shows what true spirituality is, I suggest that you see the Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-duk's masterpiece *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter...and Spring*

Second Article: The Law Of Attraction investigated through the three stages of true spirituality, and through quantum physics.

The Law of attraction investigated through the three stages of true spirituality

The Law of Attraction is, as mentioned, the idea, that your positive or negative thoughts magnetically, magically, can attract this negative or positive into your life, so that it becomes reality. And what the idea considers as being positive or negative, is only circling around one special thing: how I can get my own wishes, feelings and needs satisfied. The believers claim, that the law of attraction is a spiritual law, which will help you in this quest. In other words: focus your thoughts on getting your own wishes, feelings and needs satisfied, and then you are living in compliance with the spiritual laws, and can make reality give you what you want.

An extremely manipulating thought, because if we take the true spiritual laws, then they say, that there is a duality in the Universe you have to realize in order to reach into non-dualism: for instance yin and yang, positive and negative, light and darkness, I and Thou.

This understanding of dualism goes on, that the opposites are defining each other; they are inseparable. If there comes an overweight of one of the poles it creates unbalance.

These laws exist everywhere: in nature, in society, in Man himself.

Now, if we take true spirituality, then you can say, that it contains three important concepts:

- 1) Critical thinking (spotting thought-distortions, created by dualistic unbalance)
- 2) Investigating the shadow (ignorance, the unconscious, the painbody, the cause of suffering, your own dark side, the Ego)
- 3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images)

And now, if we take the self-deception in the Law of Attraction in relation to the above-mentioned:

1) The believers close themselves in the positive; that is: what they *think* is positive: namely their own wishes, feelings and needs. In this way they leave out the negative, which causes a lack of ability to realize the laws of dualism. Their so-called exercises - which they think the idea of the law of attraction helps them with - is about how to drive out, force out, repress, even ignore, the negative.

2) When ignoring the negative they fail to understand the shadow, their own dark sides, the Ego, ignorance and suffering as such. And understanding your own suffering is a necessity in order to train compassion. So this also causes that their empathy and compassion with other people can be hard to discover, illustrated in Australia's platinum-haired self-help guru Rhonda Byrne's (she is the main person behind the book and movie *The Secret*) famous words: If you as a woman feels you are too fat, then turn your back to fat people, so that their fat thoughts don't influence you - and in the typical words about, that peoples' suffering are their own guilt caused by negative thoughts; again: what the believers *think* is negative, that is: no focus on your own wishes, feelings and needs.

Rhonda Byrne typical meets people with a loving facade. This facade you can also meet in other law of attraction coaches. When I had my Stoic period, and were confronting a lot of these people with their philosophical incompetence, I met a Law of Attraction coach, who met me with the words: "Morten, darling, how can I help you in achieving what you want here in life?" I said, that I would like to point out some invalid claims about quantum mechanics she had made. And then the facade was crumbling, and the angry person, whom she had done so much out of repressing, suddenly arised in extreme way.

Rhonda Byrne (who claims to be the channel of a divine being) wants to remind the world, and the critics, about the crucial importance of gratitude: “Remember,” Byrne is preaching, “if you are criticizing, you are not being grateful. If you are blaming, you are not being grateful. If you are complaining, you are not being grateful.”

So here we have it again, the elimination of critical thinking. Gratitude is of course a valuable concept, as long as you, as Byrne, don't use it as a weapon. And she has done this several times. Note the self-contradiction, when Byrne uses gratitude as an attack on critical thinking.

Anyway, it was an odd time for Byrne to be preaching these words, because at the same time her lawyers had just sued two of the very people, who were instrumental in launching her book and movie *The Secret* to phenomenal success. Drew Heriot, the Australian director of the movie, and Dan Hollings, an Arizona internet consultant whose “viral marketing” helped propel Byrne to global fame via Oprah Winfrey, had both been demanding that Byrne pay them a share of the estimated \$ 300 million revenue they claim she'd promised them. In the weeks up to Thanksgiving, Byrne's lawyers had counter-attacked by launching legal actions against both men in jurisdictions far from their homes, a tactic one judge has since described as vexatious and harassing.

For a woman whose central message is the power of positivity, Byrne has a surprisingly long history of such bust-ups, stretching back to her days as a television producer in Melbourne. And it of course raises the question about what it is precisely she is considering as being “positive.”

3) They close themselves in their own idea about the law of attraction, which causes, that they don't have any spiritual practice (no training of realization and compassion).

All and all it causes a total stop of any spiritual development, any ability to learn. They lull themselves into a huge illusion and self-deception (also the cause of their abuse of science, etc.). Their bad karma, their hubris-nemesis: an enormous unbalance (read more below about the tragic incident with another famous Law of Attraction guru, James Arthur Ray).

The idea of the Law of Attraction goes wrong from the start because it is based on a misinterpretation of quantum physics and theory of relativity, which you can see repeated again and again in numerous New Age books (and also in the New Age movies *The Secret*, and *What the Bleep do we know?*). A misinterpretation, which the believers could see corrected, if they, (instead of their easy-solution-to-

everything-quest), were seeking other sources to their ideas than New Age books, for instance Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein themselves.

The manipulative in the idea is then of course, partly that it says it is proven by science, but also that all great thinkers, artists and spiritual traditions, support it. This happens by taking short or longer quotes out of the correct context, and placing them so that it seems like they support the idea. Some of the coaches and speakers in the environment are masters in this manipulative art. Manipulating is also the swollen titles they use about themselves, such as for instance "Super Coach", "The World's greatest Money Coach", and so on in the same style.

The word proven is also used manipulative in connection with the experiences the believers say they have had, after they have begun to use the Law of Attraction; that their experiences therefore "prove" that the idea is true (Law of Attraction meetings are often going off as testimonials about these "proofs" – here it reminds about NLP and LGAT meetings – see my article **A Critique Of NLP**). But again: scientific seen this is pure nonsense. Of course you can create success by creating a manipulative stunt like *The Secret*, but this doesn't prove that the idea presented in the movie therefore is true. And concerning the idea, then believers of all kinds of other beliefs (totally different from the Law of Attraction) also always have had experiences, and a lot of believers don't experience anything. It can also be pure fantasy, coincidence, etc., etc. Besides, black magic also seems to work. And psychopaths also seem to have a strange ability to attract what they desire and want. And look at the great Law of Attraction guru himself, James Arthur Ray. He must be able to give a lot of testimonials of his success. But his career ended in complete failure and tragedy. So, testimonials doesn't prove anything.

This raises another question. How can the law of attraction support the wishes of all people? What if these wishes are contradictory? What about two parts in a war? What if another person wishes me dead, and I wish to live?

And now, finally, to the most frightening thought: what if, that psychopaths, massmurderers, dictators, terrorists, got hold of the fact, that the Law of Attraction actually would justify their ideas of what they find positive (their wishes, feelings and needs)...? There is nothing at all in the Law of Attraction-concept, that can say that this would not be positive. Focusing on your wishes is per definition positive, and the concept doesn't have any other ethical foundation than this.

The Cult of the Law of Attraction is the largest – bordering to the surrealistic – manipulation-project, I have ever seen. Probably because of the way it totally turns

spirituality into the direct opposite of what spirituality is all about. And it has to be exposed.

On the other hand it can also be quite hilarious to follow New Age magazines, and see how the next week's new "revolutionary" New Age theory gets truth by authority (argumentation swindle), by claiming, that their theories have been channeled by divine sources; hilarious because these divine sources often seem to be repeating quite particular theories within American humanistic psychology (which can't be used as life philosophies) and myths about quantum mechanics, which has been shown wrong. Quite naive, not to say ridiculous, divine sources, one must say.

One thing I don't understand, though, is that these coaches, who sometimes are talking to enormous audiences, not even are considering the thought: what if someone among the audience, who actually knows a little bit about, for instance quantum physics, is beginning to ask questions? Another thing is, that there in society isn't any control at all with this large area of manipulation and pseudo-science, which for instance, if used in the universities, would have led to disqualification. But of course, we are talking about a new ideology, which the society, more and more, are building on.

The Law of attraction investigated through quantum physics

I have in my book **Dream Yoga** looked at the abuses of quantum mechanics, which we see so widely-spread in New Age circles, and wherein the misinterpretation consists. However there has right now been published a new book by my professor David Favrholt, who was one of Niels Bohr's students. It is David Favrholt who has taught me about the philosophical aspects of Niels Bohr's thinking. His new book is called *The Philosopher Niels Bohr*, and I will here summarize the most central aspects of this book, in order to show the misinterpretation in a new way.

On Manchester University in 1913 Niels Bohr produced his atomic theory, which with his own words broked with the "customary forms of experience within the physics". The atomic theory was nothing less than a showdown with classic physics and the way, in which we look at the world. Mind you, Bohr's atomic theory doesn't replace classic physics, as many are claiming. Here we find one of the misinterpretations. It is showing where the limit is for our way to observe the world. But it ushered the atomic age, as David Favrholt is writing in his book.

The quantum mechanics, as it came to be called, and which is about physics on atomic level, was so great a dispute with rational thinking, that only a few physicists at that time were willing to accept it. Bohr's most famous opponent, Albert Einstein,

tried in many years to disprove the theories of the Dane, but David Favrholt claims, that there today is common agreement about, that Niels Bohr won that debate.

Bohr found out, that we have to establish certain rules in quantum mechanics, which we can't use in classic physics. He discovered, that when we have to measure an electronic movement around the atoms, we come, with our units of measurement, to intervene in what we are investigating. In the same moment, we want to decide the location of the electron, we have disturbed its course.

Shortly said, then Bohr discovered, that we can't observe the physics on atomic level without coming to influence it. In 1927 he goes forward and ends a discussion, which had taken place through centuries. It had been about, what light is consisting in – is it waves or particles?

Bohr shows, that light in some experiments behaves, as if it is particles, and in others as if it is waves. And here we have the foundation for the next misinterpretation, that goes on, that it is the consciousness of the physicist, which affects the light. This has led to the misunderstanding in the public, that quantum mechanics should imply, that there isn't given any objective or true description of the physical reality, consequently that it is the human consciousness, which produces the phenomenons: subjectivism. The same misunderstanding characterizes by the way also Einstein's theory of relativity, that this should support relativism.

But it is *not* the consciousness of the physicist (the subjective), which makes the electron behave like a particle or a wave. It is the macrophysical (material) experimental devices, which affect the electron in a certain way, so that you unambiguous know, that if you work with this type of apparatus, then it will always behave like a wave, and with another type of apparatus, like a particle.

Nonetheless there has been created a lot of philosophical theories, which claim to be supported by quantum mechanics, and which have lead a war against the time of enlightenment, as well as against the classic physics and the connected rationalistic thinking. You could gather them under the word constructivism. Constructivism claims, that it is Man, who through his language and interpretations, creates the reality/truth. And you can swiftly see, that it for example is this idea the law of attraction is based on.

The theories is in this way characterized by relativism and subjectivism, since they claim, that there doesn't exist any objective order, which defines what is true or false, and that truth therefore exclusively is due to our own idea- and language constructions. Relativism exists in many forms, but generally you can talk about an

individualistic relativism, subjectivism, which claims that it is the individual himself who creates his truth, and a collectivistic relativism, social constructivism, which claims, that it is groups of people, that create their own truth.

And both directions consequently, in richly way, use quantum mechanics to support their theories. But does it actually do this? No, the absurd is, that it actual directly pulls the carpet away under such theories. And these theorists could have discovered this, if they had read a bit of Niels Bohr's own scriptures, instead of repeating from others, who continue the misinterpretation. But now David Favrholt consequently has written a book about the *philosopher* Niels Bohr.

First of all: if we now take the claims of for instance the law of attraction, then it say, that if you think in a certain way, then the universe will reward you in a certain way. This is actually a claim, which in extreme way is based on the principle of causation, namely that a certain way of thinking will cause an effect from the universe.

But what nuclear physics and the quantum mechanics learn us, is, that there exists processes, which precisely *not* is cause determined, and which do *not* follow the old rule about, that everything has to be continuous. In our brains and thoughts, as well as in nature and evolution, there exist processes, which in a wide extent are quantum mechanical, and since the quantum mechanics breaks with the principle of causation and determinism, then neither the human brain/thought, or nature and evolution, are fully cause-determined systems. And then you precisely *can't* explain processes in our brains and thoughts, or in nature and evolution, from a theory such as The Law of Attraction, or from a theory about everything, as for example Ken Wilber is doing (see my article **A Critique Of Ken Wilber**).

Secondly, then Niels Bohr actually claims, that it is not us that put reality in order, as for example the law of attraction, and other relativistic and subjectivistic theories, claim, but reality, that puts *us* in order. Let us investigate it.

Bohr's new discovery made of course the physicists ask: "So what is light then?" And Bohr answered, that this you can't ask about. The only thing we can do, is to say, that in some experiments we can make wave-descriptions, in others particle-descriptions. They supplement and contradict each other, but we can't go behind our experiments and say what they are in themselves. From this Bohr founds the complementarity theory.

But could you then not imagine, that light is an entirely third phenomenon, which both consists of light and particle properties? No, Bohr claims. No matter how we try

to imagine it, it is not possible to imagine, that anything can be a wave and a particle at the same time. It is not possible.

In 1927 Bohr invented the so-called two-split experiment, and it has been discussed ever since. He says, that if you send electrons against a plate with two openings, it produces a wave phenomenon. But what happens along the way? He answers, that along the way you can't see, what happens. But there must happen something? Yes, but you can't make a description of it. But this you will be able to some day? No. If you intervene into it in order to see, what happens along the way, the whole of the phenomenon disappears.

Using the conventionally conceptions which is lying in our culture, we say, that you must be able to make a model of everything. Many of Ken Wilber's devotees think, that he is the first to do this. But that has actually been done several times, and often in a much more profound way than Wilber. The reason why Ken Wilber's devotees often think Wilber is the first, is, that they only have read Ken Wilber books.

Anyway, Bohr says, that you can't make a model of everything.

The movements of the electrons are fundamentally not able to be experienced. But we can very well talk about it. Should we eventually create theories about everything, it is not in three dimensions, then it is in nine or several dimensions; this we can't. It would end in an infinite regress.

David Favrholt continues, that Bohr's philosophy in this way originates from his physics. And Favrholt says, that Bohr's philosophy hasn't gained so much a footing as his discoveries within the physics. But this it ought to. Bohr's basic view on language is epochal, Favrholt claims, though he must admit that the epoch not yet has turned up.

What is Bohr's philosophical viewpoint?

According to Bohr's philosophy, then it is correct that we actually from our thoughts, language and interpretations construct our self-images and world-images. But we can precisely not do it as it fits us, in the way which constructivism claims. On the contrary it is this idea, which creates the whole of our illusion about reality, and therefore our problems and suffering.

Bohr says: If a person moves from A to B, it takes a certain time, and the faster he moves, the less time it takes. Here we suddenly have the concepts location, distance, movement, speed, time. It is therefore not ourselves who determine, how reality looks

like. It is the constitution of nature, which determines, how we shall use the concepts in order to explain reality. This is lying in direct opposition to what the constructivists claim, and by the way to a number of Western philosophers up through time.

It is not us who put reality in order, it is reality which puts us in order. That is the soul in Bohr's philosophy. Then comes the next, where Man as a rational being suddenly again has entered into the discussion. Bohr says, that when we have to establish the unambiguous language, then this is due to, that two persons can look at a thing and agree about, that the thing is round or square. They can't agree about, whether it is beautiful or ugly. That is subjective. But they have an intersubjective agreement about, what means what, which you then can establish a language of physics about. A language of physics is nothing else but specified every day language.

All this is implying an opinion about, how we observe the world – and here Bohr picks inspiration from his own discoveries within the atom theory. We can't place ourselves outside our own idea about reality, Favrholt explains. The physicist can't be a kind of God's eye, who looks at the world from outside, because he is himself a part of the world. We can't possibly think ourselves out of reality. But that is what for example Ken Wilber is doing.

Personally I have had the honour of participating Favrholt's lectures on Chinese philosophy, which is another of his passions. And the Taoist teaching in China matches well with Bohr – it is therefore that Bohr's coat of arms, when he got the elephant order, carries the yin and yang-symbol.

In accordance with Taoism there is nothing beyond the world, Favrholt explains. You can't see the world from outside. You are in the world, and you can only define something from its opposition. What is the good? This you understand, if you know what the evil is. You can't say anything about the world as a whole, because you can't put the whole in opposition to anything.

These thoughts you find in all wisdomtraditions, in all the spiritual directions within the religions. There exists a fundamental dualism, which the spiritual practitioner must understand, in order to reach into non-dualism. That is also the soul in Nagarjuna's above-mentioned argumentation. You can't say anything about the wholeness, and if you do it will be a distortion.

Bohr often told the story about the ethnographer, who is send out to learn about Indians in the Amazon jungle. He begins to dress and dance, as they do, but he is still an observer. He learns their language, but is still Danish. Gradually he has eventually

forgotten his Danish, and he throws his camera and the typewriter in the river. Now he knows, how it is to be Indian, but now he can't write about it.

Favrholdt says, that Bohr always ended this history saying with a smile: "Well then we must send a new ethnographer."

Third article: The tragic incident with James Arthur Ray

True spirituality is in its nature absolutistic. In order to go beyond all concepts and ideas it must be possible to discriminate between language and the real, the map and the landscape. It therefore builds on an objective truth-criterion, which is lying in a reality, wholeness, or Otherness, that transcends us. As Niels Bohr says, then it is reality (wholeness/the order of nature), that puts us in order, and not us that put reality in order.

Contrary to this New Age is defending a relativism and a subjectivism, which doesn't allow this. And this is a bit of a paradox, because New Age is claiming to be spiritual.

According to New Age then the language is the real, the map is the landscape, the word is the real. It is, according to relativism and subjectivism, not possible to go beyond all concepts and ideas. But you can change these. So what it is about is to change your language, maps and words so that they fit into your wishes, needs and desires, and in that way you can become whatever you like, and you can create whatever reality it fits you – that is: according to your ego. As the New Age coaches say: "It is not facts, but the best story, that wins!" And they often do it in a mix of interpretations of Shamanism and Western theories of hypnosis. But in true spirituality this is the same as enlargening your distortion of reality.

The paradox in New Age is, that its build-in subjectivism and relativism are implying, that there isn't any objective truth-criterion in any wholeness or reality that transcends us, at the same time as it is talking a lot about transcending everything. According to New Age then we create truth and reality ourselves through our linguistic mappings, and because there is no objective truth-criterion to decide the truth, then all such mappings must be equally true. This is implying that the "new age", New Age is talking about, can't be said to be more true than the "old age", violence and hate must be seen as having the same truth as non-violence and compassion.

Another paradox in New Age, is that it is saying, that quantum mechanics is supporting it. This is one of its quite central ideas. But quantum mechanics does actually the direct opposite, it disproves it, as we already have seen.

But the idea about that we can create reality as it fits us, is the reason why New Age supporters in extreme cynical ways are abusing science as it fit them, and use all kind of unrealistic exaggerated grand titles about themselves (for instance the world's greatest money coach, and so on in the same style). Because if they just think it is true, well, then it magical must be true. This is especially seen within the movement of the law of attraction.

James Arthur Ray is one of the most famous self-help gurus on the concept of The Law of Attraction, which I have as one of the five main programming-technologies of the Matrix Conspiracy.

He is the author of *The Science of Success: How to Attract Prosperity and Create Harmonic Wealth Through Proven Principles*. (Notice how he already in the title manipulating uses the words science and proven). He is also one of the co-authors in the book/movie *The Secret*. He calls himself: "Philosopher, lecturer, author and creator of true wealth, prosperity, and human potentials programs." The fact is that he is more or less selfmade, but has been made famous in an Oprah Winfrey show.

I will repeat James Arthur Ray words, "Here's the question I want you to consider - do you treat yourself the way that you want other people to treat you?"

As mentioned: Does that sound familiar? It is a twist, a pretty severe twist, of one of the most universal principles of life called the Golden Rule, which Jesus described as "do to others as you would have them do to you." So this tried and true egoless principle of life ("do to others...") becomes the ultimate form of self-centeredness ("treat yourself..."). Oh, and by the way, you can attend James Arthur Ray's seminar, his "harmonic wealth weekend," for a seminar fee of a mere \$9.600. Somebody has figured out how to attract wealth to himself.

The Law of Attraction would lead you to believe that you are entitled to whatever you want, and that you have the power within yourself to gain it. The book *The Secret* says: "Begin right now to shout to the universe: life is so easy. Life is so good. All good things come to me." And "You deserve all good things life has to offer." "You are the creator of you, and the law of attraction is your magnificent tool to create whatever you want in your life. Welcome to the magic of life and the magnificence of you."

Very different from the message of Jesus: the first will be last and the last will be first; lose your life and you will find it.

In the movie *The Secret*, a succession of American personal development gurus explain that by really focusing on what you want, then your positive energy flows out into the universe and is rewarded (notice how it is an implied assumption, that it is “positive”, to focus on your own wishes/greed). Intercut with this mantra are dramatised scenes of this “law of attraction” in action: a little boy visualises a brand new bicycle and gets one from his dad; a woman focuses on some jewellery in a shop, and gets it; a man is visualizing a parking space, and vupti, there it is! At one point the “miracles coach” Joe Vitale likens the universe to a giant shopping catalogue.

And again: in this we find the confusion of The Law of attraction. It is all about the Ego, for the Ego, obsessed with the Ego. Even Newsweek magazine offers this ethical critique: "On an ethical level, *The Secret* appears deplorable. It concerns itself almost entirely with a narrow range of middle class concerns: houses, cars, vacations, followed by health and relationships, with the rest of humanity a very distant sixth."

In October 2009 it all went wrong on one of James Arthur Ray’s seminars. At Sedona in Arizona he held a simulated Native American rite in a so-called sweat lodge. As with other New Age directions (both Byron Katie, NLP, LGAT, and so on), he mixes his seminars with all kinds of rituals and therapies imported from different, often conflicting, religious/therapeutical/psychological, directions. This tendency within New Age sounds as if the seminar leaders just have chosen accidental from a New Age catalogue of what sounds interesting, in order to give their own “teaching” a bit of color.

When people began complaining over discomfort James Arthur Ray was ignoring this danger signal, and just said that they should continue, because “it was a part of the process” (nothing can harm you if you use the law of attraction, remember).

Three people died and more than a dozen others were injured, and the great guru himself could just stand frozen to the ground looking at how his devotees tried to help people. The only one, who wasn’t able to help, was the great guru himself. And the time after the incident was filled with his surrealistic attempts to explain the whole incident away. He was put in jail for manslaughter, though, and is in this writing moment waiting for his conviction.

No matter whether he is convicted guilty or not, then the incident shows three important things about the abuse of true spirituality:

- 1) That the true cosmic laws, namely compensatory karma, here stroke back. Compensatory karma is based on the energy-laws that work within the wholeness.

But the wholeness, or the Otherness, is precisely what the law of attraction devotees (and NLP devotees, and so on) in extreme way shut themselves away from (though they talk a great deal about wholeness). And when it is done in such an extreme way - where they think they don't need training, experiences, knowledge about spiritual traditions, but can create the whole thing through magical thinking - then they also can create an energy extreme in the wholeness, and with necessity the energy in the wholeness will compensate, and it does this by making the energy swing over in the other extreme. The Law of attraction devotees are completely ignorant about this.

2) That many New Age gurus don't know anything about the Indian ritual in a sweat lodge, though often leading such. They are often simulated; that is: a non-experienced teacher is simulating what experienced teachers do, as when children are playing. And the Native Americans are disgusted over all these incompetent New Age Gurus, who are misusing their rituals in order to make money. One of their main objections is, that you never must take a fee for a sweat lodge ritual, because it involves spirits and so on.

3) That it is not all wrong to call this a 666 conspiracy. It is so far out, and really a demonical turn.

About Morten Tolboll

Morten Tolboll holds a MA in philosophy, and a minor in psychology. He has practised yoga and meditation since 1985, and during this period he has developed the concept of Meditation as an Art of Life. Today he travels through life as a philosophical globetrotter, lifeartist and idler. He earns his living as an author, philosophical counselor and careworker.

Morten Tolboll has published three books on his concept of Meditation as an Art of Life:

- 1) Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader (WingSpan Press 2008)
- 2) Dream Yoga (WingSpan Press 2009)
- 3) A Portrait of a Lifeartist (WingSpan Press 2010)

The books are both available as free downloadable Ebooks (www.mortentolboll.weebly.com) – and as paperbacks on all major online bookstores around the world.

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