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The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Subjective Idealism

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.

Matthew 7:15

This Ebook is a deeper going update to my article [Six Common Traits of New Age that Distort Spirituality](#).

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1. Introduction

I will use the six traits described in the article to write some longer comments. If we begin with the sixth trait:

6. Ideology

An ideology functions with the implied assumption, that the supreme good is lying out in the future, and that the end therefore justifies the means. In New Age this goal is the so-called New Age; the New World Order, or the Age of the Aquarius. In the self-help industry the goal is success, personal power, money, etc. An ideology is always used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. Spirituality has nothing to do with ideology, but with philosophy, which is based on an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth.

This shows that the ideology of evolutionism is central in New Age, where the concept of “The evolution of consciousness” is quite important. Evolutionism sees history in a linear way with constant upward progress. Humans are therefore seen as being on a higher level than in the past, and humans will in the future grow into even higher levels. The failure is to ignore any cyclic view of history; that is: it ignores, or explains away, the down-cycles, the negative, the dark and shadowy aspects of life (for a deeper analysis of this, see my Ebook [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in The Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

Evolutionism is a quite new ideology which started with the scientific revolution in Europe. All pre-modern views of history are in contrast with this cyclic, as for example the Indian Yuga teaching.

Yuga in Hinduism is an epoch or era within a four-age cycle. A complete Yuga starts with the Satya Yuga, via Treta Yuga and Dvapara Yuga into a Kali Yuga. Our present time is a Kali Yuga, which started at 3102 BCE with the end of the Kurukshetra War (or Mahabharata war).

The Kali Yuga is considered by many Hindus to be the day that Krishna left Earth and went to his abode. You could also say that this is when the disenchantment of the world started. What’s interesting about this view of our present day history is that it has the direct opposite view of the linear history of evolutionism, namely that we are

heading into a very long time of decline. Kali Yuga equals 432,000 Human years, and if it started in 3102 BCE, there is really no light at the end of the tunnel in the nearest future. We are just in the start of the decline.

Kali Yuga is the age of darkness and ignorance. If we consider that the Yuga teaching stretches back to 3102 BCE, or even, if we follow what the texts says, millions of years, then it gives a pretty good prediction of how our life is today. The texts say that people become sinners and lack virtue. They become slaves to their passions and are barely as powerful as their earliest ancestors in the Satya Yuga. Society falls into disuse and people become liars and hypocrites. Knowledge is lost and scriptures are diminished (by knowledge is meant philosophy, or ancient wisdom, so we are not talking about technological knowledge). Humans eat forbidden and dirty food. The environment is polluted, water and food become scarce. Wealth is heavily diminished. Families become non-existent.

I'm not arguing for the truth of the Yuga teaching, I just use it as an illustration (although, there is some philosophical argumentation for it in the Upanishads and in Plato's work, which show that philosophical knowledge is ancient, before ourselves).

The Eastern concept of Enlightenment has to do with the open now of nondual consciousness. This state of presence is qualitative different, since it is based on the entirely different perspective of unity consciousness. This is an almost ecstatic state of completion, a luminous, blissful wakefulness in which consciousness is also fully relaxed, not holding on to the bliss, not desiring the ecstasy, just an open transparency. It is a wondrous and heavenly state. The nondual presence is like the open sky, and this open sky is present here on earth at this moment.

Meister Eckhart describes this heavenly state in this way:

The now in which God created the first human, and the now in which the last human perishes, and this now in which I speak: they are equal in god and they are nothing other than one single now.

And Master Tilopa:

*Do not pursue the past
Do not invite the future
Do not think about the present
And do not meditate with the intellect.
Avoid all logical thought
And completely relax the mind.*

Especially Eastern texts like Tilopa's are the cause of New Agers confusing this with Western irrationalism, subjectivism and anti-intellectualism, forgetting that these themselves are intellectual views. You don't get enlightened by accepting a theory. You can't stop the thought. This confusion is tragic, since what Tilopa is talking about is complete objectivity and absolutism. The preparation for such a state is precisely the use of philosophy, rationality and logic: thought training and art of life.

The more advanced forms of consciousness training are traditionally thought only to take place in a face-to-face exchange with an enlightened master. It is indisputable possible to use books as sources of inspiration, and in particular to review one's insights and refresh one's practice. This is something I advise people to do, but unfortunately it is not possible to obtain the subtle practical adjustments and individual corrections required to avoid getting stuck or losing one's way in the unimaginable abundance of states and pathways of consciousness. Traditionally, this kind of teaching can only take place in an existential, individually responsible, and deeply engaged mutual process with a competent teacher.

But, as I claim in my blog post [A Shadow Odyssey](#), New Age, and its whole spiritual role-playing game with its self-designed gurus and masters without experience, has in my view put an end to this tradition. I have especially been disappointed over discovering that spiritual environments, which precisely claim to build on the necessity of a teacher who can adjust and correct unbalanced states and pathways of the individual's consciousness, have been characterized by a large number of people who have got their spiritual path distorted by these same teachers. Examples are [Swami Muktananda](#) and [Sogyal Rinpoche](#).

In the pre-modern time's spiritual pedagogics the teacher took the central place in so-called energy-mandalas, whereby the hierarchical structure was able to be unfold (Christ and Buddha in the centre). In the newer time's spiritual pedagogics a true spiritual development aims, in my view, towards holding free the center of the circles, whereby an ideal equal spirituality can begin to unfold.

This development is especially represented by Krishnamurti, who in this way seeks to make the Source common. In such a mandala-structure that, which before symbolical was gathered in the centre, is now unfolded and made common in the periphery. The aim is completely to avoid the guru-centric. Anybody, who has worked with Krishnamurti's teaching, can recognize this. And in the connection with philosophy this is also interesting since Krishnamurti's teaching in that way follows the central virtue of philosophy: *Think for Yourself!* Indeed, his teaching is characterized by the use of philosophy, instead of religious preaching or psychotherapy. Krishnamurti

time after time emphasized that you must be completely alone in your spiritual development. You must be a spiritual anarchist. The help you'll need will so to speak come from above when you are completely alone. This help is also called progressive karma.

If we return to the article, then let's look at trait 1:

1. The psychologizing of religion and philosophy

This causes, that the practitioners turn their minds towards the content, and not the form, as true spirituality does.

I simply claim that the era of enlightened masters is over, and that we are entering an era of false gurus and pseudo-spirituality. About charismatic gurus Timothy Conway says:

It's well known to the true sages that powerful but ultimately confused, constricted discarnate entities regarded as "demons" or "titans" (Skt.: asura, rakshasa, etc.) can create such electric energies through human beings as a way of then "feeding" on the aroused emotions and psychic states of the hordes of people who surround the human channel. That's why many Zen masters often warned their students to simply regard all unusual states and energies as makyō, distracting "diabolical phenomena," and instead wake up to the Open, Infinite Awareness, the formless "Big Self" or pristine "Buddha-Nature."

In concluding this point: Just because a charismatic figure is felt to be a powerhouse of energy creating altered states of consciousness in people does NOT mean the figure should be viewed as a perfected spiritual master or venerated as "Divine," ...

In my blog post [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#) I claim that we can speak about a collective top-down awakening within the enormous movement of New Age, which expresses itself in a variety of intellectual, identifi- cal and euphorical ego-inflations (and the long wake of psychic wrecks who have ended up in The Dark Night of the Soul – see my article [The Ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help environment](#)). I guess this is what New Agers are speaking about when they are talking about the “global spiritual awakening” which shall lead to the prophesized New Age: the Age of the Aquarius. Just try to google “how to open your third eye” and you’ll get 19.800.000 results (when I tried). Most of the techniques given are in my view examples of spiritual vampirism and directly criminal if there were any way of proving it.

The most scary is that there actually seems to be a thought behind it. I have called this the 666 conspiracy. The 666 conspiracy is about Evil's plot against mankind. Is the third Antichrist among us, and will our worship of him be a sign of Judgment Day, or rather, the Kali Yuga? It is clear that the Antichrist must be about anti-love and anti-existence. Most of the techniques of "how to open your third eye", will, if you actually succeed, without question lead to a top-down awakening (described in blog post [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#)), which will block the opening down towards the heart and hara; that is: it will block the possibility for love and existence. I will return to how this is the result of a top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of spiritual growth seen as a ladder, and where all focus is on the upper chakras in the head.

When I had my Stoic extroverted period, and went into discussions with New Agers, there came a time where I reached a point of immensely tiredness over having to discuss whether various "enlightened masters", who were extremely hypocritical in their way of life, in reality were showing you a "higher teaching". This tiredness culminated, and I decided that if such an unethical behavior is how an enlightened master behaves, why is it worth striving for? I began, in a slightly provoking way, to claim that the concept of enlightenment is a rhetorical trick made by power greedy megalomaniacs: the thought distortion called truth by authority: you claim that you are enlightened, and hereafter you can realize all your perverted dreams. I simply began to consider enlightenment postulations as a sign of a false guru (see my article [Playing the Enlightenment Card](#)).

Today I agree with the Zen masters and believe that it, from the very starting point, would be a good idea to regard all unusual states and energies postulated or promised by gurus as *makyo, distracting "diabolical phenomena."*

I also claim that all the original wisdom traditions will disappear, and that we in fact can watch how this is happening right now. New Age systematically works against religion (together with [atheist fundamentalism](#)), either in an attempt altogether to eliminate religion, or through [reductionism](#). With religion I mean a [religion with a tradition for a spiritual practice](#) that through experience has been adjusted and corrected through hundreds of years. Thus Gnosticism and Mysticism arised in the early and medieval Christianity, Sufism in Islam, Hasidism and Kabbalah in Judaism, Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism. In China you'll find Taoism. But even older are Shamanism and Paganism; religious practices which I under one call the old religion and the old art.

In New Age the anti-religious work is happening though an exploitative form of spiritual colonialism and one step in; first: the destruction of Indigenous cultures ([plastic shamanism](#) is today systematically organized, for example through ayahuasca journeys), and secondly: the destruction of all the other wisdom traditions. The latter is spreading under the slogan: "these traditions can best be understood when

integrated with Western psychology and psychotherapy” (= reduced to). The ignorance in this is that spiritual awakening is connected to ancestral and ancient layers, cords, eventually your own soul, and therefore only can be understood within their original context.

In his article [The Three Simultaneously True Levels of Nondual Reality \(one Absolutely True, the other two “relatively true”\)](#) Timothy Conway writes:

Most humans view their situation in a conventional, non-mystical way, treating whatever happens as concretely real, and to be judged as "good" and "bad," etc. By contrast, a growing number of spiritual teachers and disciples in the New Thought and Neo-Advaita (nonduality) movements of our era have become boxed into a viewpoint which constrains them to see whatever happens only as "the perfect manifestation of Divine Will," or else as "nothing really happening." Such persons abandon all capacity for evaluating phenomena in any constructive or meaningful way.

What Conway is worried about is the New Age confusion of Eastern enlightenment and Western Idealism (I will return to Conway’s three-fold model of nondual reality). The two notions are namely each other’s oppositions, though they, as we shall see, paradoxically enough reminds about each other. The Eastern concept has to do with an absolute and objective knowledge of the truth. The Western concept has to do with a relative and subjective knowledge of what the individual thinks of as truth. Moreover: the Eastern concept has to do with the negation of the thought, the concept of total self-abnegation, a stop of the-create-your-own-reality tendency; or shortly said: meditation. The Western concept has to do with a position of the thought, the concept of self-assertion, an encouragement of the create-your-own-reality tendency; or said in another way: the believe that you think yourself to enlightenment.

What makes them remind about each other is the view of *reality-as-an-illusion*.

In the following I will have focus on how Neo-Advaita and New Thought confuses Eastern Enlightenment with Western Idealism. I will show the consequences of this confusion by seeing it in connection with concrete examples, such as the New Age proponents Ken Wilber, Andrew Cohen, Robert Lanza, A Course in Miracles and Byron Katie. I will also comment on the question of taking money for spiritual services.

2. The Difference between Western Subjective Idealism and Eastern Enlightenment

Neo-Advaita, also called the Satsang-movement and Nondualism, is a New Religious Movement, emphasizing the direct recognition of the non-existence of the "I" or "ego," without the need of preparatory practice. Preparatory practice is an annoyance in New Age, which is characterized by all kind of attempts to jump over this, and Neo-Advaita can only be characterized as New Age. In this way Neo-Advaita skips the important concept of the negation of the thought, meditation, and is focusing on the position of the thought. This is happening through certain questioning techniques.

Neo-Advaita's teachings are derived from, *but not authorised by*, the teachings of the 20th century sage Ramana Maharshi, as interpreted and popularized by H. W. L. Poonja and several of his western students, for example Andrew Cohen, whom I'll return to.

It is part of a larger religious current called immediatism by Arthur Versluis, which has its roots in both western and eastern spirituality. Western influences are western esoteric traditions like Transcendentalism, and "New Age millennialism, self-empowerment and self-therapy" – but especially, Western Idealism. Generally said you can say that it follows the New Age tendency to reduce Eastern philosophy to Western psychology and psychotherapy (though it might claim that it isn't therapy).

The New Thought movement is a movement which developed in the United States in the 19th century, considered by many to have been derived from the unpublished writings of Phineas Quimby. There are numerous smaller groups, most of which are incorporated in the International New Thought Alliance.

New Thought holds that Infinite Intelligence, or God, is everywhere, spirit is the totality of real things, true human selfhood is divine, divine thought is a force for good, sickness originates in the mind, and "right thinking" has a healing effect. Again: notice the position of the thought. The name "New Thought" speaks for itself. Later, it developed into the movement of positive thinking.

Although New Thought is neither monolithic nor doctrinaire, in general, modern-day adherents of New Thought share some core beliefs: God or Infinite Intelligence is "supreme, universal, and everlasting"; divinity dwells within each person, that all people are spiritual beings; "the highest spiritual principle is loving one another unconditionally... and teaching and healing one another"; and "our mental states are carried forward into manifestation and become our experience in daily living".

The New Thought movement survives to the current day in the form of a loosely allied group of religious denominations, authors, philosophers, and individuals who

share a set of beliefs concerning metaphysics, positive thinking, the law of attraction, healing, life force, creative visualization, and personal power.

Both Neo-Advaita and New Thought are based on Western subjective idealism. In philosophy, idealism is the group of metaphysical philosophies that assert that reality, or reality as humans can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial.

It is important to mention the concept of epistemology here, because it makes a great difference what kind of knowledge we can trust, if any. Can *any* knowledge be trusted, or must we begin and end with skepticism? Descartes only began with skepticism, as a method (his “universal methodic doubt”); a skeptic ends with it as his final verdict on human knowledge. No matter if Eastern philosophers are idealists or not, then they believed humans can attain absolute knowledge, complete objectivity and light, and that is what is meant by Enlightenment.

If there is some kind of reliable knowledge, and we do not not have to be skeptics, the next question is how we attain it: by reason (rationalism) or sensation (empiricism), or both (realism) or neither (mysticism)? In European philosophy there is a strong tradition for accepting only two ways of attaining knowledge: sensation and reason (thinking) - and this is also the case with Neo-Advaita and New Thought. Here we see the first cause of the confusion, because there is also an opposition to this tradition. Medieval philosophers, and many Catholic philosophers in the present day, speak about meditation as a third way of attaining knowledge. Some of our time’s existentialists speak about a kind of being-cognition, which neither is due to sensation or reason (thinking). And finally, a couple of European mystics, as for instance Plotin, Meister Eckhart and William Blake, have spoken about a mystical cognition of God and higher powers, which is reaching far beyond the areas of sensation and reason (thinking). And Eastern philosophy has always worked with a mystical cognition as the final goal of the philosophers’ efforts: Nirvana, Samadhi, Tao, Satori, etc. The way towards this is therefore *precisely* the preparatory practice such as meditation; that is: a negation of sensation and thinking. Neither Neo-Advaita or New Thought work with such preparatory practices. They work with the position of thinking, either as questioning techniques or positive thinking.

In general, Western philosophy has never worked with meditation.

The earliest existent arguments that the world of experience is grounded in the mental derive from India and Greece. The Hindu idealists in India and the Greek Neoplatonists gave panentheistic arguments for an all-pervading consciousness as the ground or true nature of reality. In contrast, the Yogācāra school, which arose

within Mahayana Buddhism in India in the 4th century CE, based its "mind-only" idealism to a greater extent on phenomenological analyses of personal experience.

A similar turn toward the subjective anticipated empiricists is seen in George Berkeley, who revived idealism in 18th-century Europe by employing skeptical arguments against materialism. Beginning with Immanuel Kant, German idealists such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, and Arthur Schopenhauer dominated 19th-century philosophy. This tradition, which emphasized the mental or "ideal" character of all phenomena, gave birth to idealistic and subjectivist schools ranging from British idealism to phenomenism to existentialism.

Epistemologically, idealism manifests as a skepticism about the possibility of knowing any mind-independent thing. In contrast to materialism, idealism asserts the primacy of consciousness as the origin and prerequisite of material phenomena. According to this view consciousness exists before and is the pre-condition of material existence. Consciousness creates and determines the material and not vice versa. Idealism believes consciousness and mind to be the origin of the material world and aims to explain the existing world according to these principles. It is this viewpoint that makes it sound a lot like Eastern philosophy.

The difference between Western idealism and Eastern idealism is the difference between subjective idealism and objective idealism.

Subjective idealism takes as its starting point the given fact of human consciousness seeing the existing world as a combination of sensation. This is the view that the *human mind* is everything that exists. This is the concept of nondual consciousness that Neo-Advaita and New Thought wrongly confuse with Eastern concepts of nondual consciousness.

Objective idealism posits the existence of an objective consciousness which exists before and, in some sense, independently of human minds. This is the Eastern concept of nondual consciousness. In other words: there is a difference between human minds and consciousness. This difference is non-existent in Western idealism, which therefore come to focus on psychology, and not metaphysics, ontology and cosmology.

In Eastern philosophy the concept of nondual consciousness is one and the same as the Wholeness, reality, and is neither mind, nor matter. But mind and matter both exist as complementary ontological realms. I have detailed this in my online book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien, Metaphysics, Ontology*, part 1: [The Problem](#)

[of Mind](#). Here I present a double-aspect theory, which claim that mind and matter are two aspects of the same substance, namely consciousness. You could therefore also call it a double-aspect monism. The theory can be further explained with the claim that man seems to have two aspects: an energy-aspect and a consciousness-aspect. Seen from the energy-aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature (both classical laws and quantum laws); your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations: compensatory karma. The psychic system is what I refer to when I talk about thoughts and mind.

Seen from the consciousness-aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the Wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses (also the quantum laws). The Wholeness is one and the same as reality. So, in my view, consciousness, Wholeness and reality is one and the same. This transcendent aspect is a negation of everything we can describe. We can only describe something in relation to its opposition. The Wholeness can't be put in opposition to anything, therefore it is undescrivable. A theory of everything is impossible. So-called "holistic, or nondual theories" are self-contradictory and self-refuting.

This negation-principle furthermore implies a complementarity feature, namely that different aspects within the Wholeness may show a complementarity. It implies that with regard to mental and physical states there may be incompatible descriptions of different parts that emerge from the whole. This stands in close analogy to quantum physics, where complementary properties cannot be determined jointly with accuracy. You can say that two descriptions are complementary if they mutually exclude each other, yet are both necessary to describe a situation exhaustively (see my article [Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr](#)).

Finally, the double-aspect theory involves an ontological pluralism. I make a distinction between the metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality (the Wholeness; or the form of consciousness) - and the content of consciousness. The metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality I call *metaphysical naturalism*.

The metaphysical identification of the content of consciousness (or the content of reality) I call metaphysical pluralism. Metaphysical pluralism in philosophy is the multiplicity of metaphysical models of the structure and content of reality, both as it appears and as logic dictates that it might be, as is, for example, exhibited by the four related models in Plato's Republic and as developed in the contrast between idealism and materialism. The logic necessary in order to establish unambiguous descriptions of these models is clearly seen in what my

professor in philosophy, the late David Favrholt, called the *Core* in everyday language which I will return to later.

Within these models is the more restricted sub-fields of ontological pluralism (that examines, and describes, what exists in each of these realms). Ontological pluralism deals with the methodology for establishing knowledge about these realms. Ontological pluralism allows me to use both materialist and immaterialist explanations, it so to speak combines the two. It says that we don't have to decide between either materialism or idealism. Instead it argues for an ontological *pluralism* admitting that reality is made up of many different kinds of things.

For example, there are particular beings, such as Bob Dylan and Socrates and Barack Obama, and there may also be things like the color red, the number two, and the world of *Alice in Wonderland* (see my pop culture file [Alice in Wonderland](#)), and weather systems and foreign policy and moral laws, and the way we eat a lobster.

And all these different things can be real, but they may not fit into one neat ontological category like "material beings" or "immaterial beings," and may not fit into one neat scientific theory like quantum mechanics or relativity theory.

We may be stuck saying that the world is pluralistic, and, what's more, we may have to appeal to many different explanations in order to make sense of our very real and everyday complex world. This view has the difficulty of explaining how all these things interact, but most pluralists simply accept this problem rather than accepting the absurdity of the other two metaphysical worldviews that deny the existence of either material or immaterial things.

These days ontological pluralism comes with support from science as well. Philosophers like Nancy Cartwright in *The Dappled World* and John Dupré in *The Disorder of Things*, both members of the Stanford School of the Philosophy of Science, known for its pluralistic approach to metaphysics and science, have argued for scientific and ontological pluralism. These philosophers probably aren't going to buy into the existence of ghosts and the transmigration of souls, like Mulder in *The X-Files*, but they would probably agree with Mulder's insistence that the laws of physics don't apply as often as we would like to think.

After all, we appeal to many different successful sciences to explain our own complex reality. For example, we might appeal to social forces when talking about things like marriage and child rearing practices, and economic forces when talking about employment rates, and biological explanations when trying to understand reproductive patterns in insects and psychological explanations when trying to

explain the mind of a serial killer. Reductionism is when you try to reduce everything to just one kind of reality. Both materialism and idealism are reductionisms.

New Age idealists are today often promoting their ideas as science, such as [Rupert Sheldrake](#), [Bruce Lipton](#), [Gregg Braden](#), [Robert Lanza](#), etc., etc.). Let me mention the fourth trait of New Age:

4. Pseudoscience

New Age is filled with all kind of loose, self-invented and directly wrong interpretations of science. Furthermore there is a manipulative, and non-founded, tendency to call their own practices science. This also causes a lot of misguiding.

According to Drury, the New Age attempts to create "a worldview that includes both science and spirituality", while Hess noted how New Agers have "a penchant for bringing together the technical and the spiritual, the scientific and the religious". Although New Agers typically reject rationalism, the scientific method, and the academic establishment (see my article [Anti-intellectualism and Anti-Science](#)), they employ terminology and concepts borrowed from science and particularly from the New Physics (see my article [Quantum Mysticism and its Web of Lies](#)). Moreover, a number of prominent influences on New Age, such as David Bohm and Ilya Prigogine, had backgrounds as professional scientists.

In this, the milieu is interested in developing unified world views (theories of everything) to discover the nature of the divine and establish a scientific basis for religious belief. Figures in the New Age movement—most notably Fritjof Capra in his *The Tao of Physics* (1975)—have drawn parallels between theories in the New Physics and traditional forms of mysticism, thus arguing that ancient religious ideas are now being proven by contemporary science. Many New Agers have adopted James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis that the Earth acts akin to a single living organism, although have expanded this idea to include the idea that the Earth has consciousness and intelligence.

Despite New Agers' appeals to science, most of the academic and scientific establishments dismiss "New Age science" as pseudo-science, or at best existing in part on the fringes of genuine scientific research. This is an attitude also shared by many active in the field of parapsychology. In turn, New Agers often accuse the scientific establishment of pursuing a dogmatic and outmoded approach to scientific enquiry, believing that their own understandings of the universe will replace those of the academic establishment in a paradigm shift. Here it is important to note trait number 2:

2. The elimination of critical thinking

The psychologizing therefore also causes that critical thinking is seen as something negative, as a symptom of problems with your feelings. This turn is coming from relativistic and subjectivistic theories on Western universities, which forbid actual value judgment (notice the self-contradiction). And it has nothing to do with spirituality, and causes that the practitioners close themselves to both own problems, and problems of the world. In true spirituality critical thinking is quite central, because the practice here is about discovering both own thought distortions, and thought distortions of the world.

(see my articles [Bridge Between Science and Spirituality](#) and Constructivism: The Postmodern Intellectualism Behind New Age and the Self-help Industry. Also see my article on [Deepak Chopra](#), and see how he directly has adopted postmodernist rhetoric in an attack on science).

Amateurs are in this way claiming to have more scientific understanding than the experts. It is a direct New Age version of the so-called “[science wars](#)”, which is a series of intellectual exchanges, between scientific realists and postmodernist critics, about the nature of scientific theory and intellectual inquiry. They took place principally in the United States in the 1990s in the academic and mainstream press. What is common in these attempts is that New Agers try to make a one-sided metaphysical theory, idealism, into an alternative science which shall replace another one-sided metaphysical theory, materialism. Paradoxically, they come to support materialism in the sense of advocating a similar kind of scientism, which for example are seen in [atheist fundamentalism](#). They reduce philosophy and religion to “science”, and therewith avoid the difficult task of producing philosophical and theological arguments.

But as Patrick Suppes, another member of the Stanford School of the Philosophy of Science, has argued, science has become increasingly complex over time, increasingly specialized, and increasingly pluralistic: in other words, we are getting farther and farther away from the view that one science can unify all the others. And the fact that there is not likely to be just one simple scientific theory to explain everything suggests that the world itself must really be made up of lots of different kinds of things. In my article [Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr](#), I have explained, with support from Bohr’s philosophy, that one *Theory of Everything* isn’t possible because you can’t describe the Wholeness.

Therefore, be aware that ontological pluralism hasn’t anything to do with relativism. Relativism is essential about language, and in the most extreme form, idealism, in

which it claims that there is no reality outside our language and ideas. Reality is a linguistic construct. Ontological pluralism is essentially about different kinds of *reality*. Just because you only are able to see an elephant from certain angles, this doesn't make the elephant unreal. It doesn't make the elephant into an illusion. But that's what relativism claims. Relativism says that each person or group of people defines their own truth, establishes their own ethics, and chooses their own values, and since you can't see the elephant in its Wholeness, none of those truths, ethics, or values are inherently any more true, ethical, or valuable than any others. Relativism would for example not allow that an investigation could show something to be false, or that you could reach an experience of the Wholeness. Relativism is essentially both anti-scientific and anti-spiritual. The enormous failure of New Age is therefore its support of relativism and idealism.

In Eastern philosophy, consciousness is one and the same as the Wholeness. It is spacious and therefore also one and the same as reality. Awareness seems to be a quality of the now, and therefore a quality of life itself: nature, Universe. Many ancient Indian scripts say that the Universe is in meditation, or rather: the Universe *is* one great meditation! When you are in the Now, life, nature and universe expands. Awareness seems to have the qualities of openness and spaciousness. Unawareness closes these qualities. We can all experience this quite easily. Take a walk in the forest. Unawareness, or distractedness (focus on thinking and head), cause that we don't see the nature we are walking in. Or take the experience of waking up from a dream and realizing it was just a dream. The reason why you can realize this is the spaciousness, which is one and the same as reality. You know that what you in the waking state experience isn't something going on inside your head but is all around you.

Awareness causes that we see the external world much more clearly. And by practicing meditation (awareness in the now), you begin to connect with this open dimension of your being. In fact, it introduces you to the unlimited spaciousness that Buddhists call *Sûnyatâ* (see my book [Sûnyatâ Sutras](#)). This spaciousness is also the source of love. Spaciousness is simply love. The openness and the spaciousness come from your heart, not your head. It is neither mental nor material. It is, in fact, consciousness.

The concept of spaciousness (which is unknown in Western philosophy) solves in this way the so-called *problem of the external world*, a problem limited to Western philosophy, which only are accepting two ways of attaining knowledge: sensation and reason (thinking), and are describing consciousness as if it was a camera inside a box. Descartes, for example, argues that since it is possible to doubt that physical bodies exist, an argument must be given to prove that they exist. All of these

considerations make up what is called *the problem of the external world*. Descartes argues that the external world is known to exist because we have clear and distinct perceptions of it. If our perceptions were false, that would indicate that their efficient cause: God, was a deceiver. Since deception cannot logically be present in God, our perceptions are true, and there is, in fact, an external world. Descartes is the main philosopher, besides subjective idealists like George Berkeley, which is standing behind the concept of the brain-in-jar hypothesis and later the simulation theory (see my articles [The Dream-Hypothesis and the Brain-in-Jar Hypothesis](#) and the [Simulation theory](#)).

David Hume, dean of the empiricists, continues in the same consciousness-in-a-box style, and claims neutrality on the problem, writing that all we have before our minds are ideas, and we have no way of knowing whether our ideas correspond to an external reality.

Emmanuel Kant, self-proclaimed reconciler of rationalism and empiricism, argues that there is an external world of things-in-themselves, but we are forever cut off from it because our sensory system can provide us only with phenomena that we cannot assume deliver us the qualities of the noumena. We are a consciousness in a box.

The problem of the existence of the external world is one of Western epistemology's most vexing and important questions, as it highlights the fault lines between rationalists and empiricists. They have never considered the much deeper philosophy of the East.

Consciousness is therefore neither mind nor matter. But due to, that Western philosophy only accepts two sources of knowledge, the Western idealists reduce this consciousness to mind alone, and deny the existence of matter, hereunder the human body, with its chakra-system and its heart, where consciousness according to Eastern philosophy is seated. In fact: Western idealism sells out the whole of reality and the world. Western idealism is characterized by the Indo-European top-heavy focus of spiritual growth seen in the image of a ladder: evolutionism. They are therefore extremely focused in the head, even the top of the head, which is considered the place where enlightenment is happening. But enlightenment is happening in the heart, since the heart is the seat of consciousness. All traditional spiritual practice is about emptying the mind and relaxing the head.

3. The concept of *reality-as-an-illusion* in New Age

Remember trait 1 from the article:

1. *The psychologizing of religion and philosophy*

In his book *Myths of Light*, Joseph Campbell demonstrates this psychologizing tendency (which comes from his inspiration from Carl Gustav Jung). He writes:

Now, there is at least three points that makes it possible to speak of Eastern religious practice – yoga – and our own depth psychology in the same breath. The first is the recognition that all of the pantheons of the world, the divinities, the heavens and hells, and so forth, are seen in yoga as projections of psychological images. That is to say, what we think of normally as metaphysics and theology are interpreted as psychology, as a function of the mind (page 48).

This passage demonstrates that this is not something Campbell has experienced. Indian philosophy is created by humans who have experienced what they talk about. And, the pantheon of the world, the divinities, the heavens and hells, are precisely *not* projections of the mind. They are theological and metaphysical *realities*, external to the mind (though they might have left imprints in the mind, as we shall see later). Campbell demonstrates the importance in having a sustainable metaphysics. If your metaphysical theory is the ordinary human mind alone, you'll end in solipsism, a viewpoint which is unacceptable as a philosophical argument. You can have it as a faith, but not as a sustainable argument. What Campbell is doing is that he is reducing the whole thing to the ordinary human mind, whereby he makes this mind into a solipsism, a kind of God.

The problem of solipsism pops up just a few lines below, where he demonstrates that he doesn't understand Kundalini Yoga either:

[...] the idea behind the great heaven-ascending ladder of the seven chakras, the centers of the kundalini yoga [...] is also the basic idea behind psychoanalysis – that once one has brushed aside the webs of subconscious compulsion, one is released to the freedom of being a subject (ibid.).

He has turned the whole path towards objectivity, the freedom *from* the subject, into a worship of the subject itself: solipsism. So, here we see, demonstrated in a few lines, the whole of the tragic New Age confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western idealism (note that this reductionist tendency in Campbell doesn't invalidate the greatness of his other work, which I'm deeply inspired by. The same is the case with Jung).

The lines also demonstrate how New Age can see the concept of *reality-as-an-illusion* in connection with the psychological oriented idea that the whole world is a projection of the mind, and therefore an illusion. Being a free subject can then be seen as a practice of the *create-your-own-reality* ideology. This is in no way what Eastern philosophy teaches. We will return to this.

As mentioned in the beginning of this Ebook, one of the most contentious aspects of the New Age has been its adoption of spiritual ideas and practices from other, particularly non-Western cultures. Its belief that all traditions are free for anyone to use, rather than the private property of particular communities, has resulted in New Agers adopting and marketing the practices of Third World societies. These have included "Hawaiian Kahuna magic, Australian Aboriginal dream-working, South American Amerindian ayahuasca and San Pedro ceremony, Hindu Ayurveda and yoga, and Chinese Feng Shui, Qi Gong, and Tai Chi".

New Age is therefore a central part of a new kind of cultural imperialism, misappropriating the sacred ceremonies, and abuse of the intellectual and cultural property of especially indigenous peoples (the first victim of New Age cultural imperialism, and the first step in the destruction of all religion and the original wisdom traditions).

Indigenous American spiritual leaders, such as Elders councils of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Navajo, Creek, Hopi, Chippewa, and Haudenosaunee have denounced New Age misappropriation of their sacred ceremonies and other intellectual property, stating that "[t]he value of these instructions and ceremonies [when led by unauthorized people] are questionable, maybe meaningless, and hurtful to the individual carrying false messages". Traditional leaders of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples have reached consensus to reject "the expropriation of [their] ceremonial ways by non-Indians". They see the New Age movement as either not fully understanding, deliberately trivializing, or distorting their way of life, and have declared war on all such "[plastic medicine people](#)" who are appropriating their spiritual ways (see my entries on [Plastic Shamanism](#), and [The Psychedelic Experience versus the Mystical Experience](#)).

Indigenous leaders have spoken out against individuals from within their own communities who may go out into the world to become a "white man's shaman," and any "who are prostituting our spiritual ways for their own selfish gain, with no regard for the spiritual well-being of the people as a whole". The term "plastic shaman" or "plastic medicine people" has been applied to outsiders who identify themselves as shamans, holy people, or other traditional spiritual leaders, but who have no genuine connection to the traditions or cultures they claim to represent.

I think the next target for abuse will be Tibetan Buddhism. Originally, teachings such as Dream Yoga and Dzogchen was held secret. But when China invaded Tibet, many Tibetan teachers decided to make the teachings public, so that they should not be destroyed. In the Tibetan lama Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book [The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep](#), he explains why he teaches Dream yoga to Westerners:

Dream Yoga is a primary support in developing my own practice and this has been true for many, many masters and yogis of Tibet [...] Some Tibetan masters might find it strange that I teach these practices to Westerners who have not done certain preliminary practices or who do not have certain understandings. The teaching were traditionally maintained as secret teachings, both as a sign of respect and as a protection against dilution through the misunderstanding of unprepared practitioners. They were never taught publicly nor give lightly, but were reserved for individuals who had prepared to receive them.

The practices are no less efficacious and valuable then they ever were, but conditions in the world have changed, and so I am trying something different. I hope that by teaching what is effective, openly and simply, the tradition will be better preserved and more people would be able to benefit from it. But it is important to respect the teachings, both to protect them and to further our own practice. Please try to receive the direct transmission of these teachings from an authentic teacher. It is a good to read about these yogas but better to receive the oral transmission, which creates a stronger connection with the lineage. Also. It is easy to encounter obstacles on the path that are hard to overcome on our own but which an experienced teacher can identify and help to remove. This is an important point that should not be forgotten.

Well, I think Tenzin here are overestimating Westerners, especially within the New Age, where the focus is on evolutionism and the top-heavy Indo-European evolutionistic ideology. Let's look at the third trait of New Age:

3. Incompetent teachers

The many short self-made and private educations within the New Age ideology, cause that there are extremely many teachers without enough experiences and philosophical training. This causes a lot of spiritual misguiding.

New Age will immediately focus on the highest teachings, and drop the preliminary work. New Age is therefore now booming with Dream Yoga teachers, "experts" in lucid dreaming and astral projection. Just try to make a google search on "lucid dreaming teacher" (667.000 results) or "astral projection teacher" (374.000 results).

Well, according to the results, the huge amount of teachers at least have figured out one thing: a lucid dreaming teacher is a bit easier job than that of an astral projection teacher (read more in my article [Why I Don't Teach Tibetan Dream Yoga](#) and [David Jay Brown](#)).

The same is happening with the Indian Advaita teaching. Try to make a Google search for nonduality teachers. When I tried it, I got 1.750.000 hits. Hordes of non-enlightened teachers have colonized an area of teaching only suitable for enlightened masters and those very close to enlightenment, as for example the so-called pointing-out practice.

Neo-Advaita has been called a "controversial movement, and has been criticized for its emphasis on insight alone, omitting the preparatory practices. It has also been criticised for its references to a "lineage" of Ramana Maharshi, whereas Ramana never claimed to have disciples and never appointed any successors.

Neo-Advaita teachers don't listen to critique. In response to those criticisms, Neo-Advaita teacher and "enlightened master" Tony Parsons, has written that classical Advaita Vedanta "is just another established religion with a proliferation of teachings and literature, all of which very successfully and consistently miss the mark," qualifying it as "one of the many systems of personal indoctrination promising the eventual spiritual fulfilment." According to Parsons, classical Advaita Vedanta "has no relevance to liberation because it is born out of a fundamental misconception," namely that there is something like a separate individual who can become enlightened. According to Parsons, this is "a direct denial of abiding oneness (Advaita)." What does such statements reveal? New Age and its infringement of experience and tradition. Ken Wilber, who apparently also is a nondual teacher, has said something similar. In his view Ramana Maharshi can't be considered to be an "integral master" (a person who fits into Wilber's ultra-intellectual system), because he was a cripple.

Timothy Conway considers Parsons' teachings to be "dangerously imbalanced" ([read more](#) - also read Conway's critique of Neo-Advaita in his article [Neo-Advaita or Pseudo-Advaita and Real Advaita-Nonduality](#)...note his emphasize on the importance of critical thinking. Furthermore, read his article [Criteria for Authentic Spiritual Realization](#)).

So, the problem is the reduction of ontological realms of enlightened consciousness to psychology (ordinary mind); to something inside the ordinary human mind or psyche, which is situated in the head. The misunderstanding continues in numerous New Age books, for example also in New Age scientism, where the concepts of

enlightened consciousness have been reduced to scientific sounding terms, such as morphic field ([Rupert Sheldrake](#)), biocentrism ([Robert Lanza](#)), or the law behind the evolution of consciousness ([Ken Wilber](#)). What drives them is the evolutionary ideology (again: see my Ebook [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in The Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

It is especially in this New Age scientism the movie the Matrix comes in. They focus more on the eastern concept of Maya (reality as illusion or dream), than the concept of enlightenment. They believe that the whole of reality is an illusion created by the mind. And that we can create our own reality. In fact, it seems like they believe that enlightenment is the discovery that we can create reality just as we want to as if we were god himself.

The idea that only one's own ordinary mind is sure to exist leads to solipsism. As an epistemological position, solipsism holds that knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is unsure; the external world and other minds cannot be known and might not exist outside the mind. As a metaphysical position, solipsism goes further to the conclusion that the world and other minds do not exist, or rather, in its very beginning, it can't explain that the world and other minds exist. Below we shall see how Robert Lanza ends in solipsism. First, we shall see how solipsism is avoided in Eastern philosophy.

The earliest reference to Solipsism in Hindu philosophy is found in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, dated to early 1st millennium BCE. The Upanishad holds the mind to be the only god and all actions in the universe are thought to be a result of the mind assuming infinite forms. After the development of distinct schools of Indian philosophy, Advaita Vedanta and Samkhya schools are thought to have originated concepts similar to solipsism. It is here the confusion starts.

Advaita is one of the six most known Hindu philosophical systems and literally means "non-duality". Its first great consolidator was Adi Shankaracharya, who continued the work of some of the Upanishadic teachers, and that of his teacher's teacher Gaudapada. By using various arguments, such as the analysis of the three states of experience—wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep, he established the singular reality of Brahman, in which Brahman, the universe and the Atman or the Self, were one and the same.

One who sees everything as nothing but the Self, and the Self in everything one sees, such a seer withdraws from nothing. For the enlightened, all that exists is nothing but

the Self, so how could any suffering or delusion continue for those who know this oneness? (Ishopanishad: sloka 6, 7).

The concept of the Self in the philosophy of Advaita could be interpreted as solipsism. However, the transhuman, *theological* implications of the Self in Advaita protect it from true solipsism as found in the West. Similarly, the Vedantic text Yogavasistha, escapes charge of solipsism because the real "I" is thought to be nothing but the absolute whole looked at through a particular unique point of interest.

Advaita is also thought to strongly diverge from solipsism in that, the former is a system of exploration of one's mind in order to finally understand the nature of the self and attain complete knowledge. The unity of existence is said to be directly experienced and understood at the end as a part of complete knowledge. On the other hand, solipsism posits the non-existence of the external void right at the beginning, and says that no further inquiry is possible.

Again: the essential difference is that Advaita teaches the negation of the thought, while solipsism teaches the position of the thought (for example positive thinking and self-empowerment). This negation of the thought is what is trained in the preparatory work.

Krishnamurti is also said to teach some kind of Advaita, but quite central in his teaching is the concept of self-abnegation. He refers to the nondual enlightened consciousness as an absolute Otherness, which the ordinary mind and its thinking never can know, wherefore the ordinary mind, thinking, will, etc., must stop completely. Now, this could sound like something Neo-Advaita also says, but it isn't. It can be clarified by comparing it with the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas.

In Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority (1961), Lévinas has some ideas strikingly similar to Krishnamurti (Krishnamurti didn't know Levinas, and I guess that Levinas didn't know Krishnamurti either). Levinas said that previous philosophy had reduced the Other person to an object of consciousness, by not preserving its absolute alterity—the innate condition of otherness, by which the Other radically transcends the Self and the totality of the human network into which the Other is being placed. As a challenge to self-assurance, the existence of the Other is a matter of ethics, because the ethical priority of the Other equals the primacy of ethics over ontology in real life.

From that perspective, Lévinas described the nature of the Other as "insomnia and wakefulness"; an ecstasy (an exteriority) towards the Other that forever remains

beyond any attempt at fully capturing the Other, whose Otherness is infinite; even in the murder of an Other, their Otherness remains uncontrolled and not negated. The infinity of the Other allowed Lévinas to derive other aspects of philosophy and science as secondary to that ethic; thus:

“The others that obsess me in the Other do not affect me as examples of the same genus united with my neighbor, by resemblance or common nature, individuations of the human race, or chips off the old block ... The others concern me from the first. Here, fraternity precedes the commonness of a genus. My relationship with the Other as neighbor gives meaning to my relations with all the others.” (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974), p. 159).

This concept of indescribable transcendence also exists within Hindu and Buddhist theology. In the East, however, this relationship is viewed slightly differently: that which is absolute transcendent of all knowledge is the basis of your own being. It is you; it is immanent within you. This fundamental Oriental statement appears in the Chhândogya Upanishad as early as the eighth century B.C: *Tat Tvam Asi*, “Thou art that.” You yourself are that which you would know. However this “you” is not the you that you identify with, not this phenomenon in time and space that can be named, that can be identified, that can be described. Therefore the importance of self-abnegation, or negation as such, as this is happening in the spiritual practice. That is not it, and so we also have the Sanskrit phrase, *Neti, Neti* – “not this, not this!” Anything that you can name about yourself is not it. Therefore, when you have erased all that you can name and broken through, then you have come to it. This is a very different calculus. In this equation, a is you and x is the mystery and $a = x$ – you are that mystery, but not the “you” that you think you are. The you that you think you are is not it and you that you can’t even think about *is* it. This paradox, this absurdity, is the essential mystery of the East. At first glimpse it could sound like solipsism, but the further you inquire into, it is the direct opposite. In the preparatory practice the balloon of the ordinary mind’s solipsism is punctured.

Samkhya philosophy, which is sometimes seen as the basis of Yogic thought, adopts a view that matter exists independently of individual minds. Representation of an object in an individual mind is held to be a mental approximation of the object in the external world. Therefore, Samkhya chooses representational realism over epistemological solipsism. Having established this distinction between the external world and the mind, Samkhya posits the existence of two metaphysical realities Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (consciousness).

Finally, some Western misinterpretations of Buddhism assert that external reality is an illusion, and sometimes this position is [mis]understood as metaphysical

solipsism. Buddhist philosophy, though, generally holds that the mind and external phenomena are both equally transient, and that they arise from each other. The mind cannot exist without external phenomena, nor can external phenomena exist without the mind. This relation is known as "dependent arising" (pratityasamutpada).

The Buddha stated, "Within this fathom long body is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world". Whilst not rejecting the occurrence of external phenomena, the Buddha focused on the illusion created within the mind of the perceiver by the process of ascribing permanence to impermanent phenomena, satisfaction to unsatisfying experiences, and a sense of reality to things that were effectively insubstantial. I will return to that.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American Buddhist monk, has written: "By assigning value and spiritual ideals to private subjectivity, the materialistic world view ... threatens to undermine any secure objective foundation for morality. The result is the widespread moral degeneration that we witness today. To counter this tendency, mere moral exhortation is insufficient. If morality is to function as an efficient guide to conduct, it cannot be propounded as a self-justifying scheme but must be embedded in a more comprehensive spiritual system which grounds morality in a transpersonal order. Religion must affirm, in the clearest terms, that morality and ethical values are not mere decorative frills of personal opinion, not subjective superstructure, but intrinsic laws of the cosmos built into the heart of reality."

The latter should confirm that Buddhism, or any other spiritual tradition, not is in for moral relativism, or subjectivism. Moral relativism contradicts the concept of spirituality all together, since it denies any absolute truth. It is always bordering to nihilism. It also shows that I'm right when claiming that idealism (subjectivism) goes hand in hand with materialism, as the two main metaphysical theories today.

So now we can see the confusion. New Thought and Neo-Advaita have identified the nondual consciousness with the ordinary human mind. The ontological realms of enlightened consciousness have been reduced to psychology, to the individual human psyche. The result is epistemological subjectivism which paradoxically claims that the absolute knowledge doesn't exist or that we can't reach it. And yet they are talking about this nondual absolute state of knowledge. Placing such an absolute knowledge in the ordinary human mind as the metaphysical foundation for everything, ends in solipsism, and such a solipsism could be called Black enlightenment.

a) Neo-Advaita and Timothy Conway's Three-fold model of Nondual reality

Now, if we return to Conway and his model of discrimination. Conway's three levels of discrimination are:

3 - Conventional level

2 - Psychic-Soul level

1 - ONLY GOD

Conway writes:

Now, for an alternate, "bigger picture" context, in a hopefully-clarifying threefold model I have presented elsewhere [click [here](#) to read more extensively], we can say it is 1) Absolutely true that "nothing is really happening," that all manifestation is "dream-like" and ultimately "empty" because there is only God, only Absolute Being-Awareness-Bliss, the One Alone, the all-transcending and unmanifest Spirit. 2) A step down from this strictly nondual "Absolute-truth level" (paramarthika-satya) of the ONE Alone to the "blessed many" is what we might call the "psychic-soul" truth-level in which "whatever happens in the manifest worlds is perfect," because all souls are sooner or later coming Home to perfect virtue and Divine awakening from soul-hood into Spirit, so that there's fundamentally nothing "wrong" or "problematic." 3) Finally, more pragmatically and usefully, there is the mundane, "conventional-truth level" (vyavaharika-satya) involving the play of opposites, crucially including justice-injustice, true-false, good-evil, appropriate-inappropriate, skillful-unskillful. All three of these levels (Absolute truth, psychic-soul truth, and mundane conventional truth) are simultaneously true within this overall Nondual (Advaita) Reality. One level is Absolutely True, the other two levels are "relatively true" or "experientially true" within the play of the many.

Losing the capacity to distinguish these three levels is a mark of great folly, not enlightened wisdom. And so, for instance, to excuse or overlook injustices occurring in the Rajneesh movement or elsewhere on this planet because "whatever happens is perfect" or because "this is all a dream, there's only God" is a tragic confusing of levels, and makes a mockery of the courageous work of all those who have ever endeavored to bring truth in place of lies, healing in place of harm, justice in place of injustice.

It seems that every other day another self-proclaimed 'enlightened' teacher of Neo-Advaita appears on the scene. These Neo-Advaita guru's have reduced thousands of years of Advaita teachings into psychology. No longer is it necessary for the spiritual student to engage in self-inquiry or inner work on oneself. All that is necessary to

'realize the Self' is a constant repetitive denial of one's own identity and the (pseudo) 'understanding' that the ego and all and everything else that happens in the universe (essence and belief systems included) is 'simply an illusion'. Everything 'just happens, there is no path, no cause', so consequently there is absolutely nothing to do.

A further absurdity can be seen on the website www.liberationunleashed.com, where you can get enlightened via an online forum. Deeper "initiations" happens on different Facebook groups.

The website says:

All we do here is point. If you are a long-time seeker, or just curious about this, we invite you to investigate and explore what no self really is. This service is available to everyone, for free. Join the forum and request a guide if and when you are ready to see this for yourself. We use the Direct Pointing method, which consists of a dialogue between a guide and a seeker.

This is a process of looking at what IS; no prior knowledge or years of seeking are required. The guide poses very specific questions in order to focus the attention on the experience of the present moment. This triggers what we refer to as 'crossing the Gateless Gate': an instant in which the illusion of a separate self is seen through. A shift in perception happens.

We guide because we are a community that openly and freely shares what we have been given by others that did the same for us. We guide because we believe that questioning assumptions leads to freedom. You only need to bring your honesty and curiosity. We ask nothing from you except your willingness to Look.

What the website is talking about is the so-called Pointing-out Instruction, one of the highest spiritual practices in Eastern philosophy. The pointing-out instruction (ngo sprod) is the direct introduction to the nature of mind in the Tibetan Buddhist lineages of Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen. In these traditions, a "root guru" gives the "pointing-out instruction" in such a way that the disciple successfully recognizes the "nature of mind."

This conspicuous aspect of Vajrayana Buddhism is esoteric. In this context esoteric means that the transmission of certain accelerating factors only occurs directly from teacher to student during an initiation and cannot be simply learned from a book. The term adhisthana (literally "blessing") refers to the spiritual energy that is received in the mindstream of the aspirant when successful transmission takes place.

Many techniques are also commonly said to be secret, but some Vajrayana teachers have responded that the secrecy itself is not important but only a side-effect of the reality that the techniques have no validity outside the teacher-student lineage. As these techniques are said to be highly effective, when not practiced properly, the practitioner can be harmed physically and mentally. In order to avoid these kind of dangers, the practice is kept secret. Unfortunately, New Ager has today sniffed the possibility of abusing it.

According to the Dalai Lama in the "Tradition of Mahamudra":

The Kagyu system refers to those who manifest clear light mind by relying on the methods for penetrating vital points of the external and internal body as those who progress through graded stages of methods. Such practitioners manifest clear light mind by progressing through stages. Those with sharp faculties, however, may be practitioners for whom everything happens at once. The Nyingma tradition of dzogchen also distinguishes between these two types of practitioners. Those who manifest rigpa, pure awareness, by training through stages involving various practices with the energy-winds, tummo, and so forth are those who progress through graded stages, while those for whom everything happens at once achieve the same by relying solely on meditation on a nonconceptual state of mental consciousness without the practices of the energy channels and energy-winds.

According to one Kagyu text, the method of practice of those for whom everything happens at once is powerful medicine. But it is deadly poison for those who progress through graded stages. In other words, the method of practice of meditating solely on the nonconceptual state of the mind is suited only for those of sharpest faculties. For those who are not of their level, such practice brings only harm, no benefit. For them the medicine acts like a poison.

Kaydrub Norzang-gyatso, in A Lamp for Clarifying Mahamudra to Establish the Single Intention of the Kagyu and Gelug Traditions, has explained that those for whom everything happens at once are persons who have trained extensively through stages either in previous lives or earlier in this life. As a result, meditation on the nonconceptual state of the mind, without need to rely on any further meditation on penetrating vital points of the vajra-body, alone causes clear light mind to manifest so that everything happens at once. Such meditation does this by acting as a circumstance for triggering the ripening of potentials built up from previous practice with energy-winds and so forth, so that they automatically enter, abide and dissolve in the central energy-channel. If a practitioner has not built up these potentials, then no matter how intensively he or she may focus in a nonconceptual state of mind, this

person is unable to manifest clear light mind or pure awareness. They lack sufficient causes.

New Age is more user-friendly than that. Today you can, as mentioned, get the initiations via an online forum, and deeper initiations are happening via Facebook. You don't need any preparatory training. Oh, yes, of course, you have to give up all critical thinking. The website is quite firm about this. In its guidelines for using the forum it says:

By accessing 'The Gate' (hereinafter "we", "us", "our", "The Gate", "<http://liberationunleashed.com/nation>") you certify that you have read the following guidelines and agree to stick to them to the best of your ability:

- 1. You agree to post regularly (ideally at least once a day);*
- 2. In general, your guide will ask the questions for you to respond to;*
- 3. Responses require your utmost honesty;*
- 4. Avoid speculation: this is not a discussion forum for analytical and philosophical rhetoric. Responses are best from your own experience (felt senses and observed thoughts);*
- 5. Put aside all other teachings, philosophies and such for the remainder of this investigation.*

There is also a disclaimer, which frees the website from any responsibility (which seems a bit self-contradictory, since you don't need any preparatory training):

The method of inquiry used on this site may actually work, unlike many spiritual practices. It will likely change how you regard your self, your relationships, and your world. Neither you nor we can predict how this will turn out for you. If you are already mentally or emotionally fragile, it may exacerbate a mental condition or disorder. If you are currently relying on a prescription or self-prescribed substance to regulate your mood or your sanity, we strongly suggest you not enter into this process. Our guides are not therapists and cannot take responsibility for your mental health, before or after. If your relationships are unsatisfactory, they may improve, or they may not. If you have strong religious or spiritual beliefs, direct experience may support them, or (in our experience) not. You are at all times responsible for your honesty, integrity and focus. A leap into the unknown is just that. We will do

everything we can to support it, insofar as we are volunteers working online, with attendant limitations.

When you have been through the forum, you can continue your initiations on Facebook:

We maintain several Facebook groups that allow people who have been through a forum process to discuss and work through common issues. These are not a substitute for any mental or physical help that you may need after Gate. None of the group participants is responsible for your well-being, or can be held liable for any advice. Adopt any more thoughts, concepts, or beliefs at your own risk.

Enter into this process if you are ready and willing to question all your beliefs and assumptions about awakening, if you are ready to face your fears, and if you prefer truth to comfortable lies. Do not enter if your goal is to fix the parts of your life that you think are broken, to embark on a self-improvement project, or to gain some kind of spiritual certification. Spiritual tourists will be taken to the airlock and launched into deep space.

By [registering at our forum](#) and agreeing to the terms and conditions, you also certify that you are at least 18 years old at the moment of registration.

Who are the “guides” you’ll meet? You have absolutely no idea (on the problem of online spirituality, see my blog posts on Facebook: [Is Facebook a Matrix Machine?](#) And [The Return of the Sophists](#)).

On the skeptics society forum, a person is posting an example of an “inquiry” he experienced on the forum:

”Who's asking?”

“no one is asking.”

“But who's experiencing and perceiving?”

“no one.”

“Then who is aware of this conversation?”

“Consciousness.”

“Then it is you experiencing consciousness subjectively, as a separated person, isn't it, since no one is aware of your thought?”

“No, It is oneness expressing and happening.”

They try all the point to avoid to say that is 'you' experiencing it. The 'YOU' word is a sin for their forum, so they use words like "consciousness" "life living itself."

They are repeating this over and over: *You* don't exist, *You* are not a separated person, *Separation* is an illusion, *You* can't do nothing about it, *You* have no free-will, *You* are hopeless, *You* have no self, *Your* existence is meaningless, *The World* is meaningless, and that this is only a dream that happens to no one, and you're dreaming. But there is no "you" separated from the wave. It is all just "life happening", seeing happens, talking happens...etc , etc.

On her Facebook profile the Neo-Advaita worshipper Nancy McDonald Lowe lectures us about the human brain:

the human brain weighs about 3 pounds and is made up of 60% fat and 75% water. it contains 100 billion neurons, 100 trillion synapses, trillions of axons, and 500 billion glial cells. it allows you to see, to hear, to taste, to smell, and to feel.

it is the reason that experience exists...

or... is all of that just a very elaborate story?

*look at experience as it *actually* is right now...*

can you actually find the 100 billion neurons in experience right now?

can you actually find 100 trillion synapses in experience right now?

can you actually find trillions of axons in experience right now?

can you actually find 500 billion glial cells in experience right now?

can you actually find the connection between the brain and the colors, sounds, smells, sensations etc that you are aware of right now?

*and if you cannot find *any* of these things, what else could they be but a story told by thought?*

*experience is *undeniably* real. it's authenticity *cannot* be denied.
but the brain is just a tale told by a storyteller that doesn't even know that it's speaking. a storyteller that isn't aware of anything and doesn't even know that it exists.*

so who are you going to believe?

gb ~ hall of mirrors

So, the brain doesn't exist either, since the brain is made up of matter. We shall return to the postulate about the non-existence of the body.

Nancy McDonald Lowe is obvious quite impressed by her own brilliance and she is supplying her post with a lot of emojis with smiling faces with sunglasses and winking faces. In reality, what she, and the other “inquiry” are doing, is setting up a so-called [Questioning Trap](#). Setting up a Questioning Trap might seem very profound in the questioner's own mind, but it is incredible easy, and certainly unhelpful. What's difficult is to give answers. And people using Questioning Traps don't want to give answers. They want their targets to feel uncomfortable. They want to feel their own power.

A Questioning Trap is always based on the questioner's own values, preferences and biases, and, disagreement with the target. But the questioner don't want to go into a rational discussion. A Questioning Trap can therefore easily turn into the 'Spanish Inquisition', where it develops into several thought distortions. In the case of Neo-Advaita, the thought distortion called Nondual Bias.

Nondual bias arises when you describe something as nondual, while forgetting that you can't describe anything without implying the negation of it.

The only thing that can be said to be nondual is the Wholeness (Conway's level 1). According to the Taoistic teaching of Yin and Yang there isn't anything beyond the world. You can't see the world from outside. You are in the world and you can only describe 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 Wholeness in opposition to anything. The Wholeness is therefore the indescribable (Tao).

So clear thinking, and therefore clear communication, involves, according to Taoism, an epistemological, a so-called gnoseological, dualism (Yin and Yang – Conway's level 3)). Clear, or unambiguous, description, has the distinction between subject and

object, image and reality, as a necessary precondition. We have to discriminate between subject and object, image and reality, in order to communicate unambiguously. And we have to discriminate between a long line of other oppositions as well: under one called Yin and Yang. And this discrimination is characterized by the knowledge that oppositions are complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same time necessarily must supplement each other. If your thoughts slip out in one extreme you must remember the other extreme and bring it in. If you confuse oppositions, you must separate them.

Unclear, or ambiguous, thinking, or communication, arises when you either are confusing the oppositions, or are thinking in one extreme of a pair of opposites. This is what is happening when confusing level 1 (nondual reality) with level 3 (dual reality). That is: dualistic unbalance which creates thought distortions.

Clear thinking and communication therefore also involve critical thinking, where you try to spot thought distortions. Such a critical thinking must both be directed in towards the subject as well as out towards the object. And therefore clear thinking and communication are an ethical practice.

In Neo-Advaita they for example commit the Nondual bias by saying that meditation is to be completely without thoughts, because the enlightened consciousness (the Wholeness) is without thoughts. This is without doubt a comforting thought for many people who might have had bad experiences within the area of thinking (for example preparatory work and education). They can then attack, for example critical thinkers, for being dual (that is: on a lower plane of consciousness), while themselves being nondual, and therefore on a higher level of consciousness. They just forget that they themselves are using thinking in order to communicate this, and that in a very unclear and ambiguous, even insulting way. In this way the Nondual bias is used in combination with thought distortions such as *Ego-inflation* and *Truth by Authority*. An actually enlightened master would never do this, because he knows he must think in order to communicate. And in this thinking he uses the complementarity principle, and the art of discrimination.

Therefore: always first look at how unambiguous/ambiguous so-called spiritual teachers, gurus, New Agers, and other people, etc., use their communication, before taking their claims seriously.

There are also many people caught in spiritual crises of different types, or clairvoyants, mediums, channelers, etc., who experience non-ordinary phenomena, and where images and reality in their descriptions flow together in one big confusion. It can be very flattering to hear, and sound very “nondual”, but in reality they express themselves, not only unclear and ambiguous, but directly obscure. So instead of

taking them seriously, you should remember that obscurantism means hostility towards enlightenment, or simply: darkness. So, who knows what it is that expresses itself through them.

As we can see until now: the reduction of the nondual consciousness (level 1) to the ordinary mind (level 3) ends in solipsism, and therefore nihilism. Nihilism is the philosophical viewpoint that suggests the denial or lack of belief towards the reputedly meaningful aspects of life. Most commonly, nihilism is presented in the form of existential nihilism, which argues that life is without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value. Moral nihilists assert that there is no inherent morality, and that accepted moral values are abstractly contrived. Nihilism may also take epistemological, ontological, or metaphysical forms, meaning respectively that, in some aspect, knowledge is not possible, or reality does not actually exist. The latter is in a nutshell what Neo-Advaita claims, and, by the way, an almost endless number of other New Age theories promoting the create-your-own-reality ideology. For example this is seen in the new version of the Matrix Conspiracy: [The Simulation Theory](#). It is of course, in complete compliance with the nihilist Sophist King over them all: Friedrich Nietzsche.

The language used by Neo-Advaita supporters reminds about Orwellian Newspeak. The name *Newspeak* is the name George Orwell gave the language, which the rulers in his dystopian novel *1984*, had created. The intention with it is to control thinking, to make some ideas impossible to think, including concepts such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly. In this connection they are using concepts such as old-thinking and new-thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, everytime they use concepts within old-thinking. The rulers are doing this by connecting concepts within old-thinking with the word thought-crime.

Now, let's remember Conway's 3-level model:

3 - Conventional level (our conventional situation)

2 - Psychic-Soul level (the heavenly perfected soul-situation)

1 - ONLY GOD (absolute reality)

(one Absolutely True, the other two "relatively true")

Absolute truth belongs to level 1. "What is truth?" The philosopher Peter Kreeft quotes Mortimer Adler, who says that this is one of the easiest questions in philosophy to answer, and he quotes Aristotle's quintessentially commonsensical

definition of truth: “When one says of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, he speaks the truth.”

In my online book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien*, chapter 5, Epistemology; part 4: [The Core – Rediscovery of Truth](#), I write that the most philosophical provocative part of Tolkien’s “On Fairy-Stories” is what Tolkien says about fairy stories being “true”.

It is...essential to a genuine fairy-story...that it should be presented as “true”...

Probably every writer making a secondary world, a fantasy, every sub-creator, wishes in some measure to be a real maker, or hopes that he is drawing on reality: hopes that the peculiar quality of this secondary world (if not all the details) are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it...the peculiar quality of the “joy” in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a “consolation” for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, “Is it true?”...In the “eucatastrophe” we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater – it may be a far-off gleam or echo of evangelium [gospel, good news] in the real world...All tales may come true; and yet, at the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms that we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen, that we know (“On Fairy-Stories”, pp. 87-90).

The Core is a teaching created by my professor in philosophy, the late David Favrholt, who was inspired by Niels Bohr. He begins with explaining what truth means in philosophical sense. In the context of Conway’s three-fold model, truth must be seen in relation to level 1:

The truth, which philosophy seeks to achieve, is a truth that raises over human views, yes over the whole of the human existence. That something is true means in philosophical sense, that it is true independently of, who claims it, and when it is claimed. And independently of, whether anybody at all have claimed it, thought it, believed it or knows it. Truths are therefore, in philosophical context, both time-independent and idea- and consciousness-independent.

Since all philosophical views qua views claim to be true in precisely this sense, then it should be clear, that views, which try to reduce or cause explain all views, are self-refuting views.

Bohr regarded the concepts of classical physics as a more explicit formulation of everyday language. In that sense everyday language is a necessary precondition for

all natural scientific epistemology, and it can't be replaced by an unambiguous and formalized, logical scientific language.

Surprisingly, Tolkien shares this idea. Remember: The two magics (the magic of technology and the magic of enchantment) have a number of things in common or (when misused) evil. Technology becomes evil when it is turned from a means to an end (from philosophy to ideology). Fantasy becomes evil when it is turned into a create-your-own-reality philosophy. The ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, between objective and subjective reality, is the first mark of sanity, and the confusion of the two is the first and most basic mark of insanity. Neither materialism nor idealism have the ability to distinguish. In order to establish unambiguous description (and thinking) one must be able to discriminate between subject and object, dream and reality, etc. This is also the source of enchantment. Enchantment is only enchantment when it is sensed as being real, or true, as discriminated from unreal and false.

Favrholdt has developed this same important theme (inspired by Niels Bohr's epistemology) in his own philosophy called *The Core*.

Favrholdt asks us: please observe following concepts: Time – object – space – logic – body – person – experience – memory.

The phenomenalist/idealist claims, that we only with certainty can know, that the here italicized concepts stand for something real; that is to say: something from the concepts different: *Time* – object – space – *logic* – body – person – *subject* – *experience* – *memory*.

The materialist claims, that we only with certainty can know, that the here italicized concepts stand for something real; that is to say: something from the concepts different: *Time* – *object* – *space* – *logic* – *body* – person – subject – experience – memory.

Favrholdt claims, that since these concepts are interdependent, they all represent something. Together they are what he calls *The Core* in everyday language. That they are interdependent means, that they have to be used in a certain way in relation to each other, if we at all want to talk meaningful. The relations between them are not established by arbitrary definitions. We have discovered, that we shall respect the relations between them, if we want to describe something, whether we want to describe, that there is lying a phone book on the desktop, or that we have an experience of the phone book.

What we must say is as follows: When we as ordinary people – before we have heard anything about philosophy – orientate in life, we form a concept about reality. We associate with humans and animals and plants and non-living things in our daily lives, and we learn to discriminate between, what is dream and reality, - and what is lie or illusion, and reality.

Any human being understands, what we mean by saying, that the witness explained in the court, that the thief had a pistol, but in reality the thief was unarmed. We also learn to talk about the poetic reality, about the experienced reality etc. We learn to talk about things, which exist, despite that no one experiences them, or have consciousness about them. When they found the Golden Horns at Gallehus, they found something, which no one knew were there. But they found them. Is wasn' t so, that they arised, because they were experienced.

Then certain philosophers are coming and saying, that we don't know, whether there is anything behind our experiences. What can you do but ask them about, what they mean with "experiences". Then they explain this. But it turns out, that they only can do this by using the whole of *The Core*. And in this set of fundamental concepts is included the concept "object" or "thing" which represent "things, which exist whether they are experienced or not".

This is included as a necessary precondition for, that we can define or explain, what we shall understand by experience. So, because they have explained, what they mean by "experience" - so that we know the correct use of this concept - they have already accepted, that we in our description of reality must assume a correct use of the concept "things, which exist, whether they are experienced or not".

The reason why the conceptual relations in the *The Core* not are conventional or accidental, but unavoidable as the relations in the number theory, is precisely because [the absolute] reality [level 1] - the from our experiences (thoughts, mind) [level 3] independently existing reality - is included in the determination of, how we have to use our concepts in order to be able to realize it, and describe it. It is not us who put reality in order, it is reality which puts us in order.

We can choose not to describe something and instead soak ourselves in Hinajana Buddhistic meditation - or music [level 2], but if we want to describe it [level 3], if we want to find out, what is subjective and objective, if we want to achieve realization within physics, biology, psychology etc., then we must use our fundamental concepts in a correct, non-arbitrary way.

This involves, not an ontological dualism, but an epistemological, a so-called gnoseological dualism. Unambiguous description [in level 3] has the distinction between subject and object as a necessary precondition. And the fact itself, that we have to discriminate between subject and object in order to communicate unambiguously, actually indicates logically, that both materialism (the scientific bias) and idealism (the New Age bias) are mistaken points of view.

So truth is objective, and discovered. Mere fictions are subjective creations. Yet, like many great authors, Tolkien found the process of writing *The Lord of the Rings* to be one of discovery rather than creation. Tolkien's son Christopher said of his father's writing: "I say *discover* because that is how he himself saw it, as he once said, 'Always I had the sense of recording what was already *there*, somewhere; not of *inventing*' (*Silmarillion*, Foreword, p. 9).

And Tolkien says he wrote *The Lord of the Rings* to elucidate "truth": "I would claim, if I did not think it presumptuous in one so ill-constructed, to have as one object the elucidation of truth, and the encouragement of good morals in this real world, by the ancient device of exemplifying them in unfamiliar embodiments, that may tend to 'bring them home'" (*Letters*, no. 153, p. 194).

In Wikipedia's entry on Neo-Advaita there is a fairly good historical account of how the Western approach to "Asian enlightenment traditions" is highly eclectic, drawing on various Asian traditions, as well as "numerous Western discourses such as psychology, science, and politics." Neo-Advaita uses western discourses, such as "New Age millennialism, Zen, self-empowerment and self-therapy" to transmit its teachings. It makes little use of the "traditional language or cultural frames of Advaita Vedanta," and is framed in a Western construction of experiential and perennial mysticism, "to the disregard of its social, ethical and political aspects."

This "modern experiential and perennialist mystical framework" emphasizes Perennialism, the idea that there is a common, mystical core to all religions, which can be empirically validated by personal experience. It has pervaded the Western understanding of Asian religions, and, according to Wikipedia, it can be found in Swami Vivekananda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's Neo-Vedanta, but also in the works of D.T. Suzuki and his "decontextualized and experiential account" of Zen Buddhism. It can also be found in the Theosophical Society, and the contemporary New Age culture, with influences like Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* and *The Doors of Perception*, and writers like Ken Wilber.

Gregg Lahood also mentions Neo-Advaita as an ingredient of "cosmological hybridization, a process in which spiritual paradises are bound together", as

exemplified in American Transcendentalism, New Age, transpersonal psychology and the works of Ken Wilber are examples.

Brown and Leledaki place this "hybridization" in a "structurationist" approach, pointing out that this is an "invented tradition", which is a response to a novel situation, although it claims a continuity with a "historic past", which is "largely factitious." Brown and Leledaki see these newly emerging traditions as part of Western Orientalism, the fascination of western cultures with eastern cultures, but also the reduction of "Asian societies, its people, practices and cultures to essentialist images of the 'other'". Brown and Leledaki also note that this Orientalism is not a one-way affair, but that "there has been a dynamic interaction between Asian and Western representatives of various religious traditions over the last 150 years," and that this "blending of thought and practice" is a co-creation from modernist religious movements in both East and West.

According to Arthur Versluis, neo-Advaita is part of a larger religious current which he calls immediatism, "the assertion of immediate spiritual illumination without much if any preparatory practice within a particular religious tradition." Its origins predate American Transcendentalism. In *American Gurus: From Transcendentalism to New Age Religion*, Versluis describes the emergence of immediatist gurus: gurus who are not connected to any of the traditional religions, and promise instant enlightenment and liberation. These include Eckhart Tolle, Ram Dass, and Andrew Cohen.

Versluis describes "Immediatism" as "a religious assertion of spontaneous, direct, unmediated spiritual insight into reality (typically with little or no prior training), which some term "enlightenment"." According to Versluis, immediatism is typical for Americans, who want "the fruit of religion, but not its obligations."

In short: the main result of this discourse is the tragic New Age confusion of Eastern Enlightenment (nondual consciousness, level 1) with Western Idealism (ordinary mind, level 3).

We shall now look at some consequences of this confusion as they are manifested in concrete examples from New Thought and Neo-Advaita, such as Ken Wilber, Andrew Cohen, Robert Lanza, *A Course in Miracles* and Byron Katie.

b) Ken Wilber

Ken Wilber has tried to make an evolutionary *theory of everything*, which basically is about *The Evolution of Consciousness*, an expression which today is an integrated

part of the New Age vocabulary. But any *theory of everything* implicates the nondual bias. Nondual bias arises when you describe something as nondual, while forgetting that you can't describe anything without implying the negation of it. It seems like he thinks that his *model*, or *theory* (level 3) is one and the same as the nondual reality and truth (level 1). This results in, like all totalitarian ideologies, that his theory somehow attains holiness. Let's look at how he then reacts when this theory is being criticized. I will re-post an update to my article [A Critique of Ken Wilber and His Integral Model](#), which can be found in the Matrix Dictionary entry [Ken Wilber](#).

Ken Wilber calls his theory integral, claiming that criticism already is included in it, and just makes it stronger. But Wilber is also known to get almost childishly angry over critique. So, in his view there are apparently *honest criticism* and *dishonest criticism*. Honest criticism is the form of criticism which makes his system stronger. I just wonder what that kind of critique is? A Wilber-sanctioned form of critique?

In his article [What We Are, That We See. Part I: Response to Some Recent Criticism in a Wild West Fashion](#), he is getting really angry over critique, and is imaging himself as Wyatt Earp constantly facing challengers. It seems like he is identifying his nonsense-intellectual system with the nondual truth itself. He does not seem to realize that a system can't be nondual, since it always will be facing the negation of it. So, if someone dares to criticize it, it is as if he believes that the critic had criticized this nondual truth itself.

Wilber seems to require that if critics should be taken seriously, they must accept his system in advance, and thereby accept their roles as first-tier thinkers (on a lower mental state than Wilber is). According to Wilber you can have discussions about elements within his system, which thereby contribute to the growth of his system, but the system itself is unquestionable true. In fact, Wilber can only take a critic seriously if he somehow is a supporter of his system, or said in another way: the unknown truth a critic might come up with, can only be accepted as truths if they are fitting into Wilber's idiosyncratic beliefs. Somewhere in the article, which is lesser filled (though not completely as you will see) with emotional attacks on critics and exaggerated thoughts about his own intellectual brilliance, he writes:

Any honest criticism that I find I take seriously, at least long enough to see if there are any important truths that I might be missing. There is an old saying, "You do not understand your opponent's ideas until you can argue them better than he can"—and I take that seriously. Some critics are fantastic in the number of new truths you can learn from them; and some critics are just worthless—I mean Meyerhoff is adolescent postmodernism 101 with an attitude; I've already gone over his ideas 10 times more acutely than he has, and I did so years ago. This is why such critics keep saying

things like, “Well, um, gosh, I guess Wilber in his latest writings has started to move in the direction I recommend, but, um, I’m gonna attack his old ideas that he held a decade ago cuz I really want to get noticed. If I take down Wyatt Earp, I’ll make a name for myself overnight.” But please notice that the reason that “my recent writings” (although the ones you critics are referring to have actually been out there now for over FIVE and sometimes TEN fucking years, you morons)—but the reason they have “moved in this direction” is that a decade ago I began reading the people that these critics just discovered, I fully got what they were saying (I can explain them a hell of a lot better than the critics’ loopy writings have), and I immediately INCORPORATED their important perspectives and truths into my work, which was one of the reasons for moving from wilber-4 to wilber-5.

But in general, good criticism shows me new areas that I can include. I FUCKING LIVE FOR GREAT CRITICISM, IT MEANS MORE TRUTH FOR A MORE INTEGRAL MODEL.

[...]

In short, it’s just ridiculous to say that I try to hide from this criticism, I live on it! Every new truth I find, I rejoice. That’s why it went from wilber-1 all the way to wilber-5. This is what second tier does automatically anyway, it takes new truths wherever it finds them and weaves them into larger tapestries. It can’t help doing so! If I find one, I am ecstatic! So mark this well: Only a first-tier mentality would even think that one would run away from good criticism. But then these folks.... Okay, I won’t even take a shot at that one, too easy.

This is also the surrealistic kind of discussion you are getting involved in if you talk with Wilber’s disciples. That he in this article writes so childish (the above quote is light in comparison with the rest of the article), and hereafter not is deleting it as a moment of lost control, is apparently because that this writing style also is something he can find justification of in his system (if he should decide to delete it I have saved it in the Internet Archive - [click here](#)). The article is a part of his “Wyatt Earp series”, and written in a “Wild West fashion”. So, if critics, like me, might think that Wilber in this article is going too far into a use of emotional language (unacceptable in philosophy), then this is because they don’t understand that this is an integral part of his system as well. Wilber is sometimes talking about shadow projections, but such are also being justified as elements in his system. So, just like Hegel, Wilber’s historicist evolutionary *theory of everything* can be used to justify just about anything as steps upwards on the evolutionary ladder, which in itself can’t be questioned. It has developed into a totalitarian ideology. An ideology is characterized by that it

doesn't accept critique (see my article [The Difference between Philosophical Education and Ideological Education](#)).

I guess it is the thought about that also criticism (and also all thoughts which anyone in the future will come up with) already is a part of Wilber's system, that make his followers believe it is so brilliant. Wilber has already philosophized everything, not only in this Universe, but also in all other Universes, the Multiverse as he calls it. But in reality it is just a ultra-light version of Hegelian dialectics, which is the philosophy behind both Communism and Nazism. It is Orwellian [doublethink](#).

Fundamental speech is an act of creating. And unspeaking is uncreating. If we turn to Tolkien's philosophy, you can say that the two sides of the One Ring are ideology and will to power. Gandalf will not utter the words on the Ring in the Black Speech of Mordor in the Shire, but only at the Council of Elrond in Rivendell, and even in that safe and holy place the words summon something of the presence of their Hellish source: "*Ash nazg durbatuluk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatuluk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul.*" (One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them, One ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them).

So the power of deception, which is over others' *minds* (symbolized by the invisibility given by the Ring), is an essential complement to the power over others' *bodies* and lives and actions, which is also given by the Ring. Wilber's Ring-system is the wish for total power over all. You don't learn how to *think for yourself* in Wilber's Ring-system, as you do in philosophy, you learn how to speak Wilber's nonsense-language, and to repeat his ideas, like the Sophists taught. And people can only be accepted if they fit into the preconceived dogmas of the system. Wilber's disciples can't deny that this is precisely what they do and what they are taught. We have seen it a lot of times before. Machiavelli and Hitler both understood that principle. But we haven't seen it in the disguise of New Age spirituality.

The Ring cuts us off from community, and contact. We are alone with the Eye (solipsism). There is no room for two I's. there is no We in the I, no room for an Other in the One Ring. In the false nonduality of the Ring-system, there is no room for the negation. It is not a means to any further end. It is Nietzsche's "will to power" as itself the end. Machiavelli taught that the end justified the means; Nietzsche taught that the means (power) justified the end.

Evolutionary models like Wilber's are comparatively easy to invent. Large New Age systems such as [The WingMakers Project](#) and [The Human Design System](#), have made their own evolutionary models. Even the American futurist and transhumanist Ray Kurzweil has his own "6 Epochs of Technological Evolution", where he believes

(and actually desires) that the 6 epoch is when humans are melting together with machines and are migrating out into space.

This raises a question about the constant celebration of Wilber as “The Smartest Man on Earth,” “The Brilliant scientist,” “The Einstein of Consciousness,” “The Greatest Philosopher in History.”, etc., etc., etc. Even his critics often refer to him as a “giant” or “fallen giant” as for example Mark Manson ([read his account](#)). This shows a peculiarity within New Age, where a myth can live outside the real world, as for example [quantum mysticism](#). Let me emphasize: Ken Wilber is *not* a giant, not before or after his “fall”. If he was, why is it he isn’t mentioned with a word on philosophical institutions around the world? (forget conspiracy theories as explanation). Well, maybe because he isn’t the great philosopher he constantly is being claimed to be. The same integrated knowledge of different fields can be found in almost any introduction to philosophy, but insiders (without philosophical education) will believe that this is Wilber’s own insight. In fact, it is a question whether his model at all can be labeled as philosophy, and not some kind of historical or sociological model; or maybe most accurate: a psychological model.

There is no trace of philosophical argumentation in his work. It is all explanations. And his reaction to the critique which arised when his work began to get awareness outside the closed New Age circle, exposes a complete lack of ability for philosophical argumentation. It is also a question whether Hegel’s and Marx’s work can be categorized as philosophy, and not a historical model (Hegel) or economical model (Marx). Wilber is just re-inventing old trends in historicism, nothing more. The same is seen in other large New Age systems. The account of Wilber as a giant comes from insiders, or former insiders. Outsiders have a complete other perception of Wilber, especially people who are educated within the fields Wilber is claimed to be the greatest expert in ever.

What I especially would like to hear more of, is philosophers’ opinions of Wilber’s work. This would be interesting, since Wilber is characterized as a philosopher. The critique mostly comes from different branches of science, whether it is the natural or human sciences. Such critique contains the explanatory style of the single branches, but lacks philosophical argumentation.

Evolutionism (historicism) is a newer, strictly European, ideology, beginning with the scientific revolution (note that evolutionism hasn’t anything to do with evolutionary biology). It is a linear view of life (vertical or horizontal), which is in opposition to all earlier views of life, which are cyclic. It focuses on the up-cycles and denies, or are explaining away, the down-cycles.

Where Kurzweil is talking about the “evolution of technology”, Wilber is talking about “the evolution of consciousness”. But the concept of “the evolution of consciousness” is wrong, when you look at the original wisdom traditions. Here, consciousness doesn’t evolve, it wakes up. And that’s purely an individual thing. Consciousness doesn’t evolve *from* something, or *towards* something. It is. The traditional view is, that consciousness is transcendent in relation to all laws, whether physical laws or historical laws, or any other law. It is a negation. If consciousness should evolve, you would need to reduce it to physical or historical laws. In both cases you end in reductionisms such a physicalism or historicism. Wilber ends in the same kind of historicism as Hegel, Marx, Oswald Spengler and Auguste Comte (in my online book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien*, I have suggested a double-aspect theory of consciousness based on the original wisdom traditions – see the chapter on Metaphysics, Ontology, part 1: [The Problem of Mind](#)).

Evolutionism is rooted in the Western mind in a degree that it is almost impossible for us to see life in any other way than as a line towards constant progress. But the Indian culture, for example, has, with its Yuga teachings, another view. Let me finish with a quote from the mythologist Joseph Campbell, who in his book *Myths of Light*, has described the Yuga ages. He writes of the present Yuga, the Kali Yuga (which interestingly enough also is called the *Age of the One*):

Finally, of course, there comes the Age of the One, when the cow is on only a single leg. This is our unfortunate time, the age of the mixture of castes, when nobody knows his own true nature. And the worst of it is that people won’t read the scriptures, and when they do they don’t understand them. This is the age of deterioration. And if – from the traditional perspective – you want to have any proof of the deterioration, just look at everything that we call progress: it is an exteriorization of life; the machines are taking over. And everything that we in the West consider to be evidence of progress, is, in terms of this ancient tradition, evidence of decline. So the world is getting worse (page 58).

c) Andrew Cohen

Andrew Cohen is one of Wilber’s admirers. He was also a disciple of H. W. L. Poonja, a self-styled teacher who taught that no effort is needed to attain enlightenment "because it is merely the realisation of what one already is". At their first meeting, Cohen realized that he "had always been free". Poonja declared Cohen to be his heir, and Cohen began to teach as a neo-Advaita teacher, and gathered a community around him.

Besides Poonja, Cohen credits Wilber, with whom he conducts frequent public discourses, with helping him form the theoretical framework of his teachings. According to Cohen and Wilber, "enlightenment" does not refer to an unchanging state, but has to be in accord with an ongoing evolution of humanity, which is the "Authentic Self." According to Cohen, individuals need to recognize that their own spiritual transformation is essential for cultural evolution. To achieve that, in Cohen's view, an individual should strive to realize his or her true self as being "one with the timeless Ground of all Being and with the evolutionary impulse that is driving the entire cosmos."

Here we see the reductionism. The transcendent eternal consciousness aspect of Man (the Soul) is reduced to the energy aspect, in this case evolution. It is some kind of "spiritual" evolutionary biology; Richard Dawkins supplied with spirituality. A forward pointing line is introduced: progressivism. There is no looking back towards the original, towards the past, towards the dark ancient inertia. Progressivism allows no failure, no weakness, no catastrophe. It can therefore not explain evil, which we see happen all the time; or rather, evil is explained, and therefore justified, as the evolution of the good. Here we see the inspiration from German idealism, Hegel and Theosophy.

According to Wilber, evolutionary enlightenment means "the realization of oneness with all states and all stages that have evolved so far and that are in existence at any given time." But the concept of "the evolution of consciousness" is wrong, when you look at the original wisdom traditions. Here, consciousness doesn't evolve, it wakes up. And that's purely an individual thing. Consciousness doesn't evolve *from* something, or *towards* something. It is. The traditional view is, that consciousness is transcendent in relation to all laws, whether physical laws or historical laws, or any other law. It is a negation. If consciousness should evolve, you would need to reduce it to physical or historical laws. In both cases you end in reductionisms such a physicalism or historicism. Wilber ends in the same kind of historicism as Hegel, Marx, Oswald Spengler and Auguste Comte (in my online book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien*, I have suggested a double-aspect theory of consciousness based on the original wisdom traditions – see the chapter on Metaphysics, Ontology, part 1: [The Problem of Mind](#)).

Cohen believes that individuals need to transcend egoism to express the "Authentic Self." Through identifying the evolutionary impulse as their own Authentic Self, individuals can transcend ego, and find a deeper self-sense without relying on asceticism or solitude.

Cohen's ideas are in that way co-inspired by Wilber's Integral Theory, offering an integral vision of the integral evolution of matter and consciousness. According to this theory, human development parallels the evolution of all being.

It is no surprise then, that Cohen is insisting on "flawless behavior" as the manifestation of "Evolutionary Enlightenment", aiming at an impersonal enlightenment which transcends the personal. But the teaching-style led also to "physical force, verbal abuse, and intense psychological pressure against students." Here we see the inspiration from psychotherapy.

As a consequence of this reductionism, there have been numerous critics of Cohen. From books such as *American Guru* and *Mother of God*, to well supported blogs such as [What Enlightenment?](#) and [EnlightenNixt](#).

Some of Cohen's former followers, including his mother, Luna Tarlo, have viewed him as a manipulative spiritual teacher. Tarlo wrote a critical book, called [Mother of God](#), about her experience as one of his disciples. In a *Psychology Today*, article, published in 1998 entitled "[Crimes of the Soul](#)", Tarlo recounted how she became a disciple of her son who told her "to give way to him or their relationship would end" and forbade her "to express an opinion on anything". Tarlo said she "knew if I seriously objected to anything, I'd be kicked out" and stated that her son, formerly the "sweetest, sensitive kid, had changed into an unrecognizable tyrant."

André van der Braak's [Enlightenment Blues: My Years with an American Guru](#) alleges that Cohen demanded large sums of money and extreme and unquestioning devotion from his students.

[American Guru: A Story of Love, Betrayal and Healing, by William Yenner](#) and other former Cohen student contributors (foreword by Stephen Batchelor), allege authoritarianism, financial manipulation, physical and psychological abuse in Cohen's community, and discusses the challenges of healing after leaving the community.

Poonja himself has been sharply criticized for too easily authorising students to teach: One of the tragedies of Poonjaji's teaching ministry is that he either told, inferred, or allowed hundreds of individuals to believe they were fully enlightened simply because they'd had one, or many, powerful experiences of awakening. These "enlightened" teachers then proceeded to enlighten their own students in a similar way, and thus was born what is known as the "neo-Advaita", or "satsang" movement in Western culture. This is precisely what we also see in another Indian cult, The Oneness Movement, which I have written about in my article [A Critique of the Indian](#)

[Oneness Movement and its use of Western Success Coaching](#). This movement is supported by another American New Age guru, Tony Robbins.

In 2016, over 200 of Cohen's former students signed an online petition titled "[Stop Andrew Cohen teaching again](#)", including detailed explanations of why they believe him to be unfit to teach others.

So, luckily enough, Andrew Cohen has been exposed for massively critique. That's seldom the case with other New Age self-made gurus. And the supporters will defend them with several thought distortions. There is the argument from evolution itself. Cohen was a part of a "good evolutionary quantum step", that made people realize truth. So, he is in fact doing what enlightened masters are doing. This can quickly be supported by the Crazy Wisdom argument. Crazy Wisdom is an ancient concept, in which spiritual teachers are doing crazy things in order to enlighten their students. The argument can be used to justify any behavior as part of the "teaching".

In Martin Erdmann's article [The Real Cause of Andrew Cohen's Dilemma - Part I: Andrew Cohen following Fatefully in Ken Wilber's Egosteps](#), we see how evolutionism in this way not necessarily are denying negativity's existence completely, like New Thought, but somehow are justifying it as a necessary evolutionary step upwards.

The abstract says:

Abstract: There has been a lot of discussion recently about Neo-Advaita teacher Andrew Cohen, who has been severely reproached with abusive treatment of his disciples. The article tries to show that the real cause of the dilemma is not to be found with Andrew Cohen as a spiritual teacher, who truly believed in the dubious enterprise he engaged in. The dilemma lies inherent in Ken Wilber's ego-theory, which has been faithfully followed by Andrew Cohen in his spiritual practice. So it is primarily Wilber who has to be taken to task for his ill-conceived ego-theory.

And later:

Wilber did not ignore Cohen's rude behavior. "Andrew Cohen is a Rude Boy", he deliberately declared. "He is here to tear you into approximately a thousand pieces." So Wilber was aware of the trembling, the trepidation and the fright Cohen spread among his students. He wholeheartedly supported Cohen's actions, with the intent of seeing his own ego-theory realized in the spiritual practice undertaken by guru Cohen. While applauding Cohen Wilber applauded himself, with his idea of an ego that must be slaughtered.

Most of us, says Wilber, prefer our spiritual teachers to be of the Nice-Guy variety. Soft, comforting, non-threatening... It will not be okey if you want Enlightenment. It will, in fact, be hell, and only Rude Boys" like Andrew Cohen "are rude enough to tell you that, and to show you that - if you can stand the rudeness, stay in the fire, burn clean as infinity and radiate as the stars."

This has nothing to do with the investigation of the shadow, which is seen in the original wisdom traditions, but with evolutionistic relativism, where nothing is seen as false or wrong, but as more or less true and right. The consequences are precisely seen in Wilber's accept of Cohen. Any psychopath or mass murderer could use it as a justification of their behavior. Truly realizing the shadow is to realize it's falseness and wrongness.

There are two arguments against the Crazy Wisdom argument, which also can give an indication on how to spot what real enlightenment is. One is philosophical, the other is spiritual. The philosophical is simply the concept of self-contradiction; that is: a contradiction between teaching and behavior. Real masters are what they teach. The other argument is spiritual. If you have just a tiny bit of spiritual training, it is easy to see that, for example, Andrew Cohen, has a blockage between head and heart. He has very likely experienced some peak experiences which have made him ego-inflated. If he is spiritual awakened he is very likely top-down awakened (see my articles [Playing the Enlightenment Card](#) and [Spiritual Placebo](#)).

d) Robert Lanza

Solipsism has from new thought and neo-avaita entered New Age scientism, and is sought supported by quantum mysticism. Biocentrism (from Greek: βίος, bios, "life"; and κέντρον, kentron, "center") — also known as the biocentric universe — is a theory proposed in 2007 by Lanza, which sees biology as the central driving science in the universe, and an understanding of the other sciences as reliant on a deeper understanding of biology. Lanza believes that life and biology are central to being, reality, and the cosmos—consciousness creates the universe rather than the other way around. On Lanza's website this is described as groundbreaking discovery:

Every now and then, a simple yet radical idea shakes the very foundations of knowledge.

In essence, what he is doing is that he is re-inventing idealism, an old philosophical concept, as already explained. I guess he just hopes that no one discovers this, but anyone with just a slight philosophical knowledge, can see this. According to the

idealists, the ordinary mind creates all of reality. In Lanza, this is, in style with many other New Age theories, claimed to be supported by quantum physics. Lanza argues that nothing exists without an observer, and actually cites the double-slit experiments for support.

He is making two key mistakes here. The first is the confusion of “observer” with “consciousness” which he, inspired by subjective idealism, sees as the ordinary human mind (actually his entire premise rests upon this fallacy). Lanza’s second mistake (which all the Quantum Gurus also make) is to extrapolate from quantum experiments, in which conditions are very carefully controlled, to macroscopic conditions. He actually makes the analogy to your kitchen, as if your kitchen is not really there unless you are there to observe your kitchen. This shows the inspiration from postmodernism, where postmodernists extrapolate from quantum experiments to politics, especially left-wing politics (see my articles [Constructivism: the Postmodern Intellectualism behind New Age and the Self-help Industry](#) and [The Sokal Hoax](#)). The idea that the world doesn’t exist when you’re not there to observe it, is purely subjective idealism; that is: metaphysical solipsism.

It’s an incredible easy idea to debunk (see my Matrix Dictionary entry on [Simulation theory](#)). Moreover: it is an extremely frightening thought, which can be compared with the short stories of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. It is a vision of Hell that wants something: you yourself have to simulate infinity each and endless moment in an infinite past and infinite future. You have no family, no friends, no other humans to support you, and no other existence at all, except yourself and your [Sisyphean](#) mind-work. Ergo: there is no reason at all to share the idea because there is no one to share it with (about Jorge Luis Borges and his influence on my concept of The Matrix Conspiracy, see my Matrix Dictionary entry: [Jorge Luis Borges](#)).

Lanza is making a classic logical fallacy of the pseudoscientist – confusing currently unexplained with unexplainable. Just because we have not yet fully explained the origins of the universe, that does not mean that our current paradigms of physics and cosmology will not eventually provide at least a partial explanation (read more in the Matrix Dictionary entry [Robert Lanza](#)).

e) A Course in Miracles

To continue the Hell vision of solipsism, my article on [A Course in Miracles](#) starts:

WARNING! In this article I will give you a glimpse of Hell!

The intention with this article is to show one of the most extreme examples of what I have called The 666 Conspiracy. It is called A Course in Miracles. The Course claims to be The Third Testament. In the following I will show that if it is indeed the third testament then it is the Testament of Satan. So, if people want to call it "The New Age Bible" instead, I'm not surprised.

A Course in Miracles is the ultimate example of the 666 Conspiracy, since it deals explicit with a direct turning the teachings of Christ upside down. It is one of, if not the, most popular spiritual texts of The New Thought tradition (see my article [The New Thought Movement and the Law of Attraction](#)).

I have encountered ideas who have their roots in The Course (and certain strands of New Thought theology more broadly) constantly in my philosophical counseling practice. Overall what I see are Course ideas and beliefs creating endless problems for practitioners.

The back story of the writing of the text is a bit complex and quite fascinating actually ([see history here](#)). But I will give a few trail markers. A Course in Miracles [ACIM] is the name of a book, allegedly dictated by Jesus to [Helen Schucman](#) (1909-1981), an American research psychologist. In looking at the suffering in the world the Course says that this world cannot be created by a God. Heaven awaits us all and there is no hell; that is: the prompting to deny and ignore suffering and negativity. This is probably the best trick an Antichrist could impose in us: that hell and evil don't exist. Here we see a clear example of the confusion of levels Conway is talking about. ACIM namely regards itself as a "purely nondualistic thought system". ACIM views the normal human situation as a mistake, a bad dream, and it is the big bogeyman "ego" that is responsible for this experiential dream. With this strongly Western idealist metaphysics and reductionism, ACIM denies as "unreal" obvious empirical-level experiences such as physical laws, sickness, tragedy, death, personal weakness ("sinfulness"), etc.

ACIM claims that "The ego is literally a fear based thought." No it's not. The ego is literally not at all a fear based thought. Here the *Painbody* comes in. The ego is what it feels like to be a bodily human organism. The ego is the feeling of being an individual homo sapien. The ego is the feeling of being a bodily human self-conscious organism (organism is what ACIM thinks is an illusion).

The human body is a feeling mechanism. The human organism feels and senses moment to moment. It feels and senses the environment, other beings, and its own internal state(s). Sensation is how your nervous system feels. Emotions are how your

heart feels. Thought is how your brain feels. And the ego is how the bodymind as a total, single organism feels; that is: the painbody.

The body is for example quite central when I have people in philosophical counseling in Rold Forest. We are not our pain or our disease, nor are we defined by our limitations, restrictions, or the labels given to us by others. We are a whole body, a consciousness, and a spiritual being with a unique individual history and unique reasons for being. Understanding this is the true key to healing.

As a holistic interconnected being, our emotions, beliefs, physical pain, past traumas, and even imbalances created through spiritual issues are held within our physical form. By accessing them through the physical body with our soul – the spiritual consciousness of our human body – we can heal the continuum of mind, body, and spirit.

In the process of philosophical counseling I try to teach how to understand and work with the soul and explain how our bodies store the traumatic energies, emotions, physical issues, and restricting beliefs that cause us pain and have us feel disconnected. Together with the guest I detail how to make contact and dialogue with our soul to discover the reason why our beliefs, imbalances, and pain developed in the first place and to find ways to resolve them, healing every dream layer of our being. Working with archetypes and myths, ancestral and past life healing, religion and philosophy, supports us also in dissolving spiritual patterns and can bring about karmic resolution through the physical form.

By dialoguing with the soul we can understand who we are on the deepest levels. Discovering what lies unhealed within us enables us to heal our issues, from physical pains to ancestral and past life patterns to limiting ideas about what we can accomplish in this world. We are able to move beyond the limitations and restrictions in our body and our life, into greater health, connection, joy and consciousness.

The denial of the existence of the body is also the denial of the chakra-system, the lower chakras, the heart (love) and the Hara-center (existence, reality). It ends up in a focus in the head, and the upper chakras, and such a one-sided focus will without question lead to ego-inflation and other spiritual crises (see my articles [The Emotional Pain-body and Why Psychotherapy Can't Heal It](#), [Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Spiritual Phenomena](#), [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#), and my page [Philosophical Counseling in Rold Forest](#)).

The Christian terminology employed in *A Course in Miracles* is thoroughly redefined to resemble New Thought teachings. Thereby it also contains all the problems of the

positive psychology of New Thought; that is: it fails to understand the meaning of suffering ([Suffering as an Entrance Into the Source](#)). In Chapter 3 of A Course in Miracles Schucman directly denied the crucifixion. She must, because in idealism the body doesn't exist. It is an illusion. In fact, the whole passion is denied as having any point at all. The whole thing is an illusion, a dream.

A Course in Miracles sums up:

“There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion. At best it seems like life; at worst, like death. (T-23.II.19:all)”

In other words what you and I experience here is nothing but illusion. Living and dying, are just good and bad dreams. But, like Lanza, Schucman is preparing a cocktail of already existing ideas. Nothing taught in A Course in Miracles is new and therefore no revelation was needed to tell us humans what we already knew and some of which we already discarded as false. The idea that you can come up with all such already known ideas, and present them as “revelations” is due to the oblivion of philosophy – or rather: the intellectual laziness within the anti-intellectual clima in popular culture.

Kenneth Wapnick, one of the key players of A Course in Miracles explains:

"If we now attempt to follow the Holy Spirit's thinking [that is: ACIM's thinking], and we want to prove that the world is not real and that the sin of separation never happened, all that is needed is to prove that sin has no effect [...] If we could prove that the cause had no effect then the cause can no longer exist. If something is not a cause it is not real, because everything that is real must be a cause and thus have an effect. If we remove the effect we are also eliminating the cause."

The absurdity of these statements is self-evident. Wapnick is not suggesting to remove the sin but to pretend that sin has no effect. So if one is a victim of a crime all he has to do is to pretend that the crime never happened and therefore he cannot be harmed by it. What if the victim is dead? What if the victim loses a limb, an eye or becomes wheelchair bound? What about the survivors of the dead victim? Should they just pretend that the crime has never happened and their loved one is among them? Could they?

But Wapnick doesn't bother to go into such considerations, and continues:

"Now, if the greatest effect of sin in this world is death, demonstrating that death is an illusion simultaneously demonstrates that there is no sin."

Schucman is dead. Is that our illusion or is it hers? Could we tell a mother who has lost a child, oh don't cry you are just having an illusion? (that's what another New Thought disciple Byron Katie is doing in her "therapeutic" work – I will return to that).

According to the above, Man is still in heaven. It is simply the illusion of sin and death that have caused false senses of reality. Therefore all these wars, crimes, calamities, pains and sufferings are figments of our imagination and are not real.

A Course in Miracles also teaches that evil does not exist [that's a good idea for the Antichrist at least]. It is an illusion that must be overcome by right thinking.

"Innocence is wisdom because it is unaware of evil, and evil does not exist."
[T33/38]

According to the Course pain and suffering are illusory. They are only in the imagination of the person who is suffering.

"YOU are the dreamer of the world. You, singularly and individually (but not personally as a separate entity, as that "you" is illusory), are dreaming the entire universe of pain and suffering, sickness and death."

Is that true? If we stop "dreaming" about terrorism, wars or the natural disasters do they go away? What this explanation in fact are claiming, is that you are responsible for all the evil things going on in your world because you are dreaming them. So all you have to do is stop dreaming and your world will become a paradise. Looks like according to this doctrine each one of us is the writer and the director of this universe. A universe that exists nowhere but in our own minds. All we have to do is to change our dreams and the world will change accordingly. Again: solipsism in a nutshell; the create-your-own-reality ideology.

The more we read the *Course in Miracles* the more we realize that it is a course in absurdity, in brainwashing, in fantasies and in self-deceptions. But the absurdity does not end there.

A Course in Miracles states:

"4. No one is punished for sins, and the Sons of God are not sinners. 5. Any concept of punishment involves the projection of blame, and reinforces the idea that blame is justified. " [T-6.I.16]

This is absurd. In Christianity sin means transgression of a divine law. Those who transgress are sinners. And if there is a divine justice the sinners and non-sinners cannot be treated both equally. Hitler cannot sit next to Jesus and enjoy the same privileges or the divine Justice becomes meaningless (that Hitler can sit next to Jesus and enjoy the same privileges is in fact what Byron Katie claims, as we shall see below). If we survive our deaths, as A Course in Miracles states, would it be just if a criminal is not blamed for his crimes? Are we humans not responsible for our actions? In all ethical point of views, Christian or not, such statements are absurd.

Another disturbing deduction of this philosophy is that it, as the whole of the New Thought movement, is implanting the victimization culture in us. It is blaming the victim put in system. No wonder Freud is so appreciated. The problem in this is lying in all the talk about that you should stop blaming. The paradox in this is that it is self-refuting. The demand is itself a blame. And when constantly talking to people about that they should stop blaming, they themselves are blaming all the time. This kind of nonsense comes from psychotherapy, which has become the new religion in popular culture.

Since "Sons of God are not sinners" and pain and suffering are only illusions, a rapist is not guilty but his victim is. He is not to be blamed because as the son of God he can't commit sin, but she is guilty for imagining all that pain and suffering. The pain is not caused by the aggressor but is the cause of the separation of the victim from God. It boggles the mind to think that otherwise intelligent people would let themselves be fooled by this much asininity.

Is this really Jesus the Christ speaking here? I doubt it—more like the mind of Helen Schucman, who says she channeled or "scribed" what she heard from an "inner voice" identifying itself as Jesus from 1965 to 1972. Personally, I believe Schucman was genuinely channeling some subtle-plane entity who was very much in love with pompous-sounding New Thought material. I also believe the entity was a demon, or even the Antichrist himself, considering the ingenuity of the book. In other words: I believe we are talking about a very special case of the type of spiritual crisis called *Possession State*.

Even Wapnick himself said that "if the Bible were considered literally true, then (from a Biblical literalist's viewpoint) the Course would have to be viewed as demonically inspired". Though a friend of Schucman, Thetford, and Wapnik,

Catholic priest Benedict Groeschel has criticized ACIM and the related organizations. Finding some elements of ACIM to be what he called "severe and potentially dangerous distortions of Christian theology", he wrote that it is "a good example of a false revelation" and that it has "become a spiritual menace to many". The evangelical editor Elliot Miller says that Christian terminology employed in ACIM is "thoroughly redefined" to resemble New Age teachings. Other Christian critics say that ACIM is "intensely anti-Biblical" and incompatible with Christianity, blurring the distinction between creator and created and forcefully supporting the occult and New Age worldview.

It is worth hearing the views of Groeschel, steeped in studies of the paranormal, and a former student of Schucman at Columbia University (20 years her junior) and subsequently a close friend of Schucman in her last dozen years of life (he introduced her to Ken Wapnick and gave a eulogy at her funeral). Groeschel heard Helen tell him many times, "I hate that damn book," meaning the ACIM, and she repeatedly disavowed its teachings and the cult that formed around it. He finally surmised that ACIM might have been sourced in a diabolical entity, for, as he wrote, "This woman who had written so eloquently [in ACIM] that suffering really did not exist, spent the last two years of her life in the blackest psychotic depression I have ever witnessed," full of rage (See Groeschel, *A Still, Small Voice: A Practical Guide on Reported Revelations*, Ignatius Press, 1993, p. 79.)

Why should anyone believe that the words of Helen Schucman are the words of Jesus? Did she give any proof for that claim? Absolutely none. She expects people to believe in her claim and take her for her words. How could we know that she told the truth? We can't.

That people without hesitation take her words as being the words of Jesus says something about the authority, which the concept of channeling has within New Age. As I demonstrate in my article [The Fascism of Theosophy](#), and its follow-up [The Philosophy of Krishnamurti](#) – then unenlightened channelers in New Age often are taken as greater authorities than the enlightened masters themselves. In the case of Helen Schucman: she is obviously taken as a greater authority than the whole of the history of Christianity itself, with all its historical sources, and the Saints and mystics, whose lives and teachings have confirmed this. All this for one reason: because she claims she is a channeler. There is of course another reason: the temptation in the desert. The teaching is a tempting teaching. Furthermore, there is the anti-religion attitude in New Age.

But! The idea that the world doesn't exist when you're not there to observe it, is purely subjective idealism, or metaphysical solipsism, black enlightenment, complete

nihilism. As mentioned: It is a vision of Hell that wants something: you yourself have to simulate infinity each and endless moment in an infinite past and infinite future. You have no family, no friends, no other humans to support you, and no other existence at all, except yourself and your [Sisyphean](#) mind-work. Ergo: there is no reason at all to share the idea because there is no one to share it with.

f) Byron Katie

Byron Katie's therapeutic method *The Work* is a "single cause-single cure" mix between Cathartic psychotherapy and positive thinking. There is used confrontational theories and attack therapy in order to provoke negative feelings and memories (Cathartic psychotherapy). Positive thinking is then introduced via four questions and a turnaround technique. The question of the truth of the evoked negativity is hereby ignored. Subjective idealism justifies this ignorance.

The four questions are:

1. Is it true?
2. Are you absolutely sure it is true?
3. How do you react when you think this thought?
4. Who would you be without this thought?

The problem with *The Work* is that it has a conclusion in advance, namely that the thought is false, and therewith it is in progress, as with other New Age directions, of eliminating peoples' ability of critical thinking. After that you, as expected, have "realized", that your thought is negative [=not true], then you have to turn it upside down; you so to speak have to think the opposite thought.

This is, in all its simple mindedness, the core in Katie's teaching. It is a position of thinking. There is no meditation involved.

If you read Katie's book *Losing the Moon – Byron Katie Dialogues on Non-duality, Truth and Other Illusions* ([download it here](#)), you'll meet the confusion of the levels once again (it exposes that whatever it is Katie is experiencing, it is not enlightenment). In the foreword, Ellen J. Mack tells about the nonduality tradition in India, from Ramana Maharshi to Poonja, and how she was immersed in these teachings of Gangaji, Papaji, Robert Adams, Francis Lucille and Isaac Shapiro. She claims that Katie's work is grounded in the truth of nonduality.

In the book Katie says:

The world doesn't exist and we just come to see that clearly. It's all an illusion. It never did exist. There is no way it can exist – it's all a reflection of a concept attached to inside. There is No One and Nothing. It's literal. Are you ready to live without a world? Is that what you really want? Are you willing to lose the moon?

Pure nihilism, and during the book Katie exposes the consequences herself. When Katie has deconstructed everything else than yourself, then it's yourself you have to deconstruct. Instead of enlightenment it therefore ends in nihilism. Try to read the book and see how it more and more develops into subjectivism (blaming the victim put in system), instead of out towards objectivism.

On page 35 Katie starts talking about Nazi's taking babies from Jewish mothers and throwing the babies into a firepit near the end of WWII. Again an example of the confusion of levels.

Quote:

If Someone (God, 'what is'), pulls my baby from me - if that's what it takes, I'm there. Take the baby. Tear my baby from me. Throw it in the fire....My discomfort is my war with God. [...]

You see, there are NO choices. What is, is. [...]

But when we get to the baby thing, we're getting down to our sacred little concepts now....You take my baby from me, you're messing with the illusion of I'm the mommy, this is the baby, there's the daddy...

But tearing the baby away- that's the higher. That's the higher, because it snatches your story from you and makes it apparent in your face - nothing's real short of reality....

That's it. That's what is. That's love. That's absolutely Un-describable love. That you, God, would even give me that.

Can you know that Hitler didn't bring more people to realization than Jesus? On your knees - God. God! God! But our stories of reality keep us from the awareness of God is Everything. And God is Good. [...]

There has never been evil and there never will be. Evil is simply a story about what's not...

But I have trashed the baby when I have trashed the Nazi...

I am the baby going into the pit. I am the one throwing the baby in the pit...

Byron Katie just keeps going on and on from there. So, according to Byron Katie, Nazi's mass murdering Jewish women's babies by burning them to death alive while the mothers watch, is the loving work of God. As a matter of fact, Byron Katie says that baby killers are "higher" than the illusion of mommy.

Aspects of this justification of all kind of unethical behaviour (in the name of love) are seen again and again in *The Work*. And this kind of nihilism could of course never come from an enlightened consciousness since enlightenment (spirituality) of course is absolutism and not relativism.

If you doubt that the above kind of "argumentation" not are common in Byron Katie devotees I will here provide a link to "Samsara", a Katie devotee, who on his or hers blog demonstrates it in action. The blog **the-work-byron-katie.blogspot.com** is called *Abusive Partner is your Guru?* ([Click here](#) to read how the examination develops in the same way as Byron Katie herself could have done it. If the blog-author should decide to delete the blog, I have saved it on Archive.org ([click here](#)).

The blogger refers to something Byron Katie wrote on Facebook June 15, 2012:

"There's never a mistake in the universe. So if your partner is angry, good. If there are things about him that you consider flaws, good, because these flaws are your own, you're projecting them, and you can write them down, inquire, and set yourself free. People go to India to find a guru, but you don't have to: you're living with one. Your partner will give you everything you need for your own freedom."

([Click here](#) to read it on Facebook where you also can follow the comments. Note how most of them – except a few clear-sighted comments - uncritically celebrate the statement as an example of fantastic wisdom, without even considering the - quite obvious - terrible consequences it would have if you took it for true).

The blogger "Samsara" is hereafter commenting on this message on the above-mentioned blog under titles such as *Your Abuser is your Guru?* and *Did Byron Katie Lose Her Noodle?* She writes:

"let's travel this statement and see what we can find. Maybe Katie did lose her noodle. And if she did, let's see if we can find it. If she did not lose her noodle, well that is great news, too."

And so on...no inquiry, no investigation at all.

Many former Katie devotees have been in counseling for years in order to remove this way of confused thinking (read more in my article [A Critique of Byron Katie and Her Therapeutic Technique The Work](#), and the update: [Byron Katie](#)).

g) On Charging money for spiritual services

Now, if we take trait number 5:

5. Narcissism

The same fully individualized core of personality, which today makes us able to step out of the past's fixed and subconscious attachment, has itself within New Age become the main interest, center for the identity in a degree, that almost all awareness here are directed inwards in a global seen exceptional narcissism. The ideological use of relativism and subjectivism sounds like this: "I have my truth, you have yours!" "You judge" is the same as "You condemn." In true spirituality the central goal is the elimination of the Ego.

Ramana and like-minded teachers like [Nisargadatta Maharaj](#) did not charge fees or donations. Conway says:

I would prefer to simply say it is inappropriate behavior for any spiritual teacher to demand or require money, otherwise the entire thing becomes an operation to commodify spiritual teachings for personal gain. Virtually NONE of the greatest sages I've ever met or read about ever charged a dime for their time. The very few that did demand money, like the famous old avatâr, Sai Baba of Shirdi, India (d.1918), immediately re-distributed that money to the needy.

You could then ask: How is a teacher supposed to support themselves if they don't ask for money? Conway answers:

If their spirituality and Dharma is pure, God will find a way to support that person! Lord Krishna promises this in the Bhagavad Gita, Jesus promises it in the Gospels, and some of us know from direct experience that such support miraculously shows up.

Conway has always offered satsang and many other ongoing classes entirely for free, and claims to have received remarkable Divine support without asking.

But if everything is subjective and relative, and you don't need any preparatory work, why shouldn't you make a business out of teaching nonduality? It is especially within New Thought you see the manifestation of what I call the 666 conspiracy aspect of the Matrix Conspiracy, a focus on ego-worship. This is of course paradoxical, since the ego, in agreement with tradition, is taught to be the cause of all our misery. But the confusion of the levels, combined with certain energy-transmissions, will lead to ego-inflation, which can be experienced as a shift in consciousness because the old daily ego is gone. It can be very pleasant, like in the euphorical ego-inflation. But this is precisely the most dangerous, because people in euphoria don't want to be corrected.

The euphorical ego-inflation is mainly due to up-streaming energy. There are then real transformation-processes in the chakra-system, and the transformed, or released, energy is rising upwards – it feels and is described this way, for then, in the consciousness, to bring about states of ecstasy, spiritual intoxication, exaltation, blissfulness. Oneness-consciousness as a spiritual *crisis* belongs to euphorical ego-inflation. Mystics in the West have called this euphorical ego-inflation “jubilatio”. It can escalate and completely take the ground connection away from a human being, so that you think, that you can fly, that you will be carried by angels. You fly in Sukavati, in Firdaus, in Paradise, in Elysium, as a balloon in the blue air.

The euphorical ego-inflation lies behind oneness-consciousness as spiritual crisis; that is to say: it is not a real experience of enlightenment, but precisely a crisis; rather than being a genuine mystical experience, it is a so-called peak experience.

It is without doubt the euphorical ego-inflation, which lies behind the demonical aspect of the Deeksha/Shaktipat phenomenon. Demonical versus divine transmission of energy is a central theme in my philosophy, which I see in relation with Thomas Mann's novel Doctor Faustus – see my article [The Philosophy of Karen Blixen](#) and my books [Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story](#), [Karen Blixen – The Devil's Mistress](#), and [Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien](#).

Transformation of consciousness, or a pause in the old ego stream, can be experienced in all kinds of ways. The most known is on a journey. A journey to a beautiful place can create a pause in the old ego stream. But normally this doesn't make you inflated. But if a journey, for example, is to a guru, then this journey, with all its build-in expectations and thought distortions, as for example subjective validation, and the meeting with the guru, who actually might be able to transmit energy, can create an elimination of the old ego, an experience of euphoria, and hereafter a new inflated ego will be created.

Within the original wisdom traditions these states are well known. The mystics (for example Meister Eckhart, Tauler, Seuse) discriminated between “jubilatio” and “inflammatio”, the ecstasy and the inflammation (see my article [The Ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help Environment](#)).

New Age is booming with ego-inflations in milder or more severe forms. It is simply due to confusion of the enlightened consciousness with the ordinary mind, and the following subjectivism. That they still have an ego is exposed in their greed for money. Conway says:

Far too many of these spiritual teachers teach that "It's all God," but they don't really trust God to provide for "their ministry," which, of course, for a number of them also includes trying to live rather regally with the funds they demand or "suggest."

Some of these teachers have also learned (consciously or unconsciously) that charging lots of money creates that old perverted fascination in some people's minds: "OOooohhh—they're charging lots of money! They must be offering something REALLY special!" Once persons buy into this, the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance sets in and these poor folks are hooked—they have to neurotically keep rationalizing to themselves that what they lavished their money on was in fact “really special” and so great that now they must go out and tell all their friends about it and rope them in to convince themselves that the event was truly worthwhile (of course, most of this works on the sub-conscious or semi-conscious level).

Many folks have paid tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars to exploitative organizations like Scientology, TM, SYDA Yoga, est (later known as Landmark Forum), Adi Da's church, Kalindi's Miracle of Love group, the Golden City or Oneness/Diksha-movement in India ("Bhagavan Kalki & Amma") and that ilk. The heads of these corrupt organizations have been laughing all the way to the bank, living in luxury while their staff usually live in virtual servitude, and many of their “sucker”-consumers fall deeper and deeper into debt as they keep buying into further promises of enlightenment if only they'll come to the next retreat or seminar or whatever.

A number of New Age proponents have emphasised the use of spiritual techniques as a tool for attaining financial prosperity, thus moving the movement away from its counter-cultural origins, and far away from Eastern philosophy, and traditional spirituality as such. In fact it is completely incompatible with spirituality. This is especially happening in the re-definition of the law of karma into the law of attraction. Take the titles of the basic New Thought books: “The Science of Getting Rich” by Wallace D. Wattles, and “Think and Grow Rich”, by Napoleon Hill.

The links between New Age and commercial products have resulted in the correct accusation that New Age itself is little more than a manifestation of consumerism. This idea is generally rejected by New Age participants, who often reject any link between their practices and consumerist activities.

Embracing this attitude, various books have been published espousing such an ethos, established New Age centres have held spiritual retreats and classes aimed specifically at business people, and New Age groups have developed specialised training for businesses. During the 1980s, many prominent U.S. corporations—among them IBM, AT&T, and General Motors—embraced New Age seminars, hoping that they could increase productivity and efficiency among their work force, although in several cases this resulted in employees bringing legal action against their employers, claiming that such seminars had infringed on their religious beliefs or damaged their psychological health.

However, the use of spiritual techniques as a method for attaining profit has been an issue of major dispute within the wider New Age movement, with prominent New Agers such as Spangler and [Matthew Fox](#) criticising what they see as trends within the community that are narcissistic and lack a social conscience. In particular, the movement's commercial elements have caused problems given that they often conflict with its general economically-egalitarian ethos; as York highlighted, "a tension exists in New Age between socialistic egalitarianism and capitalistic private enterprise".

This consumer-aspect of New Age is easily recognized on New Agers' websites where they promote their services precisely as if they had been any other consumer product, complete with prizes, discounts, and testimonials.

Given that it encourages individuals to choose spiritual practices on the grounds of personal preference and thus encourages them to behave as a consumer, the New Age has been considered to be well suited to modern society, but this is of course corrupted spirituality, and a central part of the long path of spiritual degeneration we are heading into.

4. The concept of *reality-as-an-illusion* in Eastern philosophy

In Eastern philosophy the concept of reality-as-illusion consists of two aspects:

1. The concept of impermanence.

2. Tightening what you see together with your thought distortions.

1. *The Concept of impermanence*

Eastern philosophy tries to understand history in terms of the cycles of nature. The cycles of nature began with the manifestation of the world (see my online book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien*, chapter 1: [Metaphysics](#)).

There are energy-laws working in all cycles of nature. On the plane of the outer forms there are birth and death, creation and destruction, growth and dissolution of apparently separated outer forms. This is reflected everywhere: the life-cycle of a star, a planet, a physical body, a tree or a flower; in the rise and fall of nations, political systems and civilizations; and in the inevitable cycles of gain and loss in the individual person's life.

A cycle can last from some hours to some years. There are big cycles and small cycles within the big ones (in the last part of my Ebook *Evolutionism – The Red Thread in The Matrix Conspiracy*, I have explained the concept of the Indian time ages called Yugas). The cyclic nature of the Universe is closely connected with the impermanence of all things and all situations. Buddha made this into a central part of his teaching.

There are cycles with success, where things come to you, and you flourish, and cycles with defeat, where they wither away or wear down, and you become obliged to let go of them, in order to make space so that new things can arise, or so that there can happen a transformation. If you cling to them and make resistance at that time, this means, that you deny accompanying the stream of life, and then you will suffer.

As long as your awareness is identified with thinking, you will have lost the contact with your deeper being (your Soul), and only exist in the movement of time. You'll have your identity in your lifestituation and be ignorant about the Source of Life. Therefore you will also suffer by being subject to the energy-laws and life-cycles in the movement of time. But suffering is closely connected with the fact, that you make resistance against impermanence.

If you however know the energy-laws, you will know, that it is not true, that the up-cycle is good, and the down-cycle is bad, except in the mind's judgement.

2. *Tightening what you see together with your thought distortions*

Your thoughts are words and images, which work in this massive cyclic stream. It is Heraklit's River, it is the River of Time.

As the Indian philosophy claims, then this stream not only contains your personal history, it also contains a collective and universal history – together a history, which consists of images. These images are form-formations of energy, creative up-tensions, a kind of matter, though on a highly abstract plane. These images exist in other words in the actual movement of the matter, and therefore not only in your mental activity, but also outside you in nature. So, your thinking rises from an endless deep of images, which flow in the actual movement of nature.

Indian philosophy claims that the manifestation of the universe thus has arisen on the background of a mighty universal vision (Mahat or Mahat Atman – a vision of beauty, the thoughts of God). In the meeting with the thinking this vision becomes shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision; signs from Eternity, the footprints of the Gods, the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life. We all have these memories, in some they are sleeping, in others they are dreaming. They are the background for any deep longing, any deep wonder. They are the beginning of music, art, literature and philosophy.

The thinking is philosophical in the sense, that it is seeking happiness, truth, release, or liberation. In order to create meaning and coherence the thinking therefore linguistical produces the reality of the self-image and the world-image, the known, which originates from the images in the movement of time, which both are lying on the personal, collective and universal plane, and which flow through both humans, society, nature, and the whole of the universe. It is like a painting by Chagall.

In Man this production is an ongoing attempt to become something else than what you are; a movement in time, from past towards future, and from future back to past, and so on, in a lot of different life-cycles. It is the eternal recurrence of the same, which manifests as symbols, memories, conceptions, ideas, images. In these the thinking has its norms and values, ideals and experiences.

And in order to understand, the thinking tends towards division of these images: logical analyzing in the one as different from the other, emotional evaluating in likes and dislikes, esthetical separating in beautiful and ugly, ethical in good and evil, religious in holy and profane, sexually in gender. Finally it cognitional separates reality in the observer and the observed, whereby there is created a discrepancy where emptiness and loss slide in between, creating reflections, displacement and darkness. This is level 3. Therewith is created unreality and absence, a condition

where there is an inner spectator, calculator or doubter (the Ego), which places itself outside, either the individual, or the surroundings.

Time and its images consist of energy and energyfields, as well as their lawfulness within the Wholeness, which forms so-called karmic structures. In the West karmic structures has to do with original sin, personal sin, the will of God, hubris and nemesis, as well as divine providence.

If you continue being identified with your personal time and life-situation, and therefore use the consciousness in a self-circling way (words, images, feelings, moods, thoughts), then the Wholeness remains asleep. If you choose to begin to awake (through yoga, meditation and prayer), then your consciousness, like a flower, will uncover and open up its own divine dimensions in the Inner Side of the world. Everybody has this inner pure awareness. It reveals the qualities of the Now and therefore of life itself. And therefore, it is also love, self-forgetful openness.

So, to begin a spiritual practice is to begin a proces of awakening. In Zen it is for example said about the process of awakening: "In the beginning mountains are mountains, and woods are woods. Then mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. Finally mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods."

This refers to the three forms of states the Wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. When the Wholeness is sleeping, mountains are mountains and woods are woods. This is the reality of the ordinary mind (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary mind can sleep in three ways: 1) the dark sleep, which is the Ego's deep nightly sleep; 2) the grey sleep, which is the Ego's nightly dreams and other dreams; 3) the light sleep, where the Ego is awake.

Thinking is the spontaneous activity of the ordinary mind. The first aphorism of the Yoga Sutra is that yoga is the intentional stopping of the spontaneous activity of the mind. We see each other here, in the plane of Maya (illusion), because there is an echo in this substance in our minds that takes the forms of what we see and hear as well. And when you move your eyes quickly, you can see how rapidly this substance changes form. When our mind is in movement, like the rippling surface of a pond, all that we see are broken images. But let the wind be still, and the water cleared of all sediment, and you will see perfectly reflected the forms that formerly had been only broken in your experience. And so it is when the mind is stilled in yoga: all these broken reflections that we are, are gathered back to the image of which we are the broken reflections. And one sees not only the reflected sky but also down into the water depth, down into the water depth of one's own being, and the image beheld

then is the form of forms, that form which in all of us is broken. In the gospel of Thomas Jesus said:

"Now, when you see your appearance, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into being before you, which do not die and do not show themselves, how will you be able to bear such greatness?"

When this is experienced, the fascination is completely absorbing. And it may be such that the one who beholds it would not wish to return to see the broken forms again – then he remains in that fixed contemplation, and as they say, the body drops off. He has been returned to union with that which he indeed is. That which we call our ego, that which we think of as ourselves, is but the broken reflection of that which is our true self. And the discovery of that true self is the recovery of union with our own being.

The three forms of states the wholeness can be in, can also be described as the personal time, the collective time and the universal time. Furthermore it can be described as the personal history, the collective history and the universal history. Time and history constitute the structure under your thinking.

This structure is also called the astral plane, or the astral world. It is a plane of existence postulated both by classical (particular neo-Platonic), medieval, oriental and esoteric philosophies and mystery religions. It is the world of the planetary spheres, crossed by the soul in its astral body, either through the dream state, or on the way to being born and after death, and generally said to be populated by angels, demons, spirits or other immaterial beings.

The astral plane is connected with the so-called Akashic records. The Akashic records are a compendium of mystical knowledge encoded in a non-physical plane of existence: the astral plane. These records are described as containing all knowledge of human experience and the history of the cosmos. They are holding a record of all events, actions, thoughts and feelings that have ever occurred or will ever occur.

The Akasha is an “astral light” containing occult records, which spiritual beings can perceive by their “astral senses” and “astral bodies”. Clairvoyance, spiritual insight, prophecy and many other metaphysical and religious notions are made possible by tapping into the Akashic records. They are metaphorically described as a library. They can be accessed through astral projection, meditation, near-death experience, lucid dreaming, or other means.

The Akashic records are, in their depths, the universal time, the Great Vision within the Wholeness, and as mentioned: the Wholeness can be in three states of spiritual awakening - sleep, dream, awake – which again can be described as the personal, collective and universal time (or history).

The collective time is a very dangerous intermediate area, if you not are very trained in realization and compassion. The collective time is the area where different kinds of paranormal (philosophical/religious) phenomena are beginning to occur in your daily life. It is especially the lack of understanding this area, that is due to my critique of the many incompetent spiritual teachers you see today in the New Age movement. If you don't understand what to do, when these phenomena arise, it can end in a spiritual crisis. Though you might have paranormal abilities, then you, spiritual seen, not necessarily are sufficiently awake on these areas, and therefore competent enough to guide other people spiritual.

I have called the collective time for *The Spiritual Twilight Zone* between the personal and universal time. This is the zone where the above-mentioned dangerous aspect of euphorical ego-inflation is happening.

The Indian sage Sri Aurobindo, also refers to what he called the Intermediate Zone, a dangerous and misleading transitional spiritual and pseudo-spiritual region between the ordinary consciousness of the outer being and True Realisation.

...These things, when they pour down or come in, present themselves with a great force, a vivid sense of inspiration or illumination, much sensation of light and joy, an impression of widening and power. The sadhak feels himself freed from the normal limits, projected into a wonderful new world of experience, filled and enlarged and exalted; what comes associates itself, besides, with his aspirations, ambitions, notions of spiritual fulfillment and yogic siddhi; it is represented even as itself that realisation and fulfillment. Very easily he is carried away by the splendour and the rush, and thinks that he has realised more than he has truly done, something final or at least something sovereignly true. At this stage the necessary knowledge and experience are usually lacking which would tell him that this is only a very uncertain and mixed beginning; he may not realise at once that he is still in the cosmic Ignorance, not in the cosmic Truth, much less in the Transcendental Truth, and that whatever formative or dynamic idea-truths may have come down into him are partial only and yet further diminished by their presentation to him by a still mixed consciousness. He may fail to realise also that if he rushes to apply what he is realising or receiving as if it were something definitive, he may either fall into confusion and error or else get shut up in some partial formation in which there may

be an element of spiritual Truth but it is likely to be outweighed by more dubious mental and vital accretions that deform it altogether.

We can now talk about symbols and symbolizing. There exist two types of symbols, dependent on whether it is the collective images, or the universal images, which are lying as foundation for the symbol.

A mystical experience is happening when astral energies and content arrive to the consciousness, either from the collective images, or from the universal images.

When energy and content arrive to the consciousness from the collective images, then this energy, and this content, will symbolize itself. This is because the collective images are in a condition of vague, diffuse, astral oneness. Therefore, what is coming from the collective images contains a much greater width and depth than the limited, relatively narrow and clear concepts and classes of the ordinary consciousness. The vague, wide contents and energies from the collective images are therefore growing narrower in the meeting with the consciousness. Here, the symbol is the quintessence, this shortened, condensed form of expression of the vague, wide collective material.

The other types of symbols are coming from the universal images, and therewith from nondual reality and truth itself. All reality, which shall mirror itself in the superficial mind, will automatically symbolize itself. Again the symbol is a telescoping, a representation of the information quantities, and the greater clarity, which are connected with nondual reality.

Symbols originating from the collective images reproduce a more vague, more imprecise, but richer organic astral oneness. Symbols from the universal images reproduce a clearer, more precise and superior astral oneness. The more vague astral oneness, or the more precise astral oneness, shows itself in symbolic form in the dividing, separating structure of consciousness.

Symbols from the collective images are known from the archetypes and primordial images of the dreams, as well as from fantasies, fairy-tales, myths etc.

Symbols from the universal images are formed in the transition from the Wholeness of the observer and the observed, to the separation of the observer and the observed.

The collective time is the spiritual twilight zone. It is the zone where demons hunt. All genuine spiritual practice tries to guide spiritual practitioners, who wish to learn, to go round the states, which have to do with the collective time, or at least, to

shorten the passage through these areas. And if they are lost in them, to lead them back on the right track.

5. The Soul and the Wholeness in Eastern philosophy

Let's finally look at Conway's level 2:

the psychic or "heavenly soul" level of Reality, which yields the realization or epiphany that whatever happens is ultimately "perfect," because whatever occurs is the "exquisite manifestation of Divine Will" for the sake of ALL souls eventually coming Home to God-realization. And, further, here it is realized that all souls have essentially always been immortal, innocent, free and radiant with Divine bliss-love (prior to and beyond their karmic entanglements on earth and in any lower subtle realms)

The ordinary mind (level 3), the feeling of identity, is deposited around the source of consciousness (level 1). In the cinema you can look at the screen, and lose yourself in identification with the action. And you can turn around, and look into the lightsource of the projector. In the mind the projector is hidden in the Ego, hidden in the thinking, hidden in the awareness. In order to discover and break the identification with the samsarical producer of the ordinary mind, the subject must discover the hidden source in the awareness or in the innermost of consciousness. It happens by neutralizing the Ego's, or the thinking's, functions. This happens through meditation.

The Ego's functions constitute what you could call the ordinary mind. You can talk about four such, lower, functions of the ordinary mind:

1. Evaluation (accept/denial, yes/no)
2. Focus
3. Activity
4. Language (words, images)

The source of awareness, the naked consciousness, is hidden because it has melted together with these four functions. They have become a kind of layers.

Meditation is in all simplicity about separating and dismantling the consciousness' automatical identification with these functions. Then you can talk about four higher functions of the consciousness, which are becoming activated through meditation:

1. Neutral observation
2. Passive listening presence (defocus, bi-directional consciousness)

3. Non-activity (non-action)
4. Non-language (wordless)

The whole process is like a flower opening itself.

The goal of the religions in the East is to get you to shift your focus from the phenomenal (level 3) to the transcendent (level 1). So you that you identify yourself not with the bulb, the head, the body, but with the consciousness, and when you have identified yourself with the consciousness, you have identified yourself with solar existence, what Kant called the noumenal world, and you were never born and you will never die.

The next stage of experience is that of no division between Consciousness and the unity of the individual. We saw that Consciousness and the Wholeness are the same, and that Wholeness is one and the same as reality, the totality of existence. The Soul is an expression of the presence of this Consciousness in the individual. The Soul is the spiritual essence of Man, and therewith you can talk about many Souls, or many primary presences of this consciousness in men. The Soul and the Consciousness (the Wholeness) are simply two models of viewing one mystery, and in Eastern philosophy this is called *ji-ri-muge*: “Individual, universal, no division.” In bidirectional consciousness, meditation is both directed into towards the form of consciousness, and out towards its content (about bidirectional consciousness, see my blog post [The Mandala of Kant and Longchenpa](#)).

In one of my Sūnyatā Sutras I have described that in this stage there is no difference between essence and existence:

Only meditative-existential you can be in the Now.

The passive listening presence is meditation.

Meditation is to see completely with the heart and the mind; that is to say: with the whole of your essence.

The human essence is therefore meditation.

Meditation is the self-forgetfull openness for, and absorption in life itself.

The meaning of life is therefore to express the human essence.

Human essence is therefore an appearance-form of the Now.

Why? Because the essence in the human life is meditation.

Total existential presence in the Now is meditation.

The essence is therefore one and the same with existence; and this realized oneness is precisely meditation, or the Wholeness of the observer and the observed.

The final great step of transcendent consciousness is *ji-ji-muge*: “individual, individual, no division.” We are all riding on one *karma*, one universal path. We are all manifestations of one great being (level 2).

This is the doctrine of the so-called Flower Wreath, or [Avatamsaka](#). In the Buddhist sutra of that name, the whole universe is described as a great net of gems (ontological pluralism – see my online book *Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien, Metaphysics, Ontology*, part 2: [Ontological Pluralism](#)).

At each of its points of juncture, a gem reflects the light of all the others and is reflected in all the others; the accent is on what is reflected, not on the specific gem. This shift of accent is what is implicit in the mythologies of the Sun and the Moon. Look at any alchemical drawing, look at many an Oriental icon or thangka and you’ll see in the two upper corners the Sun and the Moon of equal size: that is the moment of realizing the identity of the *ji* and the *ri* principle. And this is the central idea to all Oriental religion.

All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

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