Copyright © 2014 by Morten Tolboll

Terms of use:
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/deed.en_US

Contact information:
www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

Dedication:
Soli Deo Gloria

Table of contents

Introduction.....................................................................................................................4

Part 1: Central New Age themes.................................................................................8

What is karma?............................................................................................................8

What are chakras?.......................................................................................................18

Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception..............................................24

Some critical comments on astrology.....................................................................34

Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice..................................................37

Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance..............................40

Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling...............................50

Part 2: Humanistic psychology and its method: Psychotherapy............................61

Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology..................................................61
The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy.................................80

Regression psychotherapies...........................................................................117

Cathartic psychotherapies............................................................................146

A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork............................163

A critique of Byron Katie and her therapeutic technique The Work................185

Part 3: Constructivism and its method: Coaching............................................212

Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry.................................................................212

Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity.................................................245

Quantum mysticism and its web of lies...........................................................286

The Sokal Hoax............................................................................................294

The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines.....................308

A critique of the Indian Oneness movement and its use of Western Success coaching.................................................................326

Part 4: Three examples of large New Age systems........................................360

A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method.......................................360

A critique of the Human Design System......................................................381

Time travel and the fascism of The WingMakers Project............................401

Appendix.........................................................................................................433

Me and my avatar........................................................................................433
Introduction

This book is the second part of the concept of The Matrix Conspiracy.

The Matrix conspiracy is a mix of postmodern intellectualism, management theory, self-help and New Age, which together constitute a global spreading ideology. This ideology is created by The Mythology of Authenticity – a mythology where everything is about becoming and not being. This mythology has two world images: humanistic psychology and constructivism. And these two world images again have two methods: psychotherapy and coaching.

I begin this book with an introduction to central themes in New Age, whereafter I go into an investigation of humanistic psychology and its method: psychotherapy. I show the devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy, where the devastating especially has to do with the mix of spirituality and psychotherapy. I show two central New Age psychotherapies, namely Regression psychotherapy and Cathartic psychotherapy. Hereafter I give two examples of crazy New Age psychotherapies. The one of them is Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork, where the “spiritual” is some kind of New Age Shamanism integrated with a mix of Regression and Cathartic therapy. The other is Byron Katie and her therapeutic method The Work, where the “spiritual” is the New Thought movement mixed with Cathartic therapy.

But these are just examples, there are numerous others, and new ones are emerging every day.

The mythology of the Matrix Conspiracy is characterized by magical thinking (you can create yourself and the world as it fit you) – and is seeked supported by subjectivism and relativism: the psedoscience of reductionism, especially psychologism, biologism and quantum mysticism. This is especially seen in the reductionism called constructivism (a central aspect of the concept of postmodernism which is widely spread on almost all universities of the World).

There are two kinds of constructivism: social constructivism and individual constructivism, which respectively support the political left and right. I show the connection with the Self-help industry and the concept of coaching. I also show the connection with New Age and quantum mysticism.

In part 1 I have already investigated the pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism. I have also given an introduction to the philosophy of Niels Bohr, and therefore also to quantum mechanics. In part 2 I explain the web of lies quantum
mysticism has succeeded in spreading. In that connection I describe the famous Sokal Hoax. The Sokal Hoax, also known as the Sokal Affair, was a publishing hoax perpetrated by Alan Sokal, a physics professor at New York University. The hoax was a so-called hoax of exposure. Hoaxes of exposure are semi-comical or private sting operations. They usually encourage people to act foolishly or credulously by falling for patent nonsense that the hoaxer deliberately presents as reality.

The Sokal Hoax was a pseudoscientific experiment to test the standards of scholarship and intellectual responsibility within the postmodern intellectualism.

Besides its central impact on the New Age movement, the lies of quantum mysticism have their roots in the postmodern intellectualism, for example in the new feminism, which I claim plays a central role in The Matrix Conspiracy.

Furthermore I give a critique of the Indian Oneness Movement. This movement, and its use of Western success coaching, is especially interesting, firstly because of the involvement of Anthony Robbins, who must be said to be the world’s leading business coach and often called the father of the concept of coaching itself. Secondly because of the almost surrealistic manipulation of the human mind, which is going on within this movement, and which shows what happens when you give up all critique and rationality.

With all of the above mentioned we see the emergence of a totalitarian New Age system with direct fascistic tendencies, and where Western Consumer Capitalism and Chinese Communism in all probability will melt together in a New World Order: the world of alternative history, alternative physics, alternative medicine and, ultimately, alternative reality.

In the end of the book I give an example of three large New Age systems, which have emerged in the wake of Theosophy, and which therefore exposes such totalitarian and fascistic tendencies (in part 1 I have already described the fascism of Theosophy): 1) the integral theory of Ken Wilber 2) the Human Design System and 3) the WingMakers project. Thereby I don’t say that the totalitarian New Age system will be based on these three New Age systems, I actually don’t think so. I just want to show the emerging tendencies.

The winners in this Brave New World are, due to all this, therefore not receiving their talents from being and reality, but from becoming masks and roles, from their ability to tell stories. It is a meritocracy of people wearing The Emperor’s New Clothes.
The difference between people receiving their talents from masks, roles and storytelling, and people receiving them from being and reality, can, as I have made aware of before, further be clarified by comparing the so-called Sophists with the philosopher Socrates, which I will repeat here:

After centuries of successful trading, the local gods and festivals could no longer satisfy the religious needs of the ancient Athenians. Their spiritual hunger was exacerbated by the stress of city life, by the constant threat of destruction, and by the grim vision of totalitarian Sparta: the vision of Greeks living without light or grace or humour, as though the gods had withdrawn from their world.

Into the crowded space of Periclean Athens came the wandering teachers, selling their “wisdom” to the bewildered populace. Any charlatan could make a killing, if enough people believed in him. Men like Gorgias and Protagoras, who wandered from house to house demanding fees for their instruction, preyed on the gullibility of a people made anxious by war.

To the young Plato, who observed their antics with outrage, these “Sophists” were a threat to the very soul of Athens. One alone among them seemed worthy of attention, and that one, the great Socrates whom Plato immortalised in his dialogues, was not a Sophist, but a true philosopher.

The philosopher, in Plato’s characterisation, awakens the spirit of inquiry. He helps his listeners to discover the truth, and it is they who bring forth, under his catalysing influence, the answer to life’s riddles. The philosopher is the midwife, and his duty is to help us to what we are – free and rational beings, who lack nothing that is required to understand our condition. The Sophist, by contrast, misleads us with cunning fallacies, takes advantage of our weakness, and offers himself as the solution to problems of which he himself is the cause.

There are many signs of the Sophists, but principal among these is that they are subjectivists and relativists. Their teachings are about how to get on in the world, and not about how to find the truth. Anything goes: not facts, but the best story wins. And the result is mumbo-jumbo, condescension and the taking of fees. The philosopher uses plain language, does not talk down to his audience, and never asks for payment. Such was Socrates, and in proposing him as an ideal, Plato defined the social status of the philosopher for centuries to come.

No one should doubt that sophistry is alive and well. My concept of The Matrix Conspiracy is permeated with it. We see it in the mix of postmodern intellectualism (constructivism), management culture, self-help and New Age – and in the two main methods of this mix: psychotherapy and coaching.
The Sophists are back with a vengeance, and are all the more to be feared, in that they come disguised as philosophers and scientists. For, in this time of helpless relativism and subjectivity, philosophy and science alone have stood against the tide, reminding us that those crucial distinctions on which life depends – between true and false, good and evil, right and wrong – are objective and binding. Philosophy and science have until now spoken with the accents of the academy and laboratory, and not with the voice of the fortune teller.

When Plato founded the first academy, and placed philosophy at the heart of it, he did so in order to protect the precious store of wisdom from the assaults of charlatans, to create a kind of temple to truth in the midst of falsehood, and to marginalise the Sophists who preyed on human confusion.

The Sophists were teachers of rhetoric, who against a fee, taught people how to persuade other people about their “truths”. Rhetoric, or sophistry, is the art of persuasion. Rather than giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions, as Socrates did, then those who use sophistry are employing a battery of techniques, such as emphatic assertion, persuader words and emotive language, to convince the listener, or reader, that what they say or imply is true.

The Sophists taught their pupils how to win arguments by any means available; they were supposedly more interested in teaching ways of getting on in the world than ways of finding the truth, as Socrates did. Therefore any charlatan is welcome. And the use of thought distortions is seen as the best tool, when practising the mantra of the management culture: “It is not facts, but the best story, that wins!”

My book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions is a follow-up to the first three books on my teaching Meditation as an Art of Life:

1) Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader (2008)

2) Dream Yoga (2009)


It is also a reference book to my two books on the Matrix Conspiracy. These two books can also be seen as textbooks. As textbooks I have provided them with a great deal of references to articles and books. All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com
Like part 1 this book also consists of articles already published, and there will therefore come some repetitions of the same themes. Again I have decided – except for a few changes - to leave that unchanged, since it can serve as a tool for understanding difficult problems.

With this final book on the Matrix Conspiracy, I will, like Plato, as in my teaching as such, place philosophy at the heart of it, and I do so in order to protect the precious store of wisdom from the assaults of charlatans, to create a kind of temple to truth in the midst of falsehood, and to marginalise the Matrix Sophists who prey on human confusion.

In the appendix I describe my experiment with this. Through my avatar in the online virtual world Second Life I offer philosophical counseling and cafés (or just interacting as such) – and I’m in this way using Second Life as an experimental analogy to central aspects of my teaching Meditation as an Art of Life, for example The Matrix Conspiracy.

**Part 1: Central New Age themes**

**What is karma?**

In Zen it is said about the spiritual 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. The three states can also be described as the personal, collective and universal images of 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, the astral world or the Akashic records (read more about this in my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice).
The personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness. The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with awareness, or consciousness.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now’s lawfulness around the function of a universal negation power, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego’s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can’t say anything about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (śûnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created.

Nagarjuna’s argumentation leads to the thought about that human beings 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also means that it in itself is without realization.

So, the energy aspect of human beings (compensatory karma) is closely related to the material world, laws of nature, cycles of life, yes actually pure causal regularity of mechanical kind (also read the chapter The Life Artist as a Natural Being in my book A Portrait of Lifeartist).
In accordance with the authentic spiritual traditions the movement of time is a power, an expression of energy, which follows some laws. These laws are also called compensatory karma. I use this concept because the concept of negative karma also has been distorted by the positive psychology movement (into what they call the law of attraction).

The energy-laws function in all cycles of life. 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. 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. It is also a central part of the teachings of Nagarjuna, which you can read about in my article A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method.

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.

The problem with the positive psychology of the New Thought movement, and therefore the ideology of success coaching, is that it one-sided is focusing on that the up-cycles are positive, while the down-cycles are negative.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, though, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is the area of progressive karma, spiritual development; it is the area of realization, the area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is: experiences, which are followed by realization.
When you reduce everything to the energy aspect, there can’t happen any realization. Whatever you do within this area - therapy, exercises, use of drugs, stimulation of brain cells, Holotropic breathwork, etc., etc., - then it only will result in experiences without realization. It will also result in absense of awareness, because the consciousness will be distracted by the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, as well as in fragmentation.

Experiences without realization will therefore be characterized by existential categories such as unreality, division, anxiety, stagnation and meaninglessness, no matter how “divine” or “demonical” they occur to the experiencer. And that is actually in direct opposition to the genuine mystical experience, which are followed by realization. The mystical experience is namely characterized by the opposite existential categories, such as reality, co-operation, safety, movement and meaning (see my article Suffering as an entrance to the Source).

So in a spiritual practice it is the form of the consciousness it is about (realization), not its content (experiences).

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now’s plane, the central is the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness. Not the content of the consciousness. In spiritual practice the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness’ course towards its source (the Now, the wholeness, the otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance.

So the Ego’s partial consciousness is part of a greater wholeness, which is the Now, life itself. And life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active using the pure awareness, the innermost in you, and using the heartfullness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, because the lifefulfilment, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your spiritual essence - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego’s process; that is: with your personal time and lifesituation, or with the collective time and lifesituation. Admittedly it is the Ego’s actions out on the scene, which leaves karmacially tracks. Karma (compensatory karma, or negative karma) is the subconscious consequences of the Ego’s actions. Each time the Ego acts - and thereby changes the balance in the wholeness – then the structures and power lines in your spiritual essence changes, in the subconscious.
When your spiritual essence is sleeping, karma is automatically. The Ego´s pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the wholeness, in your spiritual essence, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma. In one life ascetic, in the next libertine, then inhibited and expelled, thereupon sybarite etc. with no end, because the Ego has freedom continual to give new momentum and new course - within the karmacial possible; that is to say: heredity and environment - to the Ego´s pendulum (the same is happening in numerous other ways within one life). That is one reason for that nobody can tell you about your karma (about free will and heredity and environment: read my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

However when the Ego decides to use its free energy, its existential option to begin to awake, then the karma structures changes. Then you begin to use and work with your spiritual dimension. This dimension is not subject to the karmacially structure, it is it, or it is over it. The wholeness is over, is transcendent, in relation to the laws and mechanisms, which regulate the infrastructures of the wholeness. The wholeness is not subject to the laws and energy transformations, which rule between the constitutive parts of the wholeness.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmacially lawfulnesses and can therefore relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmacially structures, which after all not only rule between the many life´s of your spiritual essence, but all the same are known psychological mirrored from the Ego´s dreams and the Ego´s life - then you can change attitude.

Instead of swinging with the laws you can choose to observe. Instead of identifying yourself with impulses and incentives, emotions and thought tendencies, you can separate yourself, become a witness, become alert. And hereby you can break the karmacially automatism.

As mentioned: Human beings 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses.

Note, that your thoughts (the mind) belong to the energy aspect, and not the consciousness aspect. I say this because they in the very popular movement of New
Thought, Law of attraction and positive psychology, have confused the consciousness with the thoughts. They here think that you can produce progressive karma (what they call the law of attraction), with your thoughts. You can’t, because that is not an awakening process. Actually it would just produce more compensatory (negative) karma. It is only the spiritual awakening of your consciousness, and its direction in towards the source, the form of consciousness, that will produce progressive karma (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

Human beings are in that way, seen from the point of view of the ordinary ego-consciousness, inserted in two dimensions: a continuum, which streams are subject to laws; a discontinuum, for which leaps laws not seem to be effective. Note though, that this must not be confused with any quantum mystical theories about quantum jumping, quantum healing, time travel, etc., etc. As I have shown in my articles Quantum mysticism and its web of lies, and Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr, then laws are still effective within quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics, no matter how weird it is, belongs to the energy aspect of human beings.

The wholeness, your spiritual essence, is normally the discontinuous aspect; normally, because this is of course seen from the point of view of the ego-continuum. Seen from the point of view of your spiritual essence, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the spiritual essence the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream and the continuum of the ego-consciousness breaks and expands in a discontinuum (into the superior continuum of the wholeness – or your spiritual essence), then the cosmic structur-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma, a progressive karma will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma.

The process of your spiritual essence, your process of awakening, will leave progressive karma along through the various incarnations. What you spiritual have reached to realize in one life, will in the spiritual energy be there in the next life, or in the dimension of your spiritual essence.

If your spiritual essence is sleeping, the spiritual energy is quiet. Without traceable activity. A human being can live a whole life, yes, life after life, in absolute sleep.
If you however existentially begin to seek, to seek the spiritual, the divine, to seek love, if you choose to use your energy and your life in that way, then the spiritual energy will begin to vibrate, to become active. Only the images, which have achieved to imprint themselves in the spiritual energy, will be transferred as progressive karma. Your spiritual essence will remember its dreams from life to life. And your spiritual essence will remember and accumulate the glimpses of being awake, it might have experienced. These, the dreams and awake moments of your spiritual essence, are the progressive karma.

This is what is meant with, that people are born with different levels of spiritual development.

Concerning the progressive karma it applies, that each new life, in a quintessence, repeats the crucial stations on the development path of the spiritual essence. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma, if such is available, is therefore in the life, you have lived, in the history of your present life. It lies as an invisible script underneath the history of your actual life. It is the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life, in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma. In your spiritual history there is a map. This map shows the dream-tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image.

There is no doubt about, that Karen Blixen, though not fully conscious, had a sense of this map. All her books are about destiny seen in this way; they are about people who either live in accordance with this map, or in discordance with it. This map, this universal image was, what she referred to as the ”ancient”, the ”original”, and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. And a universal image is of a holographic nature, therefore it contains all other images, personal, collective and universal, and therefore it contains the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life. It is the universal history of the astral plane; the Akashic records, or the wholeness, which is awake (see my article The philosophy of Karen Blixen).

You can live a whole life with this key lying in your own actual, spiritual biography. It requires work to find it. If you through development, through training, expand your consciousness to the spiritual dimension, then this invisible script will be made visible, the dream-tracks and the songlines in the progressive karma will be found.
Alaya-vijnana is a term used within Yogacara Buddhism to indicate the store-house consciousness, or the great vision, which consists of universal images. It is also called the Akashic records. These universal images are a kind of energetical mandala-structures or yantra-fields. They have a linguistic nature, but it is of a visionary kind. These images are composite by sound and color, symbol and structure. You could also say, that they are what the philosophers call unmoved matter, a worldaspect of sound-colours and symbol-structures, an ocean of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. Altogether filled with information about life. Together the great vision, an information-ocean of holographic nature.

We have historical records about this vision. For example there within Tibetan Buddhism exists a peculiar doctrine about the so-called Tertöns (tib. Gter-bston - the unearthers of the hidden books), people who are born with a special karmacial connection to a long ago deceased master, and who, because of the connection to this master´s oneness-consciousness with the universal vision, now can collect treasures of information in from the vision, or the universal images, which after all work in synchronism with the Now, and which therefore lie in the wholeness, in the continuum of eternity. The master was hiding and storing holy “texts” various places in the universal images with that purpose, that a future ”Tertön” would be able to find this knowledge again, decipher and publish it.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol) is in that way one of the Tibetan texts, which is considered for having been hidden in the universal vision by the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Padma Sambhava, and which was found again by a Tertön with the name Rigzin Karma Ling-pa. Padma Sambhava is considered for having hidden many holy texts, whereafter he gave some of his disciples the yoga ability to become reincarnated in the right time - which were determinated astrologically - for here to find the scriptures again.

After an estimated judgment, the spiritual texts, which already have been taken out by Tertöns in the run of the centuries, would form a cyclopedia on around sixtyfive volumes with average around four hundred pages in each volume.

I can see no reason to deny the doctrin of the Tertöns. You can´t just deny people´s experiences (followed by realization) written down through centuries. This would in itself be unscientific, irrational, and besides, deeply arrogant. It is important though, to remember the philosophical aspects of the spiritual journey; that is: the use of rationality and critical thinking, which actually also is a central part of the training of the Tibetan munks. The problem with the alternative environment within the New Age movement, is namely, that precisely because the above mentioned, normal
inaccessible, areas, in principle lie outside the area of the Ego-consciousness, yes, then they are open for all sorts of fantasies.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmacially experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to see into the collective time and its images, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore they basically do not know what they are doing. They are lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no longer are woods. There is in this area of the collective time and its images, with all its “experts” and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecisely guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation (see my article Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality).

There are therefore some philosophical principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enourmous, and growing market. The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that in order to equalize old karma, or because it is his “destiny”. He is being told that he is going to meet certain people, are being told about other people, etc., etc. All this is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses. It all origin from the collective time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore, in deeper sense, not karmacial and not in the least spiritual.

Precisely like philosophy of existence the spiritual traditions say that you in your opinion formation and identity formation must be yourself, live in compliance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

If you follow clairvoyants´ advices the direct opposite happens: In your opinion formation and identity formation you will strive after becoming something else than what you are, you will imitate (model) others, be a slave of others´ ideas and ideals, and your actions will be characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. Instead of equalizing old karma (compensatory karma is what normally is understood as karma, or negative karma) they will create new compensatory karma.

If a human being in genuine sense experiences (that is: realizes) compensatory karma, then this will precisely cause a separation, a break in relation to the automatical
identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actual realizes its karmacially conditions, will precisely, by force of realization, break the automatic process.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmacially talk and experiences of the “experts” and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, regression (see my article Regression psychotherapies). None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. If you namely use the karma idea in that way (the idea of a person´s spiritual destiny), it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards or forwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

The genuine karmacially structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, a guru, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost. It is your awareness in the now that will find the progressive karma, and this awareness you can of course only practise yourself.

So the universal images lie as a kind of dream-tracks and song-lines in your actual life here and now. Only here and now they can be discovered. They can manifest themselves in symbols, which contain informations about the development process of your spiritual essence. Informations from the universal images are, contrary to informations from the collective images, not contradiction-filled and split, but healing and synthesizing (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences). They are the map, which shows the path from the Ego to your spiritual essence. When they have been discovered, the Ego knows the way to the pure awareness and love of its spiritual essence – the home of the spiritual essence.

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma (his spiritual destiny; the dreamtracks and songlines in his spiritual journey; the map that shows his way to enlightenment). The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what people through a system may be able to think about the collective time, or fantasize about karmacially experiences and spiritual evolution. Nobody can tell you about your karmacially structures, or your spiritual evolution (or the world’s spiritual evolution), or what will happen if you use their techniques. All people, models or
techniques - clairvoyants, regression therapists, astrologers, shamans, channelers, Ken Wilber’s integral method, Holotropic Breathwork, Human Design system, Law of attraction etc., etc., etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmacial – that is: with your spiritual growth - are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

In my article *Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology*, I show the consequences of the very popular self-help idea, that you psychological can control reality as you want, and therefore the concept of karma. In my article *The New Thought movement and the law of attraction*, I show how the concept of karma here has been distorted so that it fits with self-centredness. In my article *James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy*, I show a concrete example of how compensatory karma strikes back when you abuse the concept of karma in an egoistic way.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmacially course (a person’s life-history, destiny) and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that’s the same with all spiritual.

That is the other reason for why nobody can tell you about your karma.

**What are chakras?**

The Hatha Yoga texts describe, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots, or reflection-spots, which distribute over the body’s 6 head zones: 1: the eyebrow-area, 2: the mouth-throat-neck zone, 3: the breast-heart-shoulder zone, whereto often the arms belong 4: the diaphragm and solar plexus, 5: the abdominal middle, 6: the pelvic floor, the sexual organs, thighs, as well as the legs as a wholeness.

The chakra concept is part of a very worked out and profound system of description, which is developed on the background of thousand of years of work with, and experiences of inner and higher states in Man.

The chakras function firstly with the purpose of bodily and energetical balancing and regulation of the energetical swings of the thoughts. This aspect corresponds to the balancing and regulative function of the dreams, which also reflect themselves in the
body’s reflection-spots and their equal distribution across the body’s six head zones (compensatory karma).

Secondly the chakras have a development function, which also reflects itself in the symbol function of the dreams (progressive karma) – see my articles What is karma? and What is Dream Yoga?

As the dreams, the chakras therefore also both have a balancing and a development-specific function. It is in other words the same basic phenomenon, which reflects itself in the dreams and in the chakras.

In so far as the chakras are related to specific body-areas as an expression of the life energy which functions in and regulates these areas, in so far the chakras are defined as centres in the energyfield of Man, as the focus-spots of the aura, or as energy-whirls in the so-called energy-body of Man. Experiential they appear in the form of feelings.

When the chakras are related to the development-level of Man (the level of realization work and ethical practice), they are described as reflection-spots of the Source – the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Symbolical this is illustrated in the form of Mandalas.

You can talk about seven chakras. The first six chakras consist of two sides: content and essence. The seventh chakra is the Source itself, the essence without any content.

If we describe them bottom up they look like this:

1) **Muladhara-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the pelvic floor, the sexual organs, thighs, as well as the legs as a wholeness. The mandala-symbol consists of a red lotus-flower with four leaves. A yellow square and an elephant symbolize the earth-element. The elephant has seven trunks, which corresponds to the seven chakras. A triangle symbolizes the goddess Shakti´s genitalia (yoni). Within this the god Shiva´s phallus encircled by the kundalini-snake. At the top to the right the god of creation, Brahma, and the female ”doorkeeper” to the kundalini power: Dakini. A gold-letter in the middle is the mantra ”Lam”. The content-side of the chakra is the manifested. It´s essence-side is the unmanifested.

2) **Svadhistana-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the abdominal middle. The mandala-symbol consists of an orange lotus-flower with six leaves. Within this a lotus with eight leaves, which symbolizes the water-element. Herein a halfmoon and the water-monster Makara. The sanskrit-letter in the middle stands for
the mantra ”Vam”. Over the mantra can Vishnu and Shakti Rakini be seen, gods of blood and body-fluids. The content-side of the chakra is movement. Its essence-side is the unmoved.

3) **Manipura-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the diaphragm and solar plexus. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus-flower with ten leaves. An orange triangle and a ram symbolize the fire-element. Over the triangle Rudra, the god of storms and of tears, as well as the armed goddess Shakti Lakini. A black sanskrit-letter is the mantra ”Ram”. The color of the leaves is ”as a rain-cloud”. The content-side of the chakra is the emotions. Its essence-side is being.

4) **Anahata-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the breast-heart-shoulder zone, whereto often the arms belong. The mandala-symbol consists of an orange lotus-flower with twelve leaves. In the seedhouse two smoke-colored triangles which form a star: symbol on unification of opposites. An antelope stand for the air-element. At the top the god Vayu Bijar and Shakti Kakini, whose heart is softened by Nectar. The sanskrit-letter in the middle is ”Yam”. The content-side of the chakra is the opposites. Its essence-side is the oneness.

5) **Vishudda-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the mouth-throat-neck area. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus with 16 leaves in smoke-colored purple. A circle within a triangle is the full moon, which symbolizes the ether-element. In top to the right, Sadashiva, whose five heads represent the five ”lower” senses. The sanskrit-letter in the middle is ”Ham”. The content-side of the chakra is language. Its essence-side is silence.

6) **Agna-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the eyebrow-area. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus-flower with two leaves. In a triangle in the middle can be seen a luminous phallus. To the right the goddess Hakini, whose six heads represent the five ”lower” senses + the ”sixth sense”. The mantra is ”Um”. The content-side of the chakra is time. Its essence-side is the Now.

7) **Sahasrara-chakra**, which not is in any body-zone. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus-flower with thousand leaves. The Source itself, the essence without any content.

In Zen it is said about the spiritual 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. The three states can also be described as the personal, collective and universal images of 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, the astral world or the Akashic records (read more about this in my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice).

The personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness. The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with awareness, or consciousness.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now´s lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego´s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can´t say anything about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (´sûnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created.

Nagarjuna´s argumentation leads to the thought about that human beings have two aspects: an energy aspect and a consciousness aspect. Like the mind, or the thoughts, the chakras contain both these aspects. That is what is meant with, that they both have a content side and an essence side.

Seen from the energy aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature, your psychic system (and the chakras) is subject to the lawfulness of
the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also means that it in itself is without realization.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is the area of progressive karma, spiritual development; it is the area of realization, the area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is: experiences, which are followed by realization.

When you reduce everything to the energy aspect, there can´t happen any realization. Whatever you do within this area - therapy, exercises, use of drugs, stimulation of brain cells, Holotropic breathwork, etc., etc. - then it only will result in experiences without realization. It will also result in absence of awareness, because the consciousness will be distracted by the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, as well as in fragmentation.

Experiences without realization will therefore be characterized by existential categories such as unreality, division, anxiety, stagnation and meaninglessness, no matter how “divine” or “demonical” they occur to the experiencer. And that is actually in direct opposition to the genuine mystical experience, which are followed by realization. The mystical experience is namely characterized by the opposite existential categories, such as reality, co-operation, safety, movement and meaning (see my article Suffering as an entrance to the Source).

So in a spiritual practice it is the form of the consciousness it is about (realization), not its content (experiences). Or said in another way: in a spiritual practice you must concentrate about the essence-side of the chakras, not their content-side.

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now´s plane, the central is the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness. Not the content of the consciousness. In spiritual practice the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness´ course towards its source (the Now, the wholeness, the otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance.
The third chapter in Patanjali’s Yogasutras describes the paranormal experiences and abilities, you can achieve in connection with yoga-practice. Patanjali is intimately making account of, that you ought to be very careful with - in connection with yoga-practice – to try to achieve paranormal abilities and experiences, since this can be due to (or result in) a so-called spiritual crisis – a debugging in your spiritual development.

It is therefore problematic, that it is the fewest New Age directions, which connect chakras with kundalini and spiritual crises (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality, The awakening of kundalini and Spiritual Crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena).

The problem in connection with the New Age-movement is the attempt to integrate the philosophy of the East (for example chakras) with Western psychology and psychotherapy. Psychology is after all today a science, which works with empirically proofs, or empirical content. But within the spiritual area you are precisely not working with content, but with essence, and this has not anything to do with psychology as a science, but with philosophy.

The psychologizing therefore results in, that you direct yourself towards the contents and forget the essence, exactly what also characterizes a spiritual crisis. It is for example my opinion, that the Czech-American psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, despite his pioneering work of mapping spiritual crises, as well as his great knowledge of history of philosophy, ends up in such a psychologizing. Here I am especially thinking about his examinations of the concept of oneness-consciousness, where the touchstone of authenticity has with essence (realization) to do, and not content (experiences). Grof was for example seeking - first through LSD-therapy, and later, when that was forbidden, through an experiential oriented, body psychotherapeutic technique (Holotropic Breathwork) - to provoke experiences of the same kind as them you experience in a spiritual crisis – that is: through a so-called upward technique – in the belief that such a crisis always has a healing and transformational potential.

Grofs assertion is in other words, that you through LSD, or a holotropic session, should be able to skip many years of meditation practice and experience the same as the great enlightened masters.

But what he in reality skips are the philosophical aspects of the meditation practice (the philosophical questions’ self-inquiring practice – see my articles What is philosophy?, and Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy), and when these are left out, he creates breeding ground for many different types of
spiritual self-deceit. The case is namely, that an important part of the opening in towards the Source is the realization of what basically hinders this opening (see my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings). Unless you know, for example the Ego´s, fundamental nature, you will not be able to recognize it, and it will deceive you to identify with it again and again. But when you realize the hindrances in yourself (your ignorance), it is the Source itself - the Good, the True and the Beautiful – which makes the realization possible. The realization can therefore only come from within, never from outside.

When Grof seeks to open up for collective experiences, without having been working with realization of the Ego´s nature, he intervenes disruptive in the Ego´s self-regulating structures, which are thinking and time. Therewith he also intervenes in the balancing and development-specific function of the chakras. Unknowing he creates heavy energetical swings without understanding, that the karmacially consequences are being equivalent heavy contrabalances and back-swings. Grof seems himself to be in a possession state, a possession of experiences, which is mirrored in the level of fierceness in his methods, which almost seem to be attempts to rape spirituality (read more in my article A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork).

In my article Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology. I describe the tragic consequences it can have when you reduce religion to psychology, and therewith create an ignorance about the function of karma and the energy-laws.

Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception

My concept of The Matrix Conspiracy is a sign of the return of the Sophists (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

The Sophists were teachers of rhetoric, who against a fee, taught people how to persuade other people about their “truths”. Rhetoric is precisely the art of persuasion. Rather than giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions, as Socrates did (and as all true spiritual counselors do), then those who use rhetoric are employing a battery of techniques, such as emphatic assertion, persuader words and emotive language, to convince the listener, or reader, that what they say or imply is true. The Sophists taught their pupils how to win arguments by any means available; they were supposedly more interested in teaching ways of getting on in the world
than ways of finding the truth, as Socrates and true spirituality. Therefore any charlatan is welcome.

Hypnosis is a typical Sophistic technique. Being hypnotized is usually characterized by (a) concentration (b) relaxation, (c) suggestion, and (d) expectation. Hypnosis involves intentional manipulation of behavior. As such, hypnotism belongs under the broader rubric of Sophistic "persuasive techniques." It involves getting people to quit thinking critically in order to open them up to behavior modification. That is the central point of this article.

The versatility of hypnosis is unparalleled. Hypnosis occurs under dramatically different social settings: the showroom, the clinic (hypnotherapy), and the police station. My target here is the clinic.

The best definition for hypnosis is probably The Power of Suggestion. All hypnosis effects are simply the power of suggestion. The more suggestible someone is, the better their results. And the more suggestions someone complies with, the more likely they are to comply with further suggestions.

What is then the problem with hypnosis? The problem is not, that it can help some people lose weight, quit smoking, or overcome their fear of flying. My target is therefore not hypnotherapists, who exclusively work with these things, though I don’t recommend hypnosis in any form. My target is therapists/coaches who use hypnosis in combination with, for example, New Age occultism, Past-life therapy, Recovered memory therapy, or success coaching (the New Thought movement and the law of attraction) - see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality, Regression psychotherapies, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT), and The New Thought movement and the law of attraction.

The problem with discussing hypnosis as therapy/coaching is that people within the alternate self-help market often present themselves with a spectrum of private invented educations, including Hypnotherapist, Gestalt therapist, NLP psychotherapist/coach, Body therapist, Shaman, Clairvoyant, Healer, Spiritual teacher, etc., etc. As in NLP some Hypnotherapist educations will claim, that it is a method, which is based on a pure scientific way of thinking, and will refuse the connection with, for example, New Age occultism, Regression psychotherapy or success coaching. Others will fully acknowledge the connection with, for example, New Age occultism, Regression psychotherapy or success coaching.
As a matter of fact: In adverts in New Age and self-help magazines you can see how hypnotherapists are using hypnotherapy in connection with just about all kinds of different New Age theories, systems and techniques, as well as self-help programs of all kinds. So what hypnotherapy is depends on whom you ask. But the common problem is the incompetence of these educations and therefore the therapists (again: see my article Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality). They are simply not competent to talk about people’s personality flaws etc. I have several times been attacked by hypnotherapists for being critical, and often with referral to my “personality flaws”, without ever having met me.

For some months ago I got an email from a friend who referred to a hypnotherapist who told about his several “certifications” such as: Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist (from the American Council of Hypnotist examiners) Hypnotherapist (from the National Guild of Hypnotists) and also the American Board of Hypnotherapy and even the international Hypnosis Federation. He also had a “Master Practitioner” certification in NLP.

After all this work he wished he instead had got himself an MA in Counseling Psychology or something similar. He told that the best definition he had ever heard for NLP was “the skill set of a con man.” What he really learned from studying hypnosis and NLP was how to manipulate people – using thought distortions such as Confirmation bias, Testimonials, Communal reinforcement, Cold reading, etc., etc. He also told that the clients seldom were aware that he got his “Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist” credentials from a three-day-weekend class – and that only one of his certifications required him to take so much as a written test. To become a registered hypnotherapist, he filled out a form and paid a registration fee. He listed his certification on the form but was not required to provide a copy of it. Then he was open for business.

He also told about a friend who was working towards becoming a licensed social worker. She had a MSW and was doing her 1000-hour supervision with an experienced social worker. We’re talking 3-4 years of work for her versus 50 hours and filling out a form for him. When his friend can open a private practice, she’ll probably be able to charge around $ 100/hour for her services. He had been charging that (or more) for the last 5 years. Hypnotists and hypnotherapists want consumers to think of them as “professionals” and “therapists” because otherwise, based on the training requirements, you’d only pay them $15/hour.

He also told that the kids wearing “Personal Trainer” t-shirts at his local gym probably had more training that he did when he started out as a hypnotherapist. In most states it takes more work to become a Real Estate Agent than a hypnotherapist.
He asked: “Are consumers making an informed choice? If all you want is a “motivational coach” then fine. But I think a lot of consumers mistakenly believe hypnotherapists have had far more training than most do.”

So, in the following I will use the concept of hypnosis in a more broad sense, as for example in connection with the hypnotic effects that are in thought distortions such as Communal reinforcement, and propaganda as such (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions). The problem is namely that hypnosis opens you for the power of suggestion, which is a kind of magical thinking.

New Age therapists for example think that hypnosis is a gateway to occult knowledge about the self and mystical insights about the universe. Hypnosis is seen as a way to open up the unconscious mind where these alleged truths and insights have taken up residence, but what they in reality open up for is the collective time, and not truth itself, namely the universal time.

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 consciousness (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary consciousness 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.

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 (see my article What is Dream Yoga?)

The Akashic records are 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 anomalous 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 (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality, Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena, and A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork)

Instead of spiritual wisdom, then hypnosis can create:

1) An illusoric state, where the conceptions of the roles for the participants in all of these beliefs and behaviors are learned and reinforced in their social settings, which have a quite particular worldview: for example New Age occultism, NLP, Law of attraction, Human design System, or other worldviews.

In other words: hypnosis makes you vulnerable for a number of thought distortions such as Argumentum ad Populum, Communal Reinforcement, The bandwagon Effect, Groupthink, Confabulation, Priming effect, etc. etc.

In logic, an argumentum ad populum (Latin for “appeal to the people”) is a fallacious argument that concludes a proposition to be true because many or most people believe it; it alleges: “if many believe so, it is so.”
This type of argument is known by several names, including appeal to the masses, appeal to belief, appeal to the majority, argumentum by consensus, authority of the many, and bandwagon fallacy, and in Latin as argumentum ad numerum (“appeal to the number”), and consensus gentium (“agreement of the clans”). It is also the basis of a number of social phenomena, including communal reinforcement and the bandwagon effect, the Chinese proverb “three men make a tiger” concerns the same idea.

**Communal reinforcement** is a social phenomenon in which a concept or idea is repeatedly asserted in a community, regardless of whether sufficient evidence has been presented to support it. Over time, the concept or idea is reinforced to become a strong belief in many people’s minds, and may be regarded by the members of the community as fact.

Often, the concept or idea may be further reinforced by publications in the mass media, books, or other means of communication. There is no doubt about that The Matrix Conspiracy (which is a strong advocate for the use of hypnosis and hypnotherapy) will be made propaganda for through mass media phenomena such as Transmedia Storytelling, Alternate Reality Games (for example The Blair Witch Project), Viral Marketing/Internet Hoaxes and Collaborative Fiction. As an example see my article **Time travel and the fascism of The WingMakers Project**.

The phrase “millions of people can’t all be wrong” is indicative of the common tendency to accept a communally reinforced idea without question, which often aid in the widespread acceptance of urban legends, myths, and rumors.

**The bandwagon effect**, closely related to opportunism, is a phenomenon - observed primarily within the fields of microeconomics, political science, and behaviorism – that people often do and believe things merely because many other people do and believe the same things. The effect is often called herd instinct, though strictly speaking, this effect is not a result of herd instinct. The bandwagon effect is the reason for the bandwagon’s fallacy.

As more people come to believe in something, others also “hop on the bandwagon” regardless of the underlying evidence.

The bandwagon effect occurs in voting: some people vote for those candidates or parties who are likely to succeed (or are proclaimed as such by the media), hoping to be on the “winner’s side” in the end.
In microeconomics, bandwagon effect describes interactions of demand and preference. The bandwagon effect arises when people’s preference for a commodity increases as the number of people buying it increases.

Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within groups of people. It is the mode of thinking that happens when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives. Group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative ideas or viewpoints.

The primary socially negative cost of groupthink is the loss of individual creativity, uniqueness, and independent thinking.

Groupthink is related to argumentum ad populum.

Other thought distortions, which hypnosis makes you vulnerable for, are sophistry, persuader words, rhetoric, ideology, magical thinking, priming effect, and so on (see my book A Dictionary of Thought distortions). I will go further into the problem of propaganda and ideology later in this article.

2) A dependence of the technique. Regardless whether you make use of psychotherapy, clairvoyance, healing, body therapy, regression, dreaminterpretation, chakras, then there will always be more. You can continue and continue, you almost become dependent of it like drugs or sex, because the actual magnet, which attract the whole of this area with its energy – the Ego - has not been realized. The Ego will with its evaluations create new problems, new content, new longings, new dreams - which again is in need of therapy, consultation etc., indefinitely. The spiritual development stops, it leaves the rails and ends up blind.

3) A spiritual crisis, where you for real are coming in contact with the energies and phenomena of the astral world’s collective history. A spiritual crisis can be expressed in two ways: A): as suffering, often called The Dark Night of the Soul, or B) as Ego-inflation (inflammatio). See my articles Spiritual Crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena, and The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

**Hypnosis as a tool for propaganda**

The astral world’s collective history manifests itself in a widely and indefinite area, for example could a broad spectrum of common human activities and organizations be called manifestations of the collective time: parties, state formations, wars, work
communities, concerts, clans, tribes and sects, mass psychological phenomena, religious parishioners, fashion streams, group souls. Such incalculable common human undertakings are manifestations of collective energy—or lifeprocesses, in which there are great powers in play in the form of collective astral images.

The problem is, in this connection, that the same astral energy, which can be used unselfish, also can be used turned stimulative into the Ego-structures, whereby the Ego can loose balance and expand to a super-Ego, or in another way be demonized. It is this, that happens in the spiritual crisis. You have gone out in the astral world’s collective history with your Ego; that is: spiritual seen you are not sufficiently awake on these areas.

The lesser realized transmission of energy and consciousness is therefore characterised by people, who admittedly have an opening to the astral world’s collective time, but not to its universal history. Such people are often not able to discriminate between the image and the reality, and therefore they relate absolutely to the relative. They have been caught by the power of magical thinking.

The same astral energy-process and function, which realized spiritual teachers use, can therefore be used for other purposes than spiritual. When the collective time’s astral energy-processes are used spiritual, then the Ego, in its egoistic isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside, and the energy is turned into the Now, and therefore in towards the Source and the spiritual dimension. The people, who around a spiritual teacher, constitute an energy-mandala, are in this way made transparent for a higher common human spirituality.

In the Ego-inflation the contact with, and the ability to manipulate with such collective forms of astral energy, will be used for other purposes than spiritual. It can be creative, Ego-affirmative, political, demonic and so on.

The powers that, by realized spiritual teachers, are given to others’ disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same powers can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures, and therewith into past and future. In this way there can be opened creative channels, created super Egos, created political leaders and popular seducers.

This is a demonical element. It is the same demonical element, which fascinated Milton, Romanticism, Baudelaire, etc. The Devil haunted in them, and around them, just like he haunted in figure of Prospero in Shakespeare’s The Tempest, as Mefistoteles in Goethe’s Faust, or as Conchis in John Fowles’ The Magus.
In acts of war exists the most clear demonical element. There is not so much to misunderstand. No, the misunderstandings take place in the actions, which lie ahead of the war, in which a lot of seduction-art, and therefore thought distortions, are active (as we have seen above). And the archetypical popular seducer is, as already suggested, of course Lucifer (in my article The philosophy of Karen Blixen I have investigated all this in depth).

Many gurus seem to have fallen into this temptation. In the story about the temptation in the desert, we can see these possible ways of using the energy pictured in anticipated form. Here you see the possibility of using the freedom and the power, to elevation of the Ego and the consequent power and material glory. But Jesus abstains from this deification of the Ego.

However, many false gurus have fallen for the temptation. And in the present time, where spirituality is blended with management theory - the belief in, that worship of success and winner-mentality, is the same as being in compliance with the universal laws - we will undoubtedly see an explosion of such super Egos – and experiences show, that the world will follow them (see my articles Management theory and the self-help industry, and The New Thought movement and The Law of Attraction).

New Thought has grown into thousands of little movements in the past 150 years. The Secret and What the Bleep Do We Know? are just two recent manifestations of what the critical thinker Robert Carroll calls a Hydra-headed monster guarding the gates of wishful thinking, suggestion and self-hypnosis. There have been many others. Some might remember Émile Coué´s optimistic mantra therapy. The application of his mantra-like conscious autosuggestion, “Every day, in every way, I´m getting better and better”, is an example of how he thought he could teach people how to heal themselves. There is also Maxwell Maltz´s Psycho-Cybernetics, which teaches people to set the goal of a positive outcome through self-affirmation and mental visualization of that positive outcome. In this he meant there was a connection between mind and body. Both are an example of how the self-help industry is trying to combine the ideals of being healthy, beautiful, a success, a winner, a perfect human being, with self-hypnosis.

But what happens, is that the believers close themselves in the positive; that is: what they think is positive: namely ideals of beauty, health, personal power, money, success, perfectionism etc.; shortly said: an ultimative expression of self-centredness. In this way they leave out the negative, which causes a lack of ability to realize, not only the meaning of suffering (which is closely connected with self-realization, heart and compassion – the only true healers), but also the laws of dualism. Their so-called exercises are about how to drive out, force out, repress, even ignore, the negative.
What these teachers don’t understand is, that as soon as your thoughts spread themselves too much out in an extreme, the energy-system in the wholeness compensates by seeking to bring itself back to the balance of the middle (like in the teaching of Yin and Yang). The system does this by seeking over towards the opposite extreme (for instance from perfectionism to feeling of fiasco). That is: through a contrabalancing, a compensation. The energy works as a pendulum. The more energy, which is invested in the one extreme of a pair of opposites, the larger the swing in the opposite direction becomes. This is also an example of a true healing power. That is: following these teachers can directly make you sick!

Hypnosis can create an illusoric state, where the conceptions of the roles for the participants in all of these beliefs and behaviors are learned and reinforced in their social settings, which have a quite particular worldview.

If you open yourself for the power of suggestion you close yourself to your spiritual source. This shows in four philosophical ways:

1) A rational where you take your assumptions, conceptions and values for absolute truths (hereunder subjectivism and relativism), and hereby end up in a contradiction between your thoughts and your lived life (spiritual teachers preaching simple life, and living a life in luxury; spiritual teachers, coaches, psychotherapists, etc. etc., who have taken a New Age education that doesn’t give any scientifical, philosophical and spiritual training; Nonviolent Communicators).

2) A life-philosophical, where you are circling around your own past and future (regression psychotherapies, past/future lifes therapy, clairvoyance, astrology, prophecy, channeling, etc.), and hereby create a closed attitude, inattention, absent-mindedness and ennui.

3) An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt (Hypnotherapy, Hypnosis, Personal development, Coaching, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), Large Group Awareness Training, Landmark forum).

4) A spiritual where you are identified with your lifesituation, are dependent on religious or political ideologies, and where you hereby exist on a future salvation (success coaching, Law of Attraction, New Age).
Conclusion

Hypnosis involves intentional manipulation of behavior (which doesn’t mean that the practitioners don’t have good intentions). As such, hypnotism belongs under the broader rubric of Sophistic "Persuasive Techniques," which work in order to shut down people’s critical faculties. The reason why they want to make people quit thinking critically is that they in this way can open them up to behavior modification, and often inducing in them a certain worldview as for example New Age occultism, Regression psychotherapy, or success coaching.

In The Matrix conspiracy as a whole (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy) - where the agents consider themselves as authorities on spirituality - there exists an enormous hate towards critical thinking (and therefore truth), and an intense work of getting people to quit thinking critically. It shows in the abusive way critical thinkers are attacked by using thought distortions such as Back Fire effect, Ad hominem move and Good intentions bias (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

As a part of this they use a vocabulary taken from their "techniques"; that is: concepts from therapeutic situations, which should not be applied to public discussions. Besides the fact, that psychologizing Ad hominem moves are irrelevant to what a critical thinker is saying, they are also impermissible, because they involve claiming that the critical thinker has psychological problems of some sort. It shows how psychotherapy today has become an ideology to many people, or, said in another way: that religion in many cases has been reduced to psychology (see my article Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology).

It also shows the pernicious consequence for standards of scholarship and intellectual responsibility, which are spreading more and more. The spread of this tendency keeps on surprising me, if not directly shocking me, because critical thinking is a central aspect in a true spiritual practice. Read more about this in my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings

Other articles where the misuse of hypnosis is explained in detail: The Devastating New Age Turn within Psychotherapy and Regression psychotherapies

Some critical comments on astrology
Astrology is the teaching about the influence, which the celestial bodies moon, sun, planets and stars are believed to have on the life on Earth, as well as the art of predicting the future through calculations of the mutual relations between the positions of the celestial bodies (a Horoscope).

As an advocate of a communicative view of Man and nature I am not in doubt about, that the parts within the wholeness are influencing each other. There are both ancient Chinese versions of astrology, as well as Tibetan versions, that I can see no reason to doubt the value of, when practised by a competent master. And the question about competence leads to my critique of astrology.

In its psychologized form, astrology is a type of New Age therapy used for self-understanding and personality analysis (astrotherapy); that is: a reductionism (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality, The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism and Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology).

The danger of this reductionism is the same as the danger of clairvoyance (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance). The word horoscope comes from the Greek words Hora, which means time, and Skopein, which means investigate, and in this also lies the danger; the danger of loosing yourself in time. Rather than helping clients to become stronger and more independent, it can induce in the client an addiction of responsibility and a state of sickly dependence on the astrologer.

The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that, in order to equalize old karma – (or to follow the correct way of his destiny; or in case of clairvoyance: of what the spirits/dead tells him to do, etc., etc.). This is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses (see my article What is karma?).

A good philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmatically talk and experiences of the experts and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Only Man himself can find the progressive karma. The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what astrologers may be able to see in the collective time, or fantasize about another person’s karmatically experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lives) – and which have a certain reality for either the astrologer or the client – are collective fantasies.
Nobody, and nothing, can tell you about your karmically structures. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans, astrologers etc. etc., (and tools, as for example horoscopes, personality maps, etc., etc.), - who are claiming they can help you karmically (with your destiny), are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmically course and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that´s the same with all spiritual.

The genuine karmically structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correct, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, birth, the past, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost.

In all briefness you can say, that genuine spiritual counseling tries to guide people, 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 you are lost in them, to lead you back on the right track.

Just an example of how you can be fooled by astrology and horoscopes: My professor in philosophy David Favrholdt once conducted an experiment with a large group of students. They were told that the experiment was about astrology, and that they each should have made a personal horoscope. The horoscope for each student was then made by a professional astrologer, and when they received the horoscope they were told to describe how precise it was. They all answered, that they were amazed how accurate the horoscope could tell about aspects of precisely their personal life. What they wasn´t told was that the horoscope for each student was the same, made after some typical astrological stereotypes.

The experiment told about the power of wishful thinking and other thought distortions (there has been conducted many such experiments, also in other areas than astrology, for example with clairvoyance). Especially the thought distortion subjective validation was active here. Subjective validation is active when people will validate a set of statements allegedly about themselves as highly accurate even if these statements not are accurate. This tendency to find personal meaning and significance in statements not based on personal knowledge extends to words,
symbols, initials, and objects as well (see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

**Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice**

An aspect of the decline of psychology (the new age turn within psychology) is personality typing. There exists several different kinds, and there are still coming more. Each new number of a New Age magazine with respect for itself, must include at least one new “revolutionary” theory of personality types, in the same way as it must present at least one new “revolutionary” spiritual theory “proved” by quantum physics (see my article *Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality*).

Both in New Age, and in coaching (Management theory), which claims to be purely neutral and scientific, the so-called Enneagram is very popular. It is a New Age mandala, a mystical gateway to personality typing, and through this to spiritual consciousness and fuller being. The enneagram represents nine personality types. It is original developed by Oscar Ichazo (b. 1931), who claims to have received it in a vision (see my article *Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling*).

Later the enneagram has turned up in several new versions, funny enough often developed by people, who also claim to have received it in divine visions. So how the types are defined depends on whom you ask. The classification systems seem to have been modified according to the inventors’ own idiosyncratic beliefs. Often they do it in relation to astrology.

Such theories of personality types can point to many “successes.” They can demonstrate that their programs “work”. They can bring forth to testify on their behalf hundreds, if not thousands, of satisfied customers. But it is important to know, that testimonials do not validate a self-help program. Scientifical seen this is pure nonsense, and deeply manipulative. All talk about that testimonials are a proof, is a sign of pseudoscience (see my article *The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism*).

When looking at testimonials one must always consider the power of thought distortions such as, for example, *Subjective validation, Selective thinking, Confirmation bias, Motivated reasoning, Classical conditioning and placebo effects, Proof by ignorance*, etc., etc.
We will end this article with an examination of Subjective validation.

Personality typing is a typical reductionistic view of human nature. Surely – many are the people, who become seduced by the reductionisms. Maybe not so strange after all: all reductionisms imply a simplification, a manageable solution to all problems, a key, which saves the supporters for having to think fundamentally over the philosophical questions – which after all only a few are capable to. But the human nature is far too complex to be characterized in this way (see my article *The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind*).

A personality typing theory categorizes people in different psychological types. Such theories of psychological types are comparatively easy to invent, and earn money on, and they are certainly harmful because they involve all the problems of what I call *The Hermeneutics of Supicion* (see my article *The Hermeneutics of suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing*).

There is no evidence for such type-theories at all. How do we test these kinds of claims? We cant. The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has referred to the “hermeneutics of suspicion” encouraged by writers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. What people think, and the reasons they produce, may not be the real reasons at work. It then becomes easy to become suspicious of the motives of everyone, whether as the representative of an economic class, or the purveyor of a morality, or just as an individual with psychological problems to solve.

And when a therapist's or a coach - as it is the case most of the time - is lacking the ability of thinking deeper over things, then it ends in being a refined way of justifying prejudice. Personality typing is simply a way of creating a refined system of prejudice. And that is anti-scientific, anti-philosophical and anti-spiritual. Among many other thought distortions it involves the thought distortion called *Representativeness bias*. Many of our judgments involve classifying or categorizing individual persons or things. The Representativeness bias manifests itself when we take a few traits or characteristics of someone or something and fit them to a stereotype or model (again: see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

Prejudice is a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. Philosophy - that is: rationality and critical thinking – is opposed to prejudice. And true spirituality is philosophy. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question.

Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to some beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (for instance wishful thinking);
however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.

But theories of personality typing do the opposite. They try to remove rationality and critical thinking through the hermeneutic of suspicion. And they have success. A whole time-tendency within school, folk high school, universities and continuing education, focus on so-called ”personal development and self-help”, which are inspired by them.

The removal of genuine rationality from the stage leaves open the possibility of accusations of rationalizations for ulterior motives. This form of analysis (leading us to think of groups or individuals “what is in it for them?”), is not only corrosive of trust in society. It is bound eventually to undermine itself. Why are such views themselves being propagated? What are those spreading them going to gain?

Personality typing systems often make grandiose claims about that they are easy ways to get to know thyself, think for yourself and thereby be yourself. Actually the direct opposite happens if you in fact use them. You will end up in an existence-philosophical problem, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive after being something else than what you are (your type according to the system), where you imitate others (the types), are a slave of others’ ideas and ideals (the personality typing system), and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.

Everytime you have a personal problem you will begin to think in the ways the personality typing system has taught you to think, and you will begin to consider if you ought to get help (use money) from a consultant in precisely this system.

Notice that the new New Age typology system, The Human Design System, actually claims that statistical studies of various populations show the system to be reliable in grouping people according to four different basic types (see my article A critique of The Human Design System). Have The Human Design System not learned anything by studying the catastrophic human consequences of the Indian caste system, which precisely is about grouping people according to four different basic types?

Personality typing systems are also seen in for example Theosophy and the integral method of Ken Wilber (see my articles The fascism of Theosophy and A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method)

It is very important to understand that personality typing (an a variety of other New Age techniques and therapies, such as Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), Nonviolent Communication, Law of Attraction, Hypnotherapy, Astrology,
Clairvoyance, Channeling, Human Design System, The Work, different healing methods, etc., etc.) can’t be understood, succeed, or work, without understanding the thought distortion called *subjective validation*. In other words: the effect will not go beyond the effects of subjective validation.

Subjective validation is active when people will validate a set of statements allegedly about themselves as highly accurate even if these statements *not* are accurate.

Personality typing - as most other New Age techniques - are dependent of that subjective validation is active in the client, or else it won’t work. Personality typing and subjective validation are two sides of the same coin. The role of subjective validation in the client is also the reason for why that there never has been, or ever will come, a successful scientific validation of personality typing.

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance**

Clairvoyance is a kind of para-psychic opening, that gives a visual, auditory or emotive knowledge about a past and a future, which lies outside your own personality. Clairvoyants, or psychics, can perform as mediums/channelers for the dead, for spirits or gods – or they can perform so-called “readings.”

Clairvoyance is also known in connection with astral travel or astral projection (out-of-body experiences). This can for example happen when a medium allows a dead person, or a spirit of some kind, to possess her body, and use it as a channel.

The problem with the alternative environment within the New Age movement is that the normal inaccessible areas of the astral plane´s collective history, which in principle lie outside the area of the Ego-consciousness, are open for all sorts of fantasies.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmacially experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to look into the astral plane´s collective history, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore they basically do not know what they are doing. They are lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no
longer are woods. There is in this area of the collective time and its images, with all its experts and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecise guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation.

In my article **Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice**, you can read about, that 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 (also read my article **Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality** about the incompetence of New Age teachers).

There are especially two philosophical/spiritual principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enormous, and growing market:

1) The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that in order to equalize old karma, or because it is his “destiny”. He is being told that he is going to meet certain people, are being told about other people, etc., etc. All this is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses (read more about karma in my article **What is karma?**).

Precisely like philosophy of existence the spiritual traditions say that you in your opinion formation and identity formation must be yourself, live in compliance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

If you follow clairvoyants´ advices the direct opposite happens: In your opinion formation and identity formation you will strive after becoming something else than what you are, you will imitate (model) others, be a slave of others´ ideas and ideals, and your actions will be characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. Instead of equalizing old karma (compensatory karma is what normally is understood as karma, or negative karma) they will create new compensatory karma.

2) Another philosophical/spiritual principle is to examine, whether the karmacially talk and experiences of the experts and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, regression, clairvoyance, past (or future) lifes therapy, astrology, prophecy, shamanism. None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. And if they use the karma idea (the idea of a person´s spiritual destiny) in that way, it is no longer a spiritual help, it
is a collective displacement of the focus backwards or forwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

Only Man himself can find what is called *progressive* karma (his *spiritual* destiny; the dreamtracks and songlines in his spiritual journey; the map that shows his way to enlightenment). The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what clairvoyants may be able to see in the astral plane’s collective history, or fantasize about another person’s karmatically experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lifes) – and which have a certain reality for either the clairvoyant or the client – are collective fantasies.

Collective fantasies have two aspects. The one aspect of the fantasies is a kind of archetypical, mythologically symbolizings of more personally, unclarified matter (for example thought distortions - see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*). The second aspect of the fantasies is relatively valid information about incidents, for example in other centuries. The misguiding happens because the two aspects are blended together. The clairvoyant, or the client himself, can remember, that he has lived in a past incarnation (often very romantic, for example as a pharaoh), and he can even travel to the places, where he had been incarnated and find things which "proves" his assertion. There has been made many examinations of things of that kind. But regardless how fascinating it is, then it proves nothing about past lifes. And therefore it is deceptive and dangerous to occupy oneself with.

Nobody can tell you about your karmially structures. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmacial (with your destiny), are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive. They are, if they actually have paranormal abilities, most often caught in some kind of ego-inflation; that is: a spiritual crisis (see my articles *The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment*, and *Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena*).

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmially course (a person’s life-history, destiny) and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that’s the same with all spiritual.

The genuine karmially structures (progressive karma, the spiritual destiny) do not lie in the astral plane’s collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea (the idea of a person’s spiritual destiny) is used spiritual seen correct, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, the past, the dead, spirits, a guru, birth, the future), will be
present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost. It is your awareness in the now that will find the progressive karma, and this awareness you can of course only practise yourself (see my article *Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences*).

In all briefness you can say, that genuine spiritual counseling tries to guide people, who wish to learn, to go round the states, which have to do with the astral plane´s collective time, or at least, to shorten the passage through these areas. And if you are lost in them, to lead you back on the right track.

In my book *Dream Yoga* you can go in depth with the concept of karma in the article *A Map of The Spiritual Journey*

**Appendix: Cold reading**

Cold reading refers to a set of techniques used by professional manipulators to get a subject to behave in a certain way - salespersons, hypnotists, advertising pros, faith healers, con men, some therapists, etc. - or to think that the cold reader has some sort of special ability that allows her to “mysteriously” know things about the subject.

Though cold reading is described as a technique, and though the following might make it sound like a very difficult technique, cold reading is most often used in the same way as other thought distortions, completely unconscious, as a way of getting on in the world. Some educations in clairvoyance might just make you a bit more skilled in this.

Not all cold reading are done by malicious manipulators. Some readings are done by astrologers, graphologists, tarot readers, New Age healers, and people who genuinely believe they have paranormal powers. They are as impressed by their correct predictions or “insights” as are their clients and patients. They have good intentions, but you should be careful not to be caught up by the thought distortion called *Good intentions bias!* Cold reading can be learned by anyone, clairvoyant or not. Just look at how Derren Brown numerous times has shown how easy it is to fool people by using cold reading.

There are many people who promote themselves as *clairvoyants* or *psychics*, and who claim that their *powers* enable them to *read* your character, make contact with dead relatives, or provide insights into your life, your past or your future (we have already looked at how anti-spiri tual this is, and therefore unethical).
It is very important to understand, that cold reading can’t be understood, nor succeed, without understanding another thought distortion, namely Subjective validation. In other words: the effects of cold reading will not go beyond the effects of subjective validation.

Subjective validation is active when people will validate a set of statements allegedly about themselves as highly accurate even if these statements not are accurate.

This tendency to find personal meaning and significance in statements not based on personal knowledge extends to words, symbols, initials, and objects as well.

Some of the statements or other items we find personally meaningful – even when they’re not – seem meaningful because of our desires (see the chapter The Life Artist as a Desirous Being in my book A Portrait of Lifeartist).

One reason for that people rate impersonal statements as highly significant to them – even when they’re not - is because they’re gullible. People tend to accept claims about themselves in proportion to their desire that the claims be true rather than in proportion to the accuracy of the claims as measured by some non-subjective standard. We tend to accept questionable, even false, statements about ourselves if we deem them positive or flattering enough.

Being gullible and prone to wishful thinking may partially explain the tendency to subjective validation. Another key element is selective thinking, the tendency to focus on and remember evidence that supports one’s beliefs, while ignoring or forgetting the evidence that conflicts with one’s beliefs. Some of the statements in the drugstore astrology reading may be false for you, but you ignore, downplay, or forget those statements when making your overall assessment of accuracy. Subjects who seek counseling from psychics, mediums, fortune tellers, mind readers, graphologists, etc., will often ignore false or questionable claims and, in many cases, by their own words or actions provide most of the information they erroneously attribute to such counselors (the explanation of why cold reading works). Many subjects will often believe that information they provided the counselor was profound and personal information that the counselor couldn’t possible have known.

Another important element in subjective validation is the natural human tendency to find meaning and significance. We will often give very liberal interpretations to vague, ambiguous, or inconsistent claims about ourselves in order to make sense out of the claims. In fact, we will often work hard to figure out some significance or meaning for statements that aren’t even about us when told that they’re somehow important. Mentalists and unscrupulous people claiming to be psychic take advantage of our desire to find meaning everywhere.
There is at least one more key to understanding subjective validation: motivation. Many people seek fortune tellers of all sorts or psychic mediums because they desperately desire to have someone tell them what lies in store for them or they desperately wish to make contact with a dead love one. The sitter must be willing to validate. The stronger the desire to make contact, the harder the sitter will work to find meaning and connections in the medium´s items.

There may also be another mechanism at work here: the desire to please the medium. This may be due partly to the consideration that by pleasing the medium, the odds increase that the medium will make contact. But it may also have to do with a strange phenomenon that occurs in settings where a person gives up control of the situation to another, as in hypnosis or when being asked to assist a magician do a trick (see my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception). There is sometimes a kind of loss of self in those situations, and combined with a desire to please, a kind of submission to the will of another, up to a point. If such a mechanism is at work in psychic readings, the sitter may acquiesce to the suggestions or items thrown out by the medium, not because they are true or truly significant, but out of a desire to please (also see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling).

When the motivation of the sitter is high enough it might lead her to validate false or ambiguous statements.

Also the thought distortion Clustering illusion can be a key to understanding subjective validation: the intuition that random events, statements, or items, which occur in clusters are not really random events, statements, or items.

Finally, the drive to find personal meaning or significance in impersonal or insignificant coincidences may be related to the powerful natural drive to create stories, narratives that string together bits and pieces of information into a tale. Of course truth matters much of the time, but many of our narratives satisfy us regardless of their accuracy. This tendency to connect things and create plausible narratives out of partially fictitious items is a thought distortion called Confabulation. About thought distortions, see my book A dictionary of thought distortions.

So, it is subjective validation that constitutes the delusional about cold reading. But it also explains why clairvoyance not necessarily is based on guessing games, nor on trickery, such as chatting up the audience members before a performance and gather information about them; having accomplices in the audience; having detective work done on the sitter, for example through the internet; having an accomplice who chats you up, listens in on your conversations while you are waiting for the reading to begin, or who collects written information from you that is later used in the performance.
Cold reading - and most other New Age techniques, as for example astrology and personality typing - is dependent of, that subjective validation is active in the client, or else it won´t work. Cold reading and subjective validation are two sides of the same coin. Cold reading is therefore also dependent on, that all kind of critical thinking is eliminated. The role of subjective validation in cold reading is the reason for, that there has never been a successful demonstration of these “powers” in a laboratory, under properly controlled conditions, or that no clairvoyant ever has been able to take James Randi´s The One Million Dollar Paranormal Challenge. James Randi is an American stage magician and scientific skeptic. His challenge is offering a prize of US$ 1,000,000 to eligible applicants who can demonstrate evidence of any paranormal, supernatural or occult power or event under test conditions agreed to by both parties.

By far the most common method employed by clairvoyants – no matter whether they have paranormal abilities or not – is cold reading. This method involves the clairvoyant reading the client´s body language etc., and skilfully extracting information from the subject, which can then be fed back later, convincing the client that the clairvoyants have told them things they couldn´t possibly have known!

The following is 13 points to understand cold reading (inspired by Ray Hyman´s Guide to Cold Reading):

1) *The key ingredient for a successful character reading is the reader´s confidence*

If the reader looks and acts as if she believes in what she is doing, she will, because of subjective validation, be able to sell even a bad reading to most subjects. One danger of playing the role of reader is that the reader may actually begin to believe that she really is divining her subject´s true character. She is then caught in ego-inflation (see my article *The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment*).

2) *Many cold readers make creative use of the latest statistical abstracts, polls and surveys*

These can provide the reader with much information about what various subclasses in our society believe, do, want, worry about etc. For example, if the reader can ascertain a subject´s place or origin, educational level, and his/her parents´ religion and vocations, the reader has gained information which should allow her to predict with high probability his/her voting preferences and attitudes to many subjects.

Most of the time readers also utilize known principles of psychology that apply to nearly everyone; or simply: they use generalities.
3) The reader will set the stage for her reading

The reader will profess a modesty about her talents. She makes no excessive claims. She will then catch her subject off guard. She isn’t challenging them to a battle of wits – she can read his/her character, whether he/she believes her or not.

4) The reader will gain the subject’s cooperation in advance

The reader will emphasize that the success of the reading depends as much on the subject’s cooperation as on her efforts. After all, the reader implies she already has a successful career at character reading (the thought distortion Truth by authority is central here). The reader is not on trial, but her subject is!

The reader will state that due to difficulties of language and communication, she may not always convey the meaning she intends. In these cases, the subject must strive to fit the reading to his/her own life. The reader accomplishes two valuable ends with this dodge – Firstly, she has an alibi in case the reading doesn’t click: it is the subject’s fault, not her! Secondly, her subject will, again because of subjective validation, strive to fit the reader’s generalities to his/her specific life circumstances. Later, when the subject recalls the reading, the reader will be credited with much more detail than she actually provided! This is crucial. Her reading will only succeed to the degree that the subject is made an active participant in the reading, and therefore that subjective validation is active in the subject.

The good reader is the one who, deliberately or unwittingly, forces the subject to search his/her mind to make sense of her statements

5) Some readers use gimmicks, such as Tarot cards, crystal ball, palm reading etc.

Use of props serves two valuable purposes. Firstly, it lends atmosphere to the reading. Secondly, (and more importantly) it gives the reader time to formulate her next question/statement. Instead of just sitting there, thinking of something to say, she can be intently studying the cards/crystal ball etc. She may opt to hold hands with her subject – This helps her feel the subject’s reactions to her statements. If she is using, say, palmistry (the reading of hands) it helps if she has studied some manuals, and have learned the terminology. This will allow her to more quickly zero in on her subject’s chief concerns – “do you wish to concentrate on the heart line or the wealth line?”

6) The reader will have a list of stock phrases at the tip of her tongue
Even during a cold reading, a liberal sprinkling of stock phrases will add body to the reading and will help the reader fill in time while she formulates more precise characterisations. The reader uses them to start her readings. Palmistry, tarot and other fortune telling manuals are a key source of good phrases.

7) The reader keeps her eyes open!

The reader will size the subject up by observing his/her clothes, jewellery, mannerisms and speech. Even a crude classification based on these can provide the basis for a good reading. The reader will also watch carefully for her subject’s response to her statements, and notice when she is hitting the mark!

8) The reader will use the technique of fishing

This is simply a technique to get the subject to tell the reader about his/herself. Then the reader will rephrase what she has been told and feed it back to the subject.

One way of fishing is that the reader says something at once vague and suggestive – (notice that readers never say anything directly – they are always fishing!) – e.g., “I’m getting a strong feeling about....” (something). The reader will have committed to memory such things as the most common male and female names and a list of items likely to be lying about the house such as an old calender, a photo album, newspaper clippings, and so on. The reader also works on certain themes that are likely to resonate with most people who consult clairvoyants: love, money, career, health, and travel.

If the subject responds, positively or negatively, the reader’s next move is to play off the response. If the response is positive then the reader will say something like: “Yes, I can see that,” anything to reinforce the idea that she was more precise than she actually was.

If the subject gives a negative response the reader might reply: “Yes, I see that you’ve suppressed a memory about it. You don’t want to be reminded about it. Something painful. Yes, I feel it, it is in the lower back (fishing)...oh, now its in the heart (fishing)...umm, there seems to be a sharp pain in the head (fishing)...or the neck (fishing).”

If the subject gives no response, the reader will leave the area, having firmly implanted in everybody’s mind that the reader really did “see” something but the subject’s suppression of the event hinders both the reader and the subject from realizing the specifics of it. If the subject gives a positive response to any of the
fishing expeditions, the reader will follow up with more of “I see that very clearly, now. Yes, the feeling in the heart is getting stronger.”

Another way of fishing is that the reader is phrasing each statement as a question, and then waiting for reply. For example: “I sense that you have a strong feeling for...(someone/something)...am I right?” If the reply or reaction is positive, then the reader will turn the statement into a positive assertion, etc. Often the subject will respond by answering the implied question and then some. Later, the subject will forget that he/she was the source of the information – this is called “source amnesia” (forgetting the source of information) and is a very common occurrence – especially when enforced by subjective evaluation. By making her statements into questions, the reader also forces the subject to search his/her memory to retrieve specific instances to fit the reader’s general statement.

9) A reader is a good listener

During the course of a reading the clairvoyant’s client will be bursting to talk about incidents that are brought up. The good reader allows the client to talk at will. Afterwards the clients often will praise the reader for having astutely told them what in fact they had spoken themselves. Another value of listening is that most clients that seek the services of a reader actually want someone to listen to their problems. In addition, many clients have already made up their minds about what choices they are going to make. They merely want support to carry out their decision.

10) The reader will dramatise her reading

The reader will give back what little information she does have or pick up a little bit at a time. She will make it seem more than it is. She will build word pictures around each divulgence, and she will not be afraid of hamming it up.

11) The reader always gives the impression that she knows more than she is saying

The successful reader, like the family doctor, always acts as if she knows much more. Once she has persuaded the subject that she knows one item of information that she couldn’t possible have known (through normal channels) the subject will assume that she knows all! At this point, the subject will open up and confide in her.

12) A reader is not afraid to flatter her subject at every opportunity

An occasional subject will protest, but will still lap it up. In such cases, the reader can add: “You are always suspicious of those who flatter you. You just can’t believe that someone will say something good about you without an ulterior motive”.

13) *The reader will always tell the subject what he/she wants to hear!*

**Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling**

Channeling is a process whereby an individual (the ”channeler”) claims to have been invaded by a spirit entity, which speaks through the channeler. It is claimed to be the ability to make contact with divine creatures and levels of consciousness, which is thought to possess informations of spiritual value for people, and through the body mediate communication from these levels.

The phenomenon plays a great role within the New Age environment.

Channeling is grown out of the 19th century spiritualistic and occult environments, where special so-called ”mediums” received messages from for instance dead relatives and passed on these to a circle of people at special ”séances”. In this early ”channeling” the ability to be ”medium” were perceived as exclusive and something, which not all were able to.

The modern channeling-phenomenon, where you no longer speak of ”medium”, but of ”the channel” (that is to say: the one who channels), has roots in Theosophy, and its conceptions of The Great White Brotherhood, a hierarchy of spiritual masters (see my article *The fascism of Theosophy*).

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who is one of the founders of Theosophical Society, became in New York in 1873 precisely involved in the American spiritualist movement, where she established herself as medium and started to give séances. After the foundation of Theosophical Society in 1875 she started her first book, ”Isis Unveiled”, which was published in 1877. The year after she and Harry Steel Olcott moved to India, where Blavatsky started to receive ”messages” from so-called Mahatmas, spiritual masters.

After that Richard Hodgson, in his 1885 report to the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), concluded that Blavatsky was a fraud, and didn’t receive the claimed messages, but invented them herself, she moved to London, where she tried to recover after the scandal. The report has later been questioned though. In London Blavatsky began her life as an author.

Influenced by the works of Madame Blavatsky, another theosophist, Alice Bailey, described the majority of her own works as having been telepathically dictated to her
by a “master of the Wisdom”, initially referred to only as “the Tibetan”, or by the initials “D.K.”, later identified as Djwal Khul.

The theosophical influenced UFO religions are an expression of the modern making use of channeling with for instance messages from space gods and galactic masters.

Within the New Age environment channeling today plays a still greater role as one of the many rituals, and, contrary to the early spiritualistic forerunners, channeling is considered as an indwelling ability which all people can learn if they open their spiritual consciousness. In this way there is held courses and educations in channeling. It is therefore the same Consumer Capitalistic spirituality, where you can buy yourself to spiritual authority, which also is seen in all kinds of other connections within the New Age environment (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality, and Management theory and the self-help industry).

There are in that way many non-enlightened New Age teachers today – (they might very well have strange paranormal abilities, it doesn’t matter in this question) – who get authority by claiming, that their teaching, either is coming from a state of enlightenment, is being channeled from some kind of divine source, or are coming from clairvoyant abilities.

If such teachers put their teaching forward in this way, you can be hundred percent sure, that this teacher has a problem with ego-inflation - if he is not directly a fraud - and them there are thousands of within New Age (see my articles The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment, and Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena) Why? Because no real enlightened master, or sober spiritual teacher, would argue in this way. True enlightened masters, or sober spiritual teachers, speak from their own source, and are always characterized by humility. Just look at Dalai Lama, who incessantly claims, that he hasn’t reached the full Rigpa, and that he is just a beginner. True enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, are also always philosophers, who are giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions.

Beside the already above-mentioned links, there are especially four problems with channeling:

1) The thought distortion called Truth by authority

2) Nobody can tell other people about their karma

3) Pseudohistory
4) Who are the non-physical entities channelers claim to be channeling?

1) Truth by authority

As already mentioned: Truth by Authority is about taking statements to be true simply because an alleged authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities, etc.) on the matter has said/justified that they are true. A level of critical thinking is always appropriate, because the statement may be based on magical thinking, false premises, faulty reasoning, wishful thinking or vested interests.

People, who in their arguments/teachings, again and again, have to defer to some authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities) in order to justify their arguments/teachings, are hundred procent on the wrong track, even if they should have some paranormal abilities. It is interesting to see that true enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, never do this. And interesting, that probably most of the many people, who have made a business of being clairvoyant/ mediums/channelers etc., will fall for Truth by Authority.

2) Nobody can tell other people about their karma

Nobody can, spiritual seen, tell you about your karmacially structures, or your spiritual evolution. All people, models or techniques - clairvoyants, channelers, regression therapists, shamans, Theosophy, Astrologers, prophets etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmacially – that is: with your spiritual growth - are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

The genuine karmacially structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, a guru, birth, the future, Theosophy), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost (read more about karma in my article What is karma?).

So the universal images are lying as a kind of dream-tracks and song-lines in your actual life here and now. Only here and now they can be discovered. Only Man himself can find the progressive karma (explanation follows). The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what people through a system may be able to think about the collective time, or fantasize about karmacially experiences and spiritual evolution. Many of these experiences (for example about past lifes, the past and
future events/necessary actions) – and which have a certain reality for either the clairvoyant or the channeler – are collective fantasies (more about this below).

3) Pseudohistory

Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of isn´t history at all.

Pseudohistory should also be distinguished from historical fiction and fantasy. Anyone who cites a work of historical fiction as if it were a historical text is a practicing pseudohistorian. There are also writers of historical fiction who intentionally falsify and invent ancient history. A technique to do this is to claim to find an ancient document and publishing it in order to express one´s own ideas. An example is The Celestine Prophecy, and The WingMakers Project (see my article Time travel and the fascism of The WingMakers Project).

A variation on this theme is to claim that one is channeling a book from some ancient being, e.g. The Urantia Book and Bringers of the Dawn.

Also A Course in Miracles should be mentioned. A Course in Miracles is the name of a book, allegedly dictated by Jesus to Helen Schucman (1909-1981), a research psychologist. The book explains what Jesus really had in mind when he came to save the world. The popularity of Schucman´s book gives testament to the attractiveness of New Thought´s revisionist biography of Jesus as wanting more love and forgiveness (positivity), and less suffering and sacrifice (negativity). 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. So, the Christian terminology employed in the book 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 (see my articles The New Thought movement and the law of attraction and Suffering as an entrance into the source).

4) Who are the non-physical entities channelers claim to be channeling?

First of all: no unenlightened person can directly channel an enlightened consciousness/being. This would mean that either the channeler was enlightened - and therefore not in need of channeling anything - or that the channeler was very
close to enlightenment and therefore experienced genuine mystical experiences. In both cases none of the 4 problems would occur.

In order to explain who the non-physical entities are - which channelers claim to channel - I will try to characterize a particular area of the polar relationship of some collective energy-processes, where informations from the Source (the divine energy-source, the otherness – God, whatever you might call it), through individual persons, are transformed via the mandala-structures of the universal images, down through the polarized structures of the collective images, to the personal images.

In other words: the phenomenon which often is called energy- and consciousness-transmission. In my article A critique of the Indian Oneness Movement and its use of Western success coaching I have shown the false use of this ability; that is: the use of what they in Indian philosophy call Deeksha, Shaktipat, etc. The same is namely the case in relation to channeling.

The images in the universal time include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures, which work in synchronism with the Now. They therefore function synthesizing and healing. The images in the collective and personal time eliminate these polar partners, and therefore they work separating in polar tensions. Furthermore they work in sequences in past and future.

Images in the collective time are therefore a dangerous intermediate area between the universal and personal time. The collective time lies on a so-called astral plane, and its degree of fascination is known from fairy-tales, myths, archetypes, primordial images, dreams.

When individual persons have an opening to the collective time their creativity, and their reality-creating ability, are set free in fascinating degree. Experiences from here are experiences such as kundalini, clairvoyance, astral travels, mythological visions, miracles, channeling, UFOs, memories from past lifes, Near-death experiences, possession states.

However you are, in this astral state, still on the plane of the collective images of time which work in sequences in past and future, and you are in danger ending up in a spiritual crisis. A spiritual crisis is an expression of, that you have gone out in the collective time with your Ego, without having done the philosophical preliminary work; that is to say: the realization-work and the ethical training. The Ego will then make you loose your way in the collective time. This can happen in two ways: either as suffering (often called The Dark Night of The Soul), or as Ego-inflation.
Around ethical highly placed spiritual teachers (both physical and non-physical) there seem to be formed existential mandala-structures, which, as great energy-whirls, canalize highly growth-advancing energy and consciousness-waves from the Source (the Now, life itself). These mandala-structures necessarily have to arrange themselves after the collective images’ polarization-patterns in past and future, whereby the lines are formed which the energy and the transmissions can follow into the personal images, which after all also only work in past and future.

These energy-mandalas are in religious art archetypical portrayed in for example the classical configurations around Christ (the four evangelists and their symbolical power) and Buddha (the Dyani-Buddhas with their esoterical figures). Such mandala-fields are constelled concretely among the students (or highly developed channelers), who relate to such a teacher (physical or non-physical). And in these fields, constituted by human beings, the Source manifests itself concretely-existential.

When an individual person has a realized access to the collective time´s area of energy, we have to do with a spiritual teacher of one or the other kind. The realized transmission of energy and consciousness will always be characterised by a spiritual teacher who not only has realized the collective time´s astral worlds, but in addition to this also the universal time, and therefore truth and reality (which means that he or she is an enlightened master). This teacher is therefore able to discriminate between the image and the reality, and therefore able to relate relatively to the relative and absolutely to the absolute (what critical thinking is all about – see my book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions). The collective forms of energy are here used for spiritual purposes (where the energy is turned towards the Now, and therefore the Source and the essence).

Such teachers function as energy-distributers and energy-spreaders to individual persons, who are students and disciples of this teacher, a kind of transformation-phenomenon where the individual persons are liftet into the spiritual dimension with its universal images, insights and experiences of love.

To teach spiritual consists after all in, among other things, in passing on energy (love, information, healing, direct transmission of spiritual consciousness). Only an enlightened master can do this.

The passed on energy from the spiritual dimension is from the medium of an enlightened master (physical or non-physical) spreading itself like waves out towards those who are open, and those, who can learn and receive. In order to be able to reproduce itself in the personal images, which only work in past and future, this wavevibration-process goes through the mandala-structures of the universal images,
which work in synchronism with the Now (the spiritual dimension), to the polar tension-tracks in the collective images which work in past and future. The waves have to be able to travel. The energy has to be able to spread itself from higher levels, via the teacher, and out to those who can grow in this field.

Around such a teacher there in other words arises an universal image, a kind of mandala-structure, created by the teacher and the students around him (when we talk about a physical teacher). The same happens when we talk about a non-physical teacher and high developed channelers.

Most known is as mentioned Jesus and his disciples, or Buddha and his disciples. But it can also happen in a monastery, for example around Francis of Assisi, Hildegard von Bingen, or around Socrates and his students.

In such a group-energetical mandala-structure in the Now the polar relationship in the collective time is organized in such a way, that energy can be send and received, arise and travel like rings in water.

The same energy, which can be used unselfish, can namely also be used turned stimulative into the Ego-structures, whereby the Ego can loose balance and expand to a super-Ego, or in another way be demonized. It is this that happens in the spiritual crisis. You have gone out in the collective time with your Ego.

The lesser realized transmission of energy and consciousness is therefore characterised by people, who admittedly have an opening to the collective time, but not to the universal time. Such people are often not able to discriminate between the image and the reality, and therefore they relate absolutely to the relative. They are caught in magical thinking.

In Out of Africa Karen Blixen somewhere describes the magic of the words. The natives named for instance an European after an animal, and a human being, who through many years, by all his surroundings, has been named with one animal-name, finally happens to feel himself related with the animal he is named after; he recognizes himself in this animal.

In the natives´ ability to create myths they don´t discriminate between the word and the thing, the name and the named. The white men are really, in the eyes of the natives, both humans and animals. In the same way with their linkage of spirits and machines.
Karen Blixen tells about how the natives, because of this mythical “gift”, can put experiences on humans which they can’t defend themselves against, and not get out of. They can make humans into symbols. She is telling that it is a kind of magic which is used on you, and that you later never completely can disentangle from it. It can be a painful, heavy fate to be exposed as one or the other symbol.

But also in the Western civilizations we become exposed for such a magic. It is not something which we have come over. Now it is happening through one or the other kind of religious or political propaganda - and in particular through the media storm which transforms humans into consumers. ”You are what you eat!”

It is also this magic George Orwell describes in his novel 1984, with the language called NewSpeak; a language created by the rulers in order to control thinking. We all know it more or less. If you, by your surroundings, constantly are being induced some kind of image, you will in the end begin to believe in it, even if it is not true. Especially in family relations we see how family members are being induced roles which are incredible difficult to disentangle from, because family relations also have with love to do.

All this is magical thinking, and there are a lot of thought distortions built into it, for example the thought distortion Arbitrary inference which means that you make a causal linking of factors which is accidental or misleading (see my book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions). The main reason for the rise of magical thinking is that you don´t discriminate between image and reality, the map and the landscape.

True spirituality is about discriminating between language and reality. Discrimination is a central virtue in critical thinking. The Dominican mystics call this step Discriminatio, the ability to discriminate between how the energy is used temporal or religious. And despite that magical thinking actually can create something magical, then in true spirituality it is still something temporal, or relatively (black magic/occultism), which will create negative karma if practised (in my article on New Thought I have explained how this movement is a direct teaching of black magic – see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

The Orientals call the ability of discrimination viveka, discrimination, the ability to use your will on that part of the energy, you can steer yourself, and steer it towards exercises, prayer, mantras, meditation, instead of towards career, worldliness, self-unfolding, as the New Thought movement teaches it (read for example the Indian philosopher Shankara´s book The Crown-juvel of discrimination).
The same energy-process and function, which realized spiritual teachers use, can therefore be used for other purposes than spiritual. When the collective time’s energy-processes are used spiritual, then the Ego, in its egoistic isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside, and the energy is turned into the Now, and therefore in towards the Source and the spiritual dimension. The people who around a spiritual teacher constitute the energy-mandala are in this way made transparent for a higher common human spirituality.

In the Ego-inflation the contact with, and the ability to manipulate with such collective forms of energy, will be used for other purposes than spiritual. It can be creative, Ego affirmative, political, demonical and so on.

The powers that by realized spiritual teachers are given to others’ disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same powers can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures, and therewith into past and future. In this way there can be opened creative channels, created super Egos, created political leaders and popular seducers.

This is a demonic element.

Many gurus seem to have fallen into this temptation. In the story about the temptation in the desert we can see these possible ways of using the energy pictured in anticipated form. Here you see the possibility of using the freedom and the power to elevation of the Ego and the consequent power and material glory. But Jesus abstains from this deification of the Ego.

However, many false gurus have fallen for the temptation. And in the present time, where spirituality is blended with coaching and management theory (the belief in that worship of money, success and winner-mentality, is the same as being in compliance with the universal laws) we will undoubtedly see an explosion of such super Egos – and experiences show, that the world will follow them (read more about energy-transmission in my article The philosophy of Karen Blixen).

Most of the channeling experiences – and which have a certain reality for either the channeler or the client – are collective fantasies.

Collective fantasies have two aspects. The one aspect of the fantasies is a kind of archetypical, mythologically symbolizings of more personally, unclarified matter (for example thought distortions - see my book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions). The second aspect of the fantasies is relatively valid information about things that lies
beyond the ordinary consciousness and one’s personal history. The misguiding happens because the two aspects are blended together.

The whole of the thought’s past can create a reflection of itself in the body. And if this past is filled with pain, then it can show itself as a negative energyfield in the body: the emotional painbody. It contains all the pain you have accumulated in the past. The painbody lives of that you are identified with the negative or “positive” thoughtpattern behind it, for example thought distortions.

The painbody is - through the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around - connected with the more dangerous dephts of the astral plane’s collective history, which also are a kind of dark, ancient inertia which opposes any change of the ego. The energies found here are unfathomable, and when you direct them into your painbody, you are really facing problems. That is what is happening in a spiritual crisis (read more about the painbody in my article The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it).

The ego-religion and the ego-exercises are the ego’s incessant confirmation or denial of the ego: “it is no use with me!”; or: “Wonderful me!”. Both, either the denial or the confirmation of the ego, maintain the ego-proces, the ego-identity, and the ego-centralization. The ego’s religion and exercises are the ego’s needs and longings and will: I want to, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, I hope, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, or, in its most common core: I, I, I...Me, Me, Me... Therefore a spiritual crisis both can be “negative” and “positive” – the Dark night of the soul, or ego-inflation.

Your ego, and your painbody, is in other words the gate where collective energies, and astral beings, can enter into your world. When you in a selfish way use the powers from the collective history of the astral plane, and which demonical astral beings will help you with (because the ego phenomenon is their magnet of attraction), you can create personal power and material glory. That is the essence of Black Magic. The ego is a demonical structure, and it attracts demonical powers and energies, which also have been created by the ego phenomenon.

True spiritual practice is about leading people around the areas/experiences of the collective time, into the universal time where the wholeness is awake. Enlightenment simply means to be awake, to have realized the nature of the wholeness. The whole thing reminds about waking up from sleep and dreams.

So, the reason why it is necessary to lead people around the collective time, or shorten the passage through it, is because that non-physical entities from these areas are using people or cults (collective energy processes in mass phenomena: religious, spiritual, political, sports or other type) as psychic channels, working
interdimensionally to create all sorts of “experiences” in people; experiences that seem dazzling and/or extraordinary – but with the purpose to use their energy as food. That is: a kind of vampires, or even worse: demons.

A lot of channelers are frauds, or just disillusioned because they are completely controlled by subjective feelings, emotions, intuitions; that is: identified with the painbody. But some of them are also caught up in a spiritual crisis as ego-inflation, and are actually channeling entities from the collective time. The problem is that they don’t know who it is they are channeling. Demons can be very charming, and very manipulating. They will never tell you their real names. They will tell you what you want to hear; what sounds flattering; they will give you experiences; and they will help you to gain prosperity and success. But you will eventually meet the compensatory karma, or Nemesis.

A simple principle to follow: they will never teach you to turn your awareness in towards the source, and/or the now; it is always out towards the material world, and/or always into past or future.

So, remember: always critical examine the “teachings” channelers are channeling. Just look at the channelers within Theosophy (read my article The fascism of Theosophy and The philosophy of Krishnamuti) – we have already mentioned a few.

Or take Esther and Jerry Hicks. “Abraham” is the name given by Esther Hicks to a group of of spirits (“non-physical entities”) Esther claims to channel. If you examine her channelings critical you will quickly find out that Abraham´s message is straight out of the 19th century New Thought tradition: believing makes it so. The Hickses claim Abraham gave them the “law of attraction.” If “they” did, “they” stole it from Napoleon Hill´s (1883-1970) Think and Grow Rich or William Walker Atkinson´s (1862-1932) Thought Vibration and the Law of Attraction in the Thought World (1906).

You could also mention John Payne of Omni World, who channels a being he calls Omni. Here you also get a kind of “psychic copy and paste” from the New Thought tradition.

Both in New Age, and in coaching, which claims to be purely neutral and scientifical, the so-called Enneagram is very popular. It is a New Age mandala, a mystical gateway to personality typing, and through this to spiritual consciousness and fuller being. The enneagram represents nine personality types. It is originally developed by Oscar Ichazo (b. 1931), who claims to have received it in a vision.
Later the enneagram has turned up in several new versions, funny enough often developed by people who also claim to have received it in divine visions. So how the types are defined depends on whom you ask. The classification systems seem to have been modified according to the inventors’ own idiosyncratic beliefs. But personality typing involves several problems such as the thought distortions Representative bias, Hermeneutics of Suspicion, Prejudice, Selective thinking, Subjective validation, etc., etc. Therefore not given from a divine source (see my article Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice).

Or take The Human Design System (HDS). HDS is said to be a tool – a system - which you can use, if you want. It is based on old “sciences” such as Kabbala, astrology, and I Ching, which are combined in new ways, and connected to “new knowledge within Quantum Physics and genetics.”

The creator – or rather “The Receiver” of HDS is Alan Robert Krakower. He was born in Montreal, Canada, April 9, 1948. He lived on Ibiza under the name Ra Uru Hu, until his death in 2011. On Ibiza in 1987 he experienced an extrasensory intelligence, which he calls “The Voice.” This “Voice” gave him HDS. But again: if you examine HDS critically, you will find that it is a “psychic copy and paste” of a – within scientifically circles – very known myth about quantum physics which New Agers haven’t discovered because they keep on reading the same New Age books where the myth is repeated again and again. Besides this HDS also involves the problems of personality typing and different kinds of pseudoscience (see my articles A critique of the Human Design System and Quantum mysticism and its web of lies).

The above mentioned problems of channeling are growing and growing because New Agers have found out how easy it is to fool people with a claim of being a channeler – and as mentioned: some are directly frauds, others are disillusioned, and a few are caught in ego-inflation.

**Part 2: Humanistic psychology and its method:**

**Psychotherapy**

**Humanistic psychology, self-help,**

**and the danger of reducing religion to psychology**
Humanistic Psychology (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Rollo May) is a fundamental inspiration for the management theories and therefore for the whole of the self-help industry (see my article Management theory and the self-help industry).

The humanistic psychology is based on a biological view of human nature; or said in another way: it believes that humans entirely are desirous beings (see my book A Portrait of Lifeartist). Carl Rogers is therefore in his self-actualization theory focusing on the emotional experience of the individual. Abraham Maslow is in his self-actualization theory focusing on different levels of needs in the individual. Rollo May is in his existential psychology focusing on the will and wishes in the individual.

If you focus on these aspects of the human nature you will find your true authentic self, they claim. Like the wisdom traditions Humanistic Psychology namely have an idea about, that Man has a sovereign (or even spiritual/divine) core. So, it is from here we have the concepts of the self-actualizing and personal developing human being, and, as a result: the authentic, sovereign, autonomous, competent, resource-filled human being; concepts, that are central in the whole of the self-help industry. But which also are showing something of a paradox, or contradiction, because this therapeutic self-actualization has to be supported by an army of coaches and psychotherapists. The more resources the human being is conceived to have, the more potentials it has, or is claimed to have, the more support it needs – more therapists, more coaches, more courses etc. – in order to develop himself (read more about this paradox in my article Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity). This paradox shows, that something is going wrong in this world-view, and in the following I will show why.

What is common in humanistic psychology is that the individual actualizes his full resources or potentials; that is: that he finds his authentic self. This thesis has been developed in many various forms, for example it is also this thesis that is lying behind the concept of positive psychology. Positive psychology has its roots in the New Thought movement, and is claiming that if you focus on your positive thoughts, feelings, needs, wishes and will, and are ignoring the negative oppositions, then you can attract anything you want (the “positive” is in New Thought understood as material glory, money, success, personal power, sex, health, beauty) – see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction.
It is, according to the Humanistic Psychology, therefore only the individual’s *own* subjective evaluation, which can provide something with value. There neither exist valid values, which come from the community, or objective values, which come from nature, the universe, or life itself. Nothing has value in itself, unless it comes from the individual’s subjective experiences, needs, will and wishes.

The Humanistic Psychology’s view of morals is namely not only a subjectifying, which attributes the source of morals to the subjective itself, but also an emotionalizing, since it is the individual’s *feelings*, which decides the moral quality of something. What it is about, is to do what ”feels” right. It is the individual’s emotional experience of something, which defines values, not conversely. And this is fully in thread with the ideology of Consumer Capitalism, where the customer (and his or her’s experiences, wishes, will and needs) always is right. The consumer society, the therapeutic self-actualization and the subjectifying of the moral, go hand in hand. The moral – the individual’s relation to himself – is therapiized, and the moral is subjectified.

But what is this self? Is it the same as in the wisdomtraditions? No, and it is here the problems arises.

Our suffering, our painbody is according to the wisdomtraditions, through the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around, connected with the more dangerous dephts of the collective history of the astral plane, which also are a kind of dark, ancient inertia, which opposes any change of the ego (see my article *The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can´t heal it*).

That is also the reason why you, through psychotherapy, can´t heal Man from the ground. In order to heal Man from the ground you need to go into a spiritual practice. It is only within the religions and their spiritual traditions they have knowledge and names for the more dark sides of the astral plane’s collective history. The West has very precisely called this factor the original sin. The East has called it negative karma. The concepts indicate, that the inertia projects beyond the personal history (growing up conditions, traumatic bindings, painful experiences etc.) and far down into the collective inherit-backgrounds of history (genes, environment, society-ideals, the archetypes and the primordial images of the dreams, fantasies, fairy-tales, myths, and finally: instincts inherited from the animals). It is a factor, which is lying in the evolution itself, in the genes, in the collective subconscious, in the collective images of time.

When therefore psychotherapy requires a change, then the instinctive survival-preparedness in us reacts and protests. Man has survived on willfulness and a consciousness-structure, which mental and psychic sign is Egocentredness. The
bigger Ego, the bigger survival chance. The Humanistic Psychology’s view of the “authentic” self is therefore confusing this self with the ego.

Seen from a spiritual perspective, this instinctive survival strategi (the Ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma. You can’t, by psychotherapeutic strategies, free the consciousness from its attachment to this inertia. You can therefore not dissolve or dilute or convert the original sin through psychotherapy. Only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a trancendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to, that a human being should be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), then this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. And as part of this preparation serve the true spiritual practice within the religions (see my articles Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice and The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice).

So, when you in this way do your part of the work, then you will discover that the enlightened consciousness (God, Christ, Buddha), already have cleansed the negative karma and taken on, and forgiven, the original sin. All enlightened teachers of this Earth (Rumi, Krishna, Francis of Assisi, Rabia, Meera, Yeshe Tsogyel, Teresa of Avila) are doing the same: they take on the original sin and are purifying it for us.

But religion has in humanistic psychology, and in the self-help industry as such, been reduced to psychology (feelings, will and wishes, – Carl Rogers and Rollo May), spirituality has been reduced to biology (needs – Abraham Maslow), and philosophy has been reduced to ideology (consumer capitalism). So, traditional religious and philosophical practices have in Human Psychology, and in the self-help industry as such, been reduced to psychology and psychotherapy. Spirituality has in this way been turned upside down. In my book A Portrait of Lifeartist – in the section about needs - I describe how the ideology of needs distorts human nature.

In my article Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is an instrument of psychic terror I describe the reductionism in another way (NVC is directly inspired by humanistic psychology). In its way of claiming, that all human behaviour stems from attempts to meet a small set of human needs, NVC is namely a reductionism. The founder of NVC, Marshall Rosenberg, is for example proclaiming that, “all needs are universal; every human being in the world has the same needs.”

Reductionisms reduce or devaluate the many aspects of a human being (for example history, time, rationality, spirituality, communication, truth, meaning, beauty, suffering, passion, love, etc., etc., - or said in one word: the wholeness) to a phenomenon of a single type. In NVC – as well as in Maslow’s version of Humanistic psychology - this phenomenon is needs.
Needs are in NVC seen in relation to two types of feelings: feelings when your needs are satisfied, and feelings when your needs are not satisfied (on NVC websites you can find lists of fundamental needs and the two types of feelings). So NVC is about how you can get your needs satisfied. But when you reduce, for example universal values such as the good, the true and the beautiful, to needs ("Universal needs"), then the whole thing is being turned upside down, because then your being is seen as something not-yet satisfied, a state of becoming, and therefore desire. And with becoming and desire you have the ego: the direct opposite of the good, the true and the beautiful (remember that in for example Buddhism they see desire as one of the main poisons of the mind). In my article *The four philosophical hindrances and openings* I have investigated this *turning spirituality upside-down paradox* which the whole of New Age and the self-help industry are characterized by. Also see my article *The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind* for a deeper explanation of the epistemological and ethical shipwrecks all reductionisms end up in.

Where spirituality traditional is about the elimination of the ego, then the ego has become an object of worship within the self-help industry. Spirituality has been distorted.

In his book *The Good Life* the Danish Life-philosopher Mogens Pahuus writes, that if you ask about, what the old Scandinavians saw as the highest and the greatest in life, the ecstasy of life, then the answer would be, that it is self-assertion – the assertion of oneself and the family. He also writes, that you in Christianity find a diametrically opposite view of self-assertion, – both in its Catholic form as in Protestantism. In Saint Gregory and Thomas of Aquinas haughtiness/pride/self-assertion was the first and greatest of the seven so-called deadly sins. And in Luther self-assertion nor was a goodness, but the vice over all vices. It is the seven deadly sins Dante in The Purgatory must look in the eyes one after one, in order to be able to progress. He must use the discrimination, which is the purification process, where you look your destiny in the eyes and do penance after having realized how your perspective distorts reality.

So self-assertion is a vice. Self-assertion is a kind of self-interest, where everything turns around the Ego, and therefore makes the mind mediocre. To live in a world, which is controlled by self-assertion, without being self-assertive, means, truly, to love something for its own sake, without seeking a reward, a result; but this is very difficult, because the whole world, all your friends, your relatives, struggle to achieve something, to accomplish something, to become something.

Today self-assertion once again is considered as a virtue. The gurus are the many advocates for the market and the economical competition, as for instance several
management theorists. And the education-instrument is the self-help industry. The disciples are the consumers; that will say, that this outlook of life obviously is shared by most people in our society: that it is about becoming something, to get success, to conquer a place on the top of the mountain, to become a winner. Mogens Pahuus believes that the modern ideal about becoming a success, a winner, is a perverted ideal. The society praises a self-assertion, which has gone over the top, and there dominates a self-assertion, which is a vice, because it both spoils the life of the self-assertive, and the lifes of those, whom the self-assertive measures himself in relation to, and whom he wants to overpass.

Pahuus mentions some of the forms of self-assertion: 1) Vanity, which is a vice, because the vain-full always is bearing in mind, how he or she looks like, or is considered like, in the eyes of others. 2) Ambition, which is a vice, because you here constantly are on the way forward, or upwards. 3) Haughtiness, which is a vice, because you here, in your feeling of own superior value, look down at others, are letting others feel their inferiority; that is: because haughtiness is unethical. But also in the arrogant himself, haughtiness is destructive: it isolates. 4) Joy of power. The ethical seen most violating form of self-assertion is the joy of having power over others, of controlling others, or oppressing them.

Pahuus quotes Alfred Adler and says that the above-mentioned forms of self-assertion are attack-characterized. But there also exists a non-attack characterized form, as for instance the hostile isolation, anxiety and bashfulness, which you see in the Underground Man in Dostojevskij’s small novel Notes from an Underground.

The vice in the different forms of self-assertion is that it leads to an unreal life.

True spirituality is in the end about going beyond all concepts and ideas, because language and linguistic mappings is the main reason for our distortions of reality, and therefore our suffering. It is in its nature absolutist. In order to go beyond all concepts and ideas it must be possible to discriminate between the language and the real, the map and the landscape, subject and object. It therefore builds on an objective truth-criterium, which is lying in a reality, wholeness, or otherness, that transcends us. As Niels Bohr says, then it is reality (the wholeness/the order of nature), that puts us in order, and not us that puts reality in order (see my article Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr). Discrimination is a central aspect of critical thinking (my book A dictionary of thought distortions is a manual in critical thinking, and therefore philosophy).

The self-help industry is, contrary to this, defending a relativism and a subjectivism, which doesn´t allow this. And this is a bit of a paradox, because a lot of the self-help
gurus are claiming, that their teachings are spiritual, yes even that they are spiritual teachers.

According to the self-help industry then the language is the real, the map is the landscape, the word is the real. Such a lack of discrimination between language and reality, and therefore between subject and object, is a central aspect of magical thinking.

It is, according to relativism and subjectivism, not possible to go beyond all concepts and ideas. But you can change these. That is a central idea in the self-help direction called Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) – see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT). Though NLP is saying that the map is not the landscape, then it paradoxically also is supporting a subjectivism, that says that we can’t go beyond our mappings, we can’t know what the landscape is in itself. This of course introduces a Socratic question: If it is true, that we can’t go beyond our mappings and get knowledge about what the landscape is in itself, from where does NLP then know that the map is not the landscape?

Anyway, what it is about within NLP, and the self-industry as such, is to change your language, maps and words so that they fit into your wishes, needs and desires, and in that way you can become whatever you like, and you can create whatever reality you want – that is: according to your ego. As the management theorists say: “It is not facts, but the best story, that wins!” And they often do it in a mix of interpretations of Shamanism and Western theories of hypnosis (see my articles A Critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork, Regression psychotherapies, James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy and Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception). But in true spirituality this is the same as enlargening your distortion of reality.

It will be interesting to follow how new theories within the self-help industry, and in New Age, in the future, in large scale, will be based on the ability to tell a good new story. Communal reinforcement is a thought distortion, which directly will be used as a means for this. Communal reinforcement is social phenomenon in which a concept or idea is repeated asserted in a community, regardless of whether sufficient evidence has been presented to support it. Over time, the concept or idea is reinforced to become a strong belief in many people’s minds, and may be regarded by the members of the community as fact.

Often, the concept or idea may be further reinforced by publications in the mass media, books, or other means of communication. There is no doubt about that the self-help industry (which is a strong advocate for the use of hypnosis and
hypnotherapy) will be made propaganda for through mass media phenomena such as Transmedia Storytelling, Alternate Reality Games (The Blair Witch Project is an example of an Alternate Reality Game), Viral Marketing/Internet Hoaxes and Collaborative Fiction.

The phrase “millions of people can’t all be wrong” is indicative of the common tendency to accept a communally reinforced idea without question, which often aid in the widespread acceptance of urban legends, myths, and rumors.

This will often be mixed with an ability to use modern technology within computer science and production of movies. Make a great website, and tell a story like in a Hollywood movie, and you have success. The latest within New Age is for example the so-called WingMakers Project. The difference between a Hollywood movie though, and a New Age guru, is that the New Age guru is claiming that his story is true, though very well knowing, that the whole is a fiction.

It is interesting, that the creator of the WingMakers Project, Mark Hempel, already now is defending his story as being true, against critics, who say that the story is a hoax. Hempel precisely have a background working in the computer and IT industry (see my article **Time travel and the fascism of the WingMakers Project**).

Or take the Human Design System, which is created by Alan Robert Krakower, who claims to have received it in a vision, whereafter he calls himself Ra Uru Hu. He was a well-educated and successful businessman, who worked as a contractor and magazine publisher with own advertising agency (see my article **A critique of The Human Design System**).

These kinds of story-telling will be the future of New Age and the self-help industry, and it will be amusing to follow, what the next “true” story will be.

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

But the idea about that we can create reality as it fits us, is the reason why self-help gurus in extreme cynical ways are abusing science as it fits them, and use all kinds of
unrealistic exaggerated grand titles about themselves (for instance the world´s greatest money coach, and so on in the same style). Because if they just think it is true, well, then it magical must be true. This is especially seen within the movement of the law of attraction (Again: see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

In the following I will in five sequences show the consequences of what happens when you reduce traditional religious and philosophical practices to psychology and psychotherapy. The five sequences are:

1) The temple in Delphi
2) Becoming and being
3) The confusion of the ego with the spiritual essence
4) The psychopath
5) Back to the temple in Delphi

1) The temple in Delphi

The self-help industry is talking about that it is important to know thyself. That is not something new. Over the door of the Apollon Temple in Delphi was written: “Know thyself.” And the same concept can be found in all true spiritual traditions.

But the conception of, what it means to find yourself, has been turned upside down in the self-help industry. Earlier the concept of finding yourself, was to find your place in relation to the Gods. At that time it was about being yourself without becoming arrogant and reckless (ego-inflated), and therewith commit hubris (see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment). The intention was to develop yourself in relation to something else than yourself. And the same thing can be seen in other true spiritual traditions.

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

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

So the more you, through the Ego’s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes finally will swing over in their opposite extremes. Another aspect of this regularity, or another way to describe this regularity is: energy returns to its starting point. And since everything in this way only works correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that you actual can’t say anything about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness for the emptiness (śūnyatā) – a teaching, which had one quite certain purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints which ignorance has created.

Here is the main reason why the self-help industry has lost true spirituality out of sight: the Ego-worship, which shuts itself away from this wholeness. Today the wholeness, or the otherness, has been eliminated, and only the development of the self, or the Ego, is left. And the Self/Ego is your personality; therefore personal development (self-improvement). The problem with this personal development is that it has developed into a never-ending development, an egoistic philosophy. For an understanding of the necessity of an "Otherness" in spiritual practice, see my article The philosophy of Krishnamurti.

2) Becoming and being

The Ego always is in a state of becoming. Becoming is the central concept in the self-help industry: all the time to be in a state of becoming something else than what you are, a constant striving from past to future, where the goal is constantly increasing success. Contrary to true spirituality where being is the central, being in the sense studying what you are, to be what you are, to give up past and future, and be in the Now with what you are.

Becoming is the central concept in the false spirituality of the self-help industry. Being is the central concept in true spirituality.

Becoming is actually the main hindrance for the opening into the source, the Good, the True and the Beautiful. It contains four philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the Source (as mentioned I have described this in my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings).
Another problem with the self-help industry today is that life becomes one long examination, where you constantly have to develop your personality. An unavoidable part of the daily life is evaluation and continuous assessment of yourself, and what you do and feel. You can’t avoid it. Therefore it is an ideology that penetrates everything. The workplace uses professional companies to mark and grade our performance and effectiveness. Our spouses relate runningly to whether we continued are worth loving and living together with. Educators and schoolteachers call us in for meetings, where words are put on, whether we are good parents.

It becomes a lifelong examination, where we constantly strive after becoming something else, something more and better; a never-ending personal development. But instead of finding our inner “self”, we become more and more stressful and insecure about whether something is good enough. Anxiety and depression are spreading everywhere. What the self-help industry doesn’t seem to understand is that discomfort, anxiety, tension, stress, worry – all forms of fear – are created by too much future and too little presence in the Now. Here we again have a paradox, because the self-help industry is talking a lot about being the now, at the same time as it, in its worship of becoming, doesn’t allow this. Again: read more about this paradox in my article Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity.

As I have shown in my article The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines, I claim that a new dangerous kind of feminism plays a central part in this tragic comedy.

3) The confusion of the Ego with the spiritual essence

Both self-help and true spirituality are, as mentioned, common in the belief, that humans have a divine core, which the goal is to reach. But the self-help industry is confusing the Ego with this divine core. And the main reason is that it has shut itself away from the wholeness, and the otherness.

And the starting is also the same: namely ignorance and suffering. But the paradox is, that when you start a self-help program, which is based on the above-mentioned confusion, then you make the ignorance and suffering even larger. That is the ingenious trick of the self-help industry in order to keep us as slaves (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy). The divine is simply a seducing persuasion-program.

A main reason for this is all the incompetent teachers in the self-help industry. It is teachers, who most often only have taken a weekend-course or two (for instance in NLP and coaching), whereafter they with their certifications go out, and are
beginning telling people about philosophy, spirituality, life-philosophy and existence-philosophy. That is: teachers without any philosophical education.

Actually philosophy today has been directly removed from all theories of learning, and therefore you also have shut away the possibility for educated philosophers to get a chance on this market. A weekend-certification as NLP-coach, is today more valuable than an university degree in philosophy, even though both is about life-philosophy. If you want a book published, or appear in the medias, the best is to advocate the self-help industry. That is a fact, and an example on, that we here, from the highest political levels, can see some preferences and choices! You can in fact see the concept of personal development described in EU´s project on lifelong learning, education and management theory. My concept of the Matrix Conspiracy is precisely developed because I quite seriously think, that we here see the beginning of one of the most dangerous, global spreading, ideologies of our time (again: see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

So when you today make a self-help program into a guide for your life, it can encourage the development of narcissistic and egoistic human beings. The self-help industry is an expression of a “me-me-me-and-then-perhaps-you-if-it-serves-me-logic”. This logic is not written in the many self-help books. Perhaps on the contrary. Here it is pouring with homespun philosophical rules of living. Egoism is nevertheless a logical consequence of that self-centredness, which goes hand in hand with the movement of the self-help industry. It is the hidden agenda, where it basically is about, that it is me and only me, who through my inner journey shall develop towards my self. Others are without importance in that connection. The result is the lonely personal developing human being, who works in order to find nothing else than herself.

4) The psychopath

If a person really succeeds in adopting the advices of the self-help books she really gets a problem. Not only does she have to fight with the never-ending development, and the egoism. She is also becoming a serious problem for her surroundings. Because she is now, as the Danish psychologist, Nina Østerby Sæther, says, a potential psychopath.

On a course about psychopaths Nina Østerby Sæther realized, that there was many similarities between psychopathic traits, and the advices, which are given in self-help books. It made her point out some frightening resemblances.

Though some of the self-help books´ advices might sound similar to true spirituality (most often they directly quote and use spiritual texts), taken out of context, then you
have to remember how the wholeness and otherness have been removed. Religion and philosophy have been reduced to psychology and psychotherapy. And when this happens it takes a totally wrong course.

The resemblances are:

**Smarter**

*The psychopath:* a psychopathic trait is to be extremely self-centered, and experiencing yourself as smarter than most. The conception of your own abilities and importance is unrealistic exaggerated.

*Self-help:* In one of the American self-help guru Wayne Dyer’s books it is written that: “there is nothing wrong in perceiving yourself as perfect”, and “don’t be afraid of your own greatness”.

**More violent**

*The psychopath:* Psychopaths can’t take critique, resistance or defeats, something they express with violent anger or aggression.

*Self-help:* In the Danish self-help guru, Thoele’s book “Courage to be yourself”, she writes that it is “unhealthy not to give expression for your anger” (wrong! - see my article Cathartic psychotherapies)

**Seeking experiences**

*The psychopath:* Psychopaths have a big need for new experiences, and routine and monotony often have a provocative effect.

*Self-help:* Thoele writes: “If a child behaves poor and dull, we take its temperature. Why is it then we feel, that it is alright for ourselves to flow through life in an ordinary and boring way?”

**Impulsiveness**

*The psychopath:* The behaviour of the psychopath is characterized by impulsiveness. He follows the thoughts and lusts of the moment without thinking over the consequences, or future goals or actions.

*Self-help:* Dyer writes: “I have myself experienced, that you can live totally in the now, and I therefore know, that it is true” (this sounds like spirituality, but remember, that there is a big difference between instinctive reactions from the past, and being in
the Now. Being in the Now can’t be without self-forgetful absorption in the otherness, or in the wholeness. You are certainly not a person able to be completely in the Now, if you also are focusing on your own greatness and perfectionism).

Seeking excitement

The psychopath: Psychopaths are seeking excitement and therefore have a large will to run risks.

Self-help: Thoele writes: “I choose to live! To me this means a yes to take risks....if secureness has been achieved on the cost of stimulating and creative development, it will just strangle us.”

Indifference

The psychopath: The psychopath gives expression for having certain rights, which do, that he don’t need to follow normal laws, rules, or even any moral.

Self-help: Thoele writes: “I have the right to say no, without bad conscience...I have the right to be different than what is expected of me.”

This is just one example on the many “alternative” interpretations of human rights, which are happening in the culture of self-help. Freedom of speech is today typically used as a justification of offending other people (see my article The new feminism and the philosophy of women´s magazines). Another aspect of this is how positive psychology encourages people to ignore what they find negative (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

Without empathy

The psychopath: The psychopath understands other humans from their actions, and is lacking the ability to familiarizing himself with others’ thoughts and feelings. He has no problem with establishing relationships, but lacks the ability to attachment. Furthermore he often instrumentally uses others with the help of manipulation, where others are used in order to get his own lusts and needs satisfied.

Self-help: Thoele writes: “Emotional independence is a human right. Others’ expectations can be seen as hindering elements, and the goal is most possible release from these.”

You could also simply mention NLP, where “great communication skills” are seen as the ability to persuade others to do what you want (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT))
Guiltless

The psychopath: The psychopath doesn´t know what a sense of guilt is. He has a conspicuous tendency to explaining away, or rationalizing, his social problem-creating behaviour.

Self-help: The Danish self-help guru, Thorsøe, writes in his book *A little guide to modern quality of life*, that: “Guilt is meaningless, when it comes to feelings. Actual I would like to have the word guilt removed from language.”

Though guilt is a negative feeling, then Thorsøe obviously doesn´t understand, that this negative feeling contains a message about that there is something you have to change in your behaviour, precisely because you can´t escape an order of reality, which is beyond your control. But in a typical subjectivistic and relativistic way, he thinks, that you only feel guilt, because humans have constructed this concept.

Similar things are happening, when for example New Thought gurus think, that they without consequences can re-formulate the karma thought, so that it supports the ego, because this is a much more “positive” interpretation, than the old “negative” interpretation (see my articles The New Thought movement and the law of Attraction and James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy).

This distinction between old-thinking (negative) and new-thinking (positive), is, as already mentioned, happening again and again in the self-help industry. See the thought distortion NewSpeak in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions*.

The below example illustrates Thorsøe´s rationalization of behaviour, which in the eyes of many people will be regarded as unethical, egoistic and irresponsible. The personal experienced story is an extract from Thorsøe´s self-help book, and are, without any self-reflection at all, introduced with the purpose of teaching his readers about personal development (self-improvement!) and modern quality of life:

Gymnasium teacher Thorsøe´s young student Line entrusts him, that she is sexual attracted by her new stepfather Erik. Teacher Thorsøe analyses the situation, and tells his student, that ”the structure in her emotional world quite clearly is an attraction towards experienced, charming men”, and that she must accept herself: The student accepts the analysis, and...

The solution came from an unexpected angle: on a school journey to London Line discovered, that Erik wasn’t the only answer to her fascination of experienced men. She had such a crush on me (Thorsøe), that I for a short while had trouble controlling the course. But since my own life of feelings also was in an un-released
proces of renewal, it became a positive, and in reality necessary experience for both of us. When we came back to the usual surroundings – her school and my wife – we had to shorten the course, what influenced Line more than actually planned. But otherwise it is a good model: two persons, in each their crisis, help each other with taking the tiny step, that can bring them forward. (Thorsøe 1996: 36).

While Thorsøe legitimates the affair with his student using the concept about personal development (= psychology), it can, when using a moral perspective (= philosophy), be criticized on several points. Thorsøe’s relationship with Line can be regarded as both manipulative and instrumental, and moreover can his behaviour be understood as irresponsible and without compassion for his wife.

So, with starting point in moral (philosophy), we see, that it in practice is difficult to separate the personal developing person from the psychopath. We also see, that a subjectivistic moral – that is: a moral defined by the individual’s feelings (psychology) – is no moral at all.

Nina Østby Sæther concludes, that the self-help books don’t have any alibi against producing psychopath-like, self-actualizing humans. The psychopathic traits are simply lying smouldering in the books. Her moral is, that the self-actualizing psychopath can be seen as an “actual social character in the Western society”, supported by a whole industry of self-help books.

But when you think about how many people who are reading the self-help books, then it however is striking, that there then isn’t that many psychopaths running around (yet). But the paradox in this is, that people seldom totally succeed in liberating themselves from a moral, that doesn’t come from themselves. As a rule they have some kind of ethics they can’t escape from (because they can’t escape from the otherness, or the wholeness). The real psychopath hasn’t got any ethics.

But this doesn’t validate the self-help industry.

5) Back to the temple in Delphi

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

This misunderstanding consists in a lack of discrimination between compensatory karma and progressive karma. Compensatory karma could also be called negative karma, while the progressive karma could be called positive karma. The negative
karma is caused by the ego, or when the thoughts´ pendulum swings out in extremes, while the positive, progressive karma first will arise when the ego has been eliminated, and the thoughts are in balance between the extremes (read more about karma in my article What is karma?).

In connection with this, it is important to know the difference between a selfish use of energy, and an unselfish use of energy. You can also term this as a demonical use of energy, and a spiritual use of energy, or as black and white magic.

The Ego-religion and the Ego-exercises are the Ego´s incessant confirmation or denial of the Ego: “it is no use with me!”; or: “wonderful me!”. Both, either the denial or confirmation of the Ego, maintain the Ego-process, the Ego-identity and the Ego-centralization. The Ego´s religion and exercises are the Ego´s needs and longings and will: I want to, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, I hope, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, or, in its most common core: I, I, I….

The ordinary Ego-consciousness functions by being identified with the physical world, with instincts, sexuality, emotions and collective ideals. The traditional religious and philosophical exercises work through these aspects by means of, for example the core which exists in the basic monastic vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. These promises work with a restructuring of the Ego´s ownership to things, food and power, and they re-structure sexuality and emotions. First thereafter the mystical process can begin. No kind of psychotherapy can bring about this.

The Ego-religion and the ego-exercises (as encouraged in the self-help industry) are black magic, satanism, etc. The Ego is a demonical structure, and it attracts demonical powers and energies, which also have been created by the Ego phenomenon. The same energy-process and function, which realized spiritual teachers use, can therefore be used for other purposes than spiritual. When the energy-processes of the astral plane´s collective history are used spiritual, then the Ego, in its egoistic isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside, and the energy is turned into the Now, and therefore in towards the Source and the spiritual dimension. The people, who around a spiritual teacher, constitute an energy-mandala, are in this way made transparent for a higher common human spirituality.

In a lesser realized person´s use of energy the contact with, and the ability to manipulate with such collective forms of astral energy, can be used for other purposes than spiritual. It can be creative, Ego-affirmative, political, demonical and so on.

The powers that, by realized spiritual teachers, are given to others´ disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same powers
can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures, and therewith into past and future, and fragmentation (conflict). In this way there can be opened creative channels, created super Egos, created political leaders and popular seducers (in my article The philosophy of Karen Blixen I have investigated these phenomena in depth).

These phenomena are well known from history and from literature. In the story about the temptation in the desert, we can see these possible ways of using the energy pictured in anticipated form. Here you see the possibility of using the freedom and the power, to elevation of the Ego and the consequent power and material glory. But Jesus abstains from this deification of the Ego. It is also known from the Faust myth, described by for example Goethe and Thomas Mann.

When you in a selfish way use the powers from the collective history of the astral plane, and which demonical astral beings will help you with (because the ego phenomenon is their magnet of attraction) you can create personal power and material glory. That is the essence of black magic. But you will eventually meet the compensatory karma, or Nemesis.

You can in short not use these energies as you want to; that is: through, for instance, “positive” thinking.

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

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

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

If you are extremely occupied by your own success, the system will seek to balance your thoughts by bringing them over in the opposite extreme, namely the powerlessness and the fiasco. It is therefore evident, that these modern ideals about being a success and a winner are participating in creating a swing over in stress,
anxiety, depression – or failure, fiasco. The case of the self-help guru James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy is an example of how it happens in a context of New Age Shamanism (again: see my article James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy). Another example of the dangerous consequences of New Age Shamanism is Holotropic Breathwork (see my article A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork).

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

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

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

However, a true spiritual practice is to be aware, when your thoughts move too far out. In the situation you can therefore try to remember the opposite extreme and seek to bring it in. This makes the situation much more true (this is actually also a quite central aspect of critical thinking – see examples in my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

The awareness itself is in the Now, in the oneness of the opposites, and therefore in the fulcrum, which is the unmoved being in the centre of the circular movement of time. Also when something else fluctuates and dances between the swings of the extremes. Therefore the training of the awareness in itself will gradually prevent, that there is given impulse to the swings. It is the Golden Mean, which Aristotle and Buddha talked about, and which Lao Tse describes in his book Tao Te King.

The Golden Mean can generally be formulated as the art of balancing between the extremes too much and too little.
To strike the Golden Mean is an art of life, and to strike this path is a necessary suggestion for how we can prevent compensatory karma to happen, both in our own lives, as in the world.

The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy

(This article is the first in a series of three articles on New Age psychotherapies. The second is Regression psychotherapies – the third is Cathartic psychotherapies).

In this article I will investigate the devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy. I will show the difference between spiritual counseling and New Age psychotherapy, central distorting aspects of New Age psychotherapies, and finally some precautions in relation to New Age psychotherapies. In that way the article are divided in four parts:

1) The difference between spiritual counseling and New Age psychotherapies

2) Central distorting aspects of New Age psychotherapies

3) Precautions in relation to New Age psychotherapies (where do they go wrong?)

4) Conclusion

1) The difference between spiritual counseling and New Age psychotherapies

Philosophical counseling (true spiritual counseling), claims that our problems are due to a separation of the observer and the observed (see my article Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy). In its practice it directs itself away from the observed, towards the observer himself. And its questions become of existential, conceptual, ethical, epistemological and metaphysical kind.

Psychotherapy is a branch of psychology, and therefore something scientific, which directs itself towards aspects of the observed, that can be empirical tested. Therefore it must not contain philosophical and/or religious theories. An example on such a scientific based psychotherapy is Cognitive Therapy, which also has shown to be the most effective kind of psychotherapy.
Today it has become an integrated part of management theories and the self-help industry, that they draw on the New Age movement. New Age is a name of a spiritual movement, which draws on many different religious traditions: Astrology, Shamanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, different techniques of Prophecy – which all are seeked integrated with Western psychotherapy. You may say, that psychotherapy, in this combinationform, has become a new religion for the modern Western human being – a religion, which the management theories adds the ideals about being a success. In fact the term New Age is today one and the same as a mixture of spirituality, management theory and psychotherapy. If you go into a bookshop, you can often see, how books about spirituality and management theory today stand on the same shelves (see my articles Management theory and the self-help industry, Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology, Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity and Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality).

An example: today most people within school, folk high school, continuing education and business community, have met the concept Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP). Both in education, as well as at work, you will almost unavoidably be forced to work with NLP-theories, which is a directly offence of the rights for people, who don’t advocate the New Age movement.

NLP is a therapeutic method, which picks inspiration from many different directions within psychology: gestalt therapy, hypnosis therapy, body therapy, neurology, shamanism etc. Some NLP-practicians claim, that it is a method, which is based on a scientific way of thinking, and refuse the connection with New Age. But this rejection is paradoxically enough a trait, which is quite typical for the New Age movement, where concepts such as research and science all too often become mixed with spiritual concepts. An example of the lack of ability to understand oneself as philosophy/spirituality/religion, and not science (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)).

For example has there within the New Age movement almost gone inflation in the thought distortion Research has shown that... A phrase, which often is used to convince the listener about, that the one who speaks can substantiate what he says with concrete empirical proof. But this could be an example of subjective argumentation, a form of unethical manipulation (often based on wishful thinking), because it is extremely vague to claim that ”research has shown” anything, unless you can substantiate the assertion with specific details about the claimed research. Who has carried out this research? Which methods were there used? What exactly did they found out? Have their results been confirmed by others working within the area? (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions and my article The Pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism).
However there are also NLP-practicians, who fully acknowledge the connection with the new spiritual movements. If you look at the NLP-consultants´ web pages on the internet, they often present themselves with a spectrum of educations, including astrologers, clairvoyants, shamans and healers.

Today you can almost draw such “spiritual” educations in an automat, if only you have money enough. They are typical taken in a few weekends, after which you get yourself some homemade title as coach, psychotherapist, therapist, shaman, healer, clairvoyant or spiritual teacher of one or the other kind. There almost seem to be speculated in creating new peculiar titles. But such educations can of course not give the sufficient competence, neither spiritual or educational, and there is no doubt about, that there on the grey, alternative market (including the whole of the circus of management theory and coaching) rules a wild growing, uncontrolled market of quackery and scientific/philosophical/spiritual misguiding.

If we for example take the title psychotherapist, then it is very important to be aware, that this title is not a protected title. Anybody can call himself psychotherapist, and one should therefore be on the alert with people who sign themselves psychotherapist. Competent psychotherapeutic treatment is usually in charge of University-educated psychologists and psychiatrists. For both of these groups of experts it is possible to achieve licence as psychotherapist. But on the so-called grey market there exists, as mentioned, a line of alternative forms of treatment with affinity with mysticism and religiousness, which do not live up to the professional demands, which lie in the authorization arrangements. These people also title themselves as psychotherapists, and it is a deep problem that precisely these people of the grey New Age market practically have patent on personal development pedagogy in almost all areas of life: schools, further and higher education, treatment, business, etc.

I will repeat: Philosophical counseling (true spiritual counseling), claims that our problems are due to a separation of the observer and the observed. In its practice it directs itself away from the observed, towards the observer himself. And its questions become of existential, conceptual, ethical, epistemological and metaphysical kind.

Psychotherapy is a branch of psychology, and therefore something scientific, which directs itself towards aspects of the observed, that can be empirical tested. Therefore it must not contain philosophical and/or religious theories. But this is precisely what New Age psychotherapies do, and in neglecting the observer, they are misguiding their clients philosophical and spiritual. The observer is the creator of thought distortions. In connection with New Age psychotherapy, and therefore a variety of techniques and therapies within New Age and self-help, there is especially one
thought distortion they overlook, namely **Subjective validation**. These therapies can’t succeed, nor be understood, without understanding subjective validation.

Subjective validation is active when people will validate a set of statements allegedly about themselves as highly accurate, even if these statements *not* are accurate. New Age psychotherapies are dependent of that subjective validation is active in the client, or else they won’t work. It is also therefore it is necessary to eliminate critical thinking in the client. These therapies, and subjective validation, are two sides of the same coin (read more about subjective validation in my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

New Age psychotherapies are for example therapies such as Experiential psychotherapy, Rebirthing, Reparenting, Past life regression, Hypnotherapy, Alien abduction, Recovered memory therapy, Satanic ritual abuse, Primal Therapy, Gestalt therapy, Energy Breathing, Holotropic Breathwork. Also Nonviolent Communication, coaching, NLP and The law of Attraction, must be seen as kinds of New Age psychotherapies (see my articles *Regression psychotherapies*, *Cathartic psychotherapies*, *Hypnosis, hypnototherapy and the art of self-deception*, *Nonviolent Communication is an instrument of psychic terror*, *The New Thought movement and the law of attraction*).

A common thread is the belief that a person having problems is not likely to be responsible for those problems. This is due to their root in reductionism (see my article *The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind*). Another thread is the belief that the patient must discover the cause of his or her problem to be helped. These causes are built into the psychotherapy itself, and are therefore pure prejudice. It is causes such as inadequate parents, sexual abuse, satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, past lifes, alien abduction, possession by entities, etc.

In the best Sophist way the therapists are planting such causes in their patients minds. They give their patients books to read or videos to watch. They plant them during hypnosis, group sessions, etc., and then these planted causes are “recovered” and offered as validation of their therapeutic techniques and theories (see the thought distortion *Communal reinforcement* in my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

A third thread is the arrogance and incompetence of the therapists. They are very seldom educated psychologists, most often they are hopelessly uneducated. It doesn’t matter if they can show a diploma from one or the other private “New Age” education, which normally consists in a few weekend courses (see my article *Hypnosis, Hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception* for an example).
As shown in a documentary by Ofra Bikel “Divided Memories”, they are oblivious to how they are demonstrating the monstrosity of their pseudoscientific and self-deceptive work. They talk freely about how uninterested they are in the truth and how indifferent they are to the families they help destroy. They are uniform in their dismissal of critics as being in “denial.” Patient after patient is paraded forth by the therapists as evidence of their good work, yet none of the patients seem better for the therapy and many seem hopelessly ill.

The documentary shows the subjectivism and relativism in the New Age environment.

Watch the documentary on the playlist of my YouTube channel

These therapists often call themselves spiritual counselors. But the karmatically talk and experiences of these “experts” and “clients” remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. When focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. And when they use the karma idea in that way, it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time (see my article What is karma?).

New Age psychotherapies are not just useless, they are harmful. The dangers of for example combining Regression psychotherapies with Cathartic psychotherapies - in the believe this is necessary in a spiritual process of development - are shown in my articles A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork and James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy.

2) Central aspects of New Age psychotherapies

In the following I will use Margeret Thaler Singer’s and Janja Lalich’s book Crazy Therapies as a frame of reference.

The Crazy therapies Singer and Lalich are referring to are the same as New Age psychotherapies. They use the word crazy in order to describe some of these therapies, using the word as it is used in the vernacular, to refer to something as controversial, nonstandard, or “far out,” and sometimes to depict fads or current enthusiasms.

Singer and Lalich have seen three types of results from these crazy therapies, which fall on a continuum of helpful to harmful, including sometimes a combination thereof.
The first outcome is the placebo effect (see the thought distortion *Classical conditioning and placebo effects* in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions*). Here, consumers think they’re being helped. They might feel better even though there is no scientific reason or established clinical practice to support the apparent positive results. Consequently, individual clients may experience varied results from the same procedure, with some believing they’ve been greatly helped and others feeling no gain whatsoever.

The second outcome is loss. Consumers may end up wasting a lot of time and money pursuing dead ends and false leads. In some of these cases, clients may have fallen prey to unscrupulous, exploitative therapists; in others, they may simply have gone along with the enthusiasm of ill-trained, or faddish practitioners who themselves are caught up in believing in the curative abilities of a particular theory or treatment.

The third outcome is harm. Some consumers risk being harmed – psychological or otherwise – by some of the therapies currently in vogue. Each year countless individuals throughout the globe turn their innermost thoughts and feelings to a trusted counselor, only to be exploited and abused by some of them. When we go to a mental health professional or someone claiming to have special knowledge, we don’t suspect the worst; rather, we hope for the best. We go with open hearts and open minds.

But here are some of the outcomes Singer and Lalich have seen:

- “Joseph” went to a therapist for help with his anxiety and sleep problems. Dr. “P.” led Joseph to believe that his problems were caused by his having been abducted by extraterrestrials. Joseph became convinced of this past occurrence and began to tell his “abduction” story to all who would listen, including the part about having skinny tubes inserted into his rectum while on the alien spaceship. Joseph’s friends and coworkers became tired of his endless tales, and Joseph eventually lost his job for inattention to his duties and lack of concentration.

- “Jake” saw an ad for a therapist-led warrior weekend that boasted, “Find a new and healthy self. Never be fearful or physically anxious again.” At the weekend, Jake learned that he would have to do combat with martial-arts black-belt experts. During the evening combat session, Jake was permanently injured; he is now facing emotional distress, prolonged physical therapy, and job loss.

- Mr. and Mrs. “Johnson” went to therapy for typical marital issues. Dr. “T.” was a believer in aggressive methods of expressing feelings. Handing the
couple some plastic bats, Dr. T. instructed them to fight it out as hard as they
could. When the couple responded rather limply, Dr. T. sat on the sidelines
yelling at them, insulting them, and urging them to be more forceful. The
couple ended up bashing not only each other but a great deal of furniture in Dr.
T.’s office, as well as taking a few swings at him. Afterwards, Mr. and Mrs.
Johnson felt silly and never went back, but the following week they received a
bill for $5,000 in damages to Dr. T. and his office.

- “Carol,” a young professional, was seduced by her licensed therapist, Dr. “K.,”
who violated professional ethical codes and state law. Even before the sexual
liaison began, Dr. K. urged Carol to divorce her husband and wait for Dr. K.
As a result of this affair, Carol lost custody of her children. Shortly thereafter,
Dr. K. abandoned her. It was later learned that Dr. K. would frequently
convince his female patients to enter into a relationship with him.

- “Shari” was told by a friend that the best thing that ever happened to her was
the counseling she received at the “Rocky Mountain Road New Birth Center.”
Feeling troubled by her relationship with her teenage children, Shari called the
center for an intake appointment. At the first session, Ms. “R.” told Shari that
her problems with her children would be solved by Shari reexperiencing her
own birth trauma and then growing up again the right way (according to Ms.
R.’s views). This would happen at a weekend session, Ms. R. informed Shari.
In order to prepare, Shari was instructed to strip down to her underpants, sit on
Ms. R.’s lap, and suckle her (rather suddenly exposed) breast.

Singer and Lalich have heard example upon example, like those just mentioned and
worse, of maltreatment and exploitation by psychotherapists and counselors of all
stripes. They have encountered the bizarre and the arcane, the violent and the greedy.
And they feel that these injustices, these instances of devastating emotional harm and
financial loss, this psychological manipulation and in some cases physical and sexual
abuse must no longer go unheeded.

They also believe that the professional community and media are unaware of (and in
some cases, they shudder to think, turning a blind eye to) the kinds of abuses that are
rampant today in the fields of psychotherapy and personal transformation (one might
add that the media on the contrary directly are supporting these tendencies – just look
at Oprah Winfrey). They add “personal transformation” because over time they have
seen that many so-called therapies actually have less and less to do with legitimate
forms of psychotherapy as they have more and more in common with unscientific
pop psychology theories and New Age techniques.
The general public today is confronted with a panorama of theories and practices said to address a variety of symptoms and disorders, ranging from the supposedly scientific to the ludicrous and unchallenged. An array of therapists, counselors, and healers promote the following techniques, among others:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flower essence therapy</th>
<th>Hypnotherapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chakra and aura readings</td>
<td>Angel therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual touching</td>
<td>Color therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul work</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor therapy</td>
<td>Past-life regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided visualization</td>
<td>Alchemical hypnotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karmic astrology</td>
<td>Channeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alien-abduction therapy</td>
<td>Herbal brews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White goddess healings</td>
<td>Drumming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal healings</td>
<td>Intuitive readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreamwork</td>
<td>Breathwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythmaking</td>
<td>Vibrational bodywork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trance treks</td>
<td>Video work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided meditation</td>
<td>Rapid eye technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarot readings</td>
<td>Overleaf charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aromatherapy</td>
<td>Ritual ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical inductions</td>
<td>Shamanic counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ritual ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical inductions</td>
<td>Shamanic counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ritual ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebirthing</td>
<td>Facilitated communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuition development</td>
<td>Hot tubbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Floating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These techniques – for which a consumer can pay anywhere from less than one hundred to several thousand dollars – are purported to bring about results as the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tours to sacred sites</th>
<th>Depossession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner-child healing</td>
<td>Spirit releasement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear frequencies</td>
<td>Disharmonious energies release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelatory past-life journeys</td>
<td>Inner-child bonding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth life transitions</td>
<td>Spiritual healing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents´ programming release</td>
<td>Inner purpose revealed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment of fluid</td>
<td>Becoming a galactic human being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence systems</td>
<td>Deep, transformative healing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reclaiming your missing self</td>
<td>Sexual karma revealed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The body’s energies rebalanced | Lifelong happiness
---|---
Insightful shamanic journeys | Transforming dragons
Personal empowerment | Soul retrieval
Pain control | Past-life integration
Planetary healing | Knowing essence twins
Soul integration

| The body’s energies rebalanced | Lifelong happiness
---|---
Insightful shamanic journeys | Transforming dragons
Personal empowerment | Soul retrieval
Pain control | Past-life integration
Planetary healing | Knowing essence twins
Soul integration

These lists reveal the spectrum of offerings available today. How does a person evaluate whether something is legitimate or a waste of time, possible beneficial or potentially harmful?

Because of my experiences with a spiritual crisis (see my articles *Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena* and *The awakening of kundalini*) I will with this article (as well as my articles *Cathartic psychotherapies* and *Regression psychotherapies*) try to shed light on the potential dangers of some of these methods, including the increasing occurrence of iatrogenic damage, that is, damage to the client induced by the therapist.

Women in particular have been victimized by these therapies: rather than feeling empowered and more autonomous, some women have become dependent and needy, and some have been exploited and abused, psychological and/or sexually, by self-serving therapists.

So, the one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture, the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement) - read more about this paradox in my article *Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity*
The mere fact that some practitioners have degrees or a wall plastered with various fancy looking credentials is no guarantee that their work will be ethical and competent. Therapists with degrees have been known to provide services that range from excellent to negligent to out-and-out quackery. The “flying circuses of psychotherapy” whirl into town, display their unproven techniques, and vanish, leaving behind certain insecure therapists who adopt every notion, from the quint to the downright dangerous.

**Persuasion techniques within psychotherapy cults**

Cults have the same characteristics as ideologies. That a thought-system has developed into an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people. Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by analysing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself (an ideology always thinks black and white, and therefore always has an anti-ideology, an enemy image, which it attribute on to everyone, who don’t agree). An ideology is therefore characterized by, that it is not able to contain, or direct refuses, rationality and critical thinking. We all know how dissidents have been killed, jailed and tortured under totalitarian ideologies.

Ideologies are using propaganda in order to get their “truths” forced through. In that connection they use thought distortions. Thought distortions are “techniques” that, unconscious or conscious, are used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. Thought distortions are the background for poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, psychological factors, which can be obstacles to clear thought (read more in my article *The difference Between Philosophical Education and Ideological Education*).

The following is inspired by Margeret Thaler Singer’s book *Cults in Our Midst – The Continuing Fight against Their Hidden Menace* (page 125-181)

In connection with cults techniques of propaganda are often referred to as 1) Thought struggle, 2) Brainwashing, 3) Thought reform, 4) Debility, dependency, and dread (DDD syndrome), 5) Coercive persuasion, 6) Mind control, 7) Systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence, 8) Coordinated programs of coercive influence and behavioral control, 9) Exploitative persuasion.

Generally cults and groups using thought-reform processes do not have a visible product, such as a computer or a book or a car, to sell. They have an invisible
product. Therefore, those who offer psychological, political, or spiritual transformations and enlightenment have learned that either they need to prove that they have special knowledge of some kind and that a follower will gain something unusual by participating in their group, or they need to use specific persuasion techniques that will convince followers to stay with them.

If cult leaders can’t give you “proof,” then they can manipulate you into believing. Through a variety of skillful manipulations and deceptions, they will persuade you that they have the ultimate solution.

In general, cult leaders combine two methods of persuasion:

1. Inducing predictable physiological responses by subjecting followers to certain planned experiences and exercises, and then interpreting those responses in ways favorable to the leaders’ interests

2. Eliciting certain behavioral and emotional responses by subjecting followers to psychological pressures and manipulations, then exploiting those responses to induce further dependence of the cult.

Since a central issue in my own teaching is spiritual crises - (see my articles Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Paranormal Phenomena and The Awakening of Kundalini) – I will focus on physiological and psychological persuasion techniques within psychotherapy cults.

Physiological Persuasion Techniques

*Techniques producing predictable physiological responses*

Following are some of the more frequent physiological methods of producing various mental and physical feelings taught to members as group activities. Members’ responses to these activities are reinterpreted in desirable ways by group leaders or trainers, so as to convince both neophytes and devotees that the processes are good for them. The process of positive reinterpretation, sometimes called *proof through reframing*, is a persuasion technique commonly used by cults.

*Hyperventilation*

Hyperventilation is an overall label for the effects caused by overbreathing and repetitive sighing. The condition is easily induced by having people do continuous loud shouting, chanting, or speaking in tongues. For example, the effect can be produced by having individuals stand and repeatedly thrust their clenched fists
outward while simultaneously shouting in a loud voice with heavy exhalation “Love our leader! Love our Leader! Love our Leader!” Overbreathing can also be produced through intense heavy expelling of air in more private, quite ritualized chants.

Mild hyperventilation produces dizziness or light-headedness; people feel “high” and experience loss of critical thought and judgment. More prolonged or vigorous overbreathing produces numbness and tingling of the fingers, toes, and lips; sweating; pounding of the heart; ringing in the ears; tremulousness; and feelings of fear, panic, and, unreality.

Even more vigorous and prolonged overbreathing can cause muscle cramps, including clawlike rigidity of the hands and feet, body cramps, and severe chest pain and tightness. Heart irregularities can develop, and convulsive tendencies can be exaggerated.

Hyperventilation also causes fainting. People often drop to the floor and are briefly unconscious. While they are unconscious, underbreathing occurs to compensate for the period of overbreathing and to restore the normal acid-base balance of the blood. People awaken limp, exhausted, and aware that they have been through a dramatic and frightening experience.

Cults, quacks, and manipulators have become aware of the predictable outcomes of hyperventilation – the giddiness, the out-of-control feeling, the possible loss of consciousness, the tingling, and the clenching of fingers and toes. Similarly, they have recognized the impact of immediately reframing the experience. By constantly reframing, or relabeling, the effects, thus confounding individuals’ gut-level reactions that something unpleasant has happened, leaders turn a frightening state into a supposedly positive one, telling neophytes, for example, that they are “getting in touch with feelings,...becoming blissed out,...getting or receiving the spirit,...on the path.” In private, the leaders of some groups have names such as lobstering or tunaing, for the clawlike clenching and the falling to the floor produced by hyperventilation practices.

All in all, the hyperventilation syndrome is relabeled as progress, closeness to God, or a new level of enlightenment.

*Repetitive Motion*

Constant swaying motions, clapping added to chanting, or almost any repeated motion helps to alter a person’s general state of awareness. Often the repetitive movements are combined with forms of chanting to blend the effects of hyperventilation and dizziness.
Dizziness can be produced by simple spinning or spin dancing (in which the person also whirls around and around), prolonged swaying, and trance dancing (often done kneeling and rocking from side to side and backward and forward, with rhythmic repetitive drumming and background music). Again, the effects of these motions are relabeled by group leaders as ecstasy or new levels of awareness.

**Change in Diet, Sleep, and Stress**

Abrupt, radical, or prolonged dietary changes, prolonged sleep loss, and increased general stress also bring about predictable physiological responses.

**Gastrointestinal Distress and Other Diet-Related Effects**

Many groups encourage and/or institute vegetarianism as part of members’ conduct. In some cases, this dietary requirement may come only at later stages of membership or within certain select circles. Other groups simply institute cheap diets to save money and to modify behavior.

Vegetarianism can be healthy when individuals study and select proper daily combinations of foods. In contrast, a number of cults abruptly put new members on low-protein, improperly balanced vegetarian diets. Suddenly eating only vegetables and fruit with no concern for securing the proper proteins and amino acids produces odd sensations in the lower digestive tract. The manipulation in certain cults label this “doing battle with Satan” and tell neophyte members that their lower intestinal pains and churning are evidence of their basic sinfulness and their need to learn the group’s ways in order to battle Satan. Some of the neo-Hindu groups reframe the digestive upsets as the working off of past-life karma.

People in the human manipulation business know that, after a time, the body adapts and the intestinal discomfort of a sudden change in diet decreases. When this occurs, the leaders tell the new member that it means he or she is properly submitting to the leader or is achieving a higher level of awareness.

**Hormonal Changes**

Stress, poor diet, and inadequate rest can result in hormonal changes that cause menstruation to cease in women and beard growth to diminish or cease in men. Manipulators deliberately misattribute these conditions, citing them as evidence that the women are pregnant with God and the men have become children of the leader, avatar, or guru.

**Purgings, Colonics, and Sweating**
Techniques involving purgings, colonics, and sweating are used in various cultic groups as symbolic cleansing rituals, but they actually serve the covert role of keeping members debilitated, docile, and dependent on the group for their well-being and care.

Reportedly, each of these procedures can produce visible body responses, which can be reframed and reinterpreted as desired by the group leader according to his philosophy. Again, such reframing is meant to demonstrate that a visible effect is generated not as an expected physiological response but as evidence of whatever the leader says.

**Body Manipulations**

Unusual physiological effects can be produced by a person acting either alone or with others to perform body manipulations. Leaders of cults and thought-reform groups employ a number of these manipulations and interpret the experiences to mean what they want followers to think.

**Pushing on Eyeballs**

Former members report that in the Divine Light Mission the lights would be dimmed and the guru would pass among the followers bestowing “divine light” on individuals by pressing on their eyes until the pressure on the optic nerve caused them to see flashes of light. This was reframed as Divine Light.

**Pressing on Ears**

In the same group, members were instructed to plug their ears with their fingers, pushing until they heard a buzzing sound which was interpreted as hearing Divine Harmony.

**Painful Manipulations**

Some former members of a psychotherapy cult have described a number of practices their leader instituted that were allegedly to balance members´ inner and outer selves but were, in fact, painful physical manipulations used to punish people and to get them in line with the leaders´ plans. These manipulations were called *bodywork*, and the point was to elicit pain and “awareness.” The motto was “No pain, no gain.”

**Relaxation-Induced Anxiety**

It has been known in the professional literature for some time that not everyone responds well to closed-eye relaxation techniques or to mantra meditation, in which
the meditator repeats an incantation. Some individuals find these procedures relaxing and welcome, but a noticeable number experience discomfort and distress. The reason is due to how the energy is circling in the person. The problem is that most meditation teachers don’t combine meditation with energy-stabilizing techniques – they probably don’t even know what that is. In relation to this most meditation techniques today are so-called upward meditation traditions. Only a very few meditation teachers are acquainted with the downward meditation traditions (which I myself recommend – and which my own meditation exercises are based on).

Even ancient literature on mantra meditation warns of the need for the experienced teacher to monitor learners and help them avoid difficulties, and those teaching mantra meditation and other closed-eyes techniques today have also learned from experience that many meditators experience some distressing responses. Instead of feeling relaxed, some feel increased tension, break out in perspiration, find their hearts racing, or become distressingly aware of many aspects of their body. Finally a number of people end up in a spiritual crisis, for example the awakening of kundalini (see my articles Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Paranormal Phenomena, and The Awakening of Kundalini – also read the articles A Map of The Spiritual Journey and The Spiritual Crisis, in my book Dream Yoga).

In recent years, it has been in vogue in management theory and coaching to speak of the stress of life and how to reduce it through meditation (the concept of Mindfulness is today very popular in the world of management theory). Many different cultic groups have therefore offered meditation as a cure-all for stress, and have done a real Madison Avenue packaging of the typical bodily responses found in a number of people when they close their eyes and attempt empty-mind meditation.

The cult groups call this unstressing and reframe any distress it causes as a necessary and positive response. This is a typical psychotherapeutic answer. An experienced meditation-teacher would see such responses as a warning signal that something is going wrong.

What is typically going wrong (when combining meditation with the stress of life) is that people are becoming more stressed if they are not changing their life as a whole. But a change of life-style is certainly not the intention within the management theories – the idea is that meditation can help people become even more effective within a business life which already is far too stressed.

The reason why people become more stressed is that meditation gathers energy to your life as a whole; that is: if your life is relaxed, meditation will help you getting more relaxed. If your life is stressed, meditation will make you more stressed (you add one more thing to do, to all the other things you also have to do). That is my
whole point about that meditation is about philosophy of life as a whole, not just a part of if.

There are also many different kinds of meditation being promoted by various individuals, groups, and cults. In a recent copy of a California free newspaper, Singer counted advertisements for at least forty different meditation groups and courses, a portion of which were recognizable cultic groups.

The typical scene today is that meditation (and spirituality as such) is being mixed with psychotherapy and coaching (management theory – see my article Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity). Many meditation teachers (who also often are business and success coaches) claim that their meditation techniques are based on science, and has been “liberated” from the religious and philosophical traditions the meditation techniques original were based on (life as a whole). This is of course a problem, since meditation with time will open up for the collective images of time, which are of religious and philosophical nature. When this happens for some people, the meditation teachers – who don’t have any experience of this themselves, and don’t have any religious and philosophical frame of reference as explanation and guideline - are completely lost. But they will typically call this unstressing and reframe any distress it causes as a necessary and positive response.

Often they even combine meditation with the four other categories of activities – hyperventilation; reptitive motions; changes in diet and in sleep and stress levels; body manipulations.

Singer mentions a few examples which illustrate former cult members’ range of impairments, some of which remain after many years out of the cultic group. The descriptions are typical examples of people who have ended up in a spiritual crisis, though Singer doesn’t mention the concept of spiritual crises. Therefore the phenomena described are not properly explained – for example: there is no doubt that the Kundalini power has been activated in these people – and when activated you can’t “deactivate” it – though you can stabilize it if you know how.

Read the following examples and try to compare the symptoms with the symptoms I have described in my article Spiritual crises as the cause of Paranormal Phenomena (also read my article The Awakening of Kundalini):

- Blackouts, lack of sensory filters, and anxiety attacks. “John,” age thirty-six, meditated off and on for nine years; during the last two years of that time, he was encouraged to do intensives. Formerly a business executive, now, one year after leaving a meditation-based group, he is living on public funds, having been diagnosed as mentally disabled and incapable of working. He suffers
from fainting, blackouts, severe and frequent anxiety attacks, and exhaustion. John feels he no longer has protective barriers for his senses. “There is no way to keep things out from the outside,” he complains. “Everything gets in through my senses. They taught me to fear that my body was filled with odd, bizarre, scary things over which I had no control.” Although he is in therapy, he is unable to function if there is any stress in his environment. He stays away from people, takes walks in the woods alone, and rests a lot.

- **Fog and space.** “Lisa” was in a meditation group for thirteen years. During nine of those years, she suffered from unique dissociative experiences in which she would “space out.” In looking across a room, Lisa would see a waist-high orange fog. In spite of finding herself in this peculiar state, with the interruptions and distractions it presented, she was able to carry on the simple, necessary tasks of daily living. Her level of functioning was poor, however, due to her preoccupation with the fog and to feeling detached and flat.

- **Altered states and memory difficulties.** “Rick” joined a meditation group in 1975, at age seventeen, and meditated for eleven years. He experienced his first distressing symptoms at his first advanced course, when overbreathing and yogic exercises were added to his mantra meditation. He described states of euphoria; periods of dissociation, depersonalization, confusion, and irritability; and memory difficulties. When he eventually left the group, he had difficulties with reading, memory, concentration, and focusing; had involuntary body shaking; and experienced frequent episodes of dissociation.

- **Loss of boundaries.** “Bruno,” an architect in his early forties, went to his first extended meditation event at a hotel in another city after a year doing the initial brief meditations. The out-of-town event was an intense program requiring many hours of meditation, overbreathing, and never being alone. He lost track of time and felt odd and not himself. He finally fled the course after an unsettling experience in his hotel room: “Suddenly I became one with the air conditioner. I just dissolved, and it seemed that when the air conditioner started up it just took me out of my body. There wasn’t any me on the bed – I was ‘at one’ with the motor sounds. It was unspeakable terror. I had dissolved and melded with a motor sound!” When he told the trainers how distressed he was, they told him “something good is happening” and instructed him to meditate more. After he returned home, he remained anxious, had trouble sleeping, and was very tired for some weeks. Temporary sedative medication prescribed by his physician aided his recovery.
Inappropriate and unrelated bursts of emotion. “Tom,” age twenty-six, signed up for a course in which he engaged in his first extended meditating. During this meditating, he developed symptoms that continued after the course was over. His worst symptom was feeling sudden surges of intense anger unrelated to anything that was going on. At other times – when he was on a bus, streetcar, elevator, escalator, or in a car – he experienced bursts of inappropriate aggressive sexual urges. He said motion was driving him crazy. He described the few minutes of monotony and motion just prior to the sudden bursts of emotion as having the same sensation as a waking dream. For several months, he feared he was losing his mind, and he was becoming phobic about going out alone to public places because he never knew when these episodes would occur.

Muscle jerking. “Josh” had spent more than a dozen years in a meditation group, wanting to be a teacher. His major symptom – marked head and neck jerking that he could not control – developed during and after the group’s flying course. The condition was so severe that the organization wouldn’t allow Josh to appear in public. After leaving the group, he sought training in a career in which he did not have to deal with the public and his co-workers could be told what caused the jerking. Currently, his physician has prescribed an anti-seizure medication which Josh reports is very helpful.

Long-term emotional flatness. “June” meditated and took courses for nine years. She had no complains, but her husband, young adult children, parents, and siblings claimed she had become “depressed, spacey, unenthused, not careful or caring about things.” June was emotional flat – there was little variation in her facial expression, the pitch of her voice remained low and even, and her body and hand movements were minimal when she spoke, no matter what she was talking about. She reported to Singer that the only problems she had noted from the meditation were that she “lost a lot of time,” her eyes “went out of focus,” and she felt “stopped” quite often when alone. When asked about feeling stopped, she recalled numerous instances in which she lost an awareness of the passage of time and had a blank mind with no idea what she was supposed to do next. She would be released from that state when family members came home. According to her family, prior to her meditating, June had been a warm and compassionate person, responsive and involved with what was going on, even prone to temper blow-ups. Nothing in her history or responses indicated that she was a schizoid personality. Today, June appears impersonal in social situations and seems to have ceased experiencing and displaying strong emotional feelings, either positive or negative, as a consequence of her prolonged meditation.
- **Seizures.** “Calvin,” now forty, began meditation courses at age fifteen and soon wanted to be a teacher with the organization offering the courses. Early in college, he took his first prolonged meditation course, which consisted of yogic exercises followed first by slow overbreathing and then by increased meditation time. He also took a course that included overbreathing as fast as one could, alternately closing one then the other nostril, to be done after yoga exercises and prior to meditation. He suffered his first complex partial seizure (a form of epileptic seizure) in the fast-breathing program. He left the program, sought a medical diagnosis, and is still on antiseizure medication twenty-five years later. During his seizures (brief periods of loss of contact with what was going on around him) he made jerking, purposeless movements and loud sounds; afterward, he felt confused. His friends reported that during the seizures Calvin didn’t seem to hear them and that he lurched and staggered while jerking and grunting loudly.

- **Visual hallucinations.** “Caryn” meditated for seventeen years. “I saw little creatures with wings during intensive meditation periods,” she reported. “They were like my pets. They’d tell me things. I began to not be able to tell who was a person and who was a deva [a Hindu nature spirit].” The leaders in the group praised her and, no matter how distressed these events made her feel, told her to meditate more and longer. Caryn said she learned how to conceal her fear and confusion because she was terrified of being thrown out of the group. She had affiliated with it at age fourteen and was totally dependent on it. Having been encouraged long ago to break all contact with her family, she had felt she had no place else to go.

Singers examination of Physiological Persuasion Techniques and meditation groups are brilliant. The only problems are that she doesn’t seem to know anything about spiritual crises and how to handle them. Furthermore that she seems to think that ethical instructors of meditation have to be licensed psychologists or psychiatrists who use it as a therapeutic technique, or noncultic meditation instructors who teach meditation as a relaxation technique. This is of course alright, but a true meditation teacher *must* have had experiences to a certain degree, and *must* include the philosophical and religious aspects of meditation, as well as having knowledge about spiritual crises, and how to guide students around these pitfalls, or how to get students out of these phenomena if already in them.

In my article **A Critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork**, I show why the effects of physiological persuasion techniques has nothing to do with
spirituality - (though many of the descriptions sounds similar with true spiritual experiences) – and how they, on the contrary, are leading people on the wrong track.

**Psychological Persuasion Techniques**

*Hypnosis and Trance*

Hypnosis is classed as a psychological rather than a physiological method because it is essentially a form of highly focused mental concentration in which one person allows another to structure the object of the concentration and simultaneously suspends critical judgment and peripheral awareness. When this method is used in cultic environment, it becomes a form of psychological manipulation and coercion because the cult leader implants suggestions aimed at his own agenda while the person is in a vulnerable state.

A trance is a phenomenon in which our consciousness or awareness is modified. Our awareness seems to split as our active critical-evaluative thinking dims, and we slip from an active into a passive-receptive mode of mental processing. We listen or look without reflection or evaluation. We suspend rational analysis, independent judgment, and conscious decision making about what we are hearing or taking in. We lose the boundaries between what we wish were true and what is factual. Imagination and reality intertwine, and our self and the selves of others seem more like one self. Our mental gears shift into receptivity, leaving active mental processing in neutral.

What is happening is that the thought distortion *Magical thinking* is induced in the person. Again we have something that sounds like a spiritual practice namely passive listening presence and neutral observation. That is what seduces many people. But in a true spiritual practice people on the contrary learn to use critical thinking, or discrimination. Central in critical thinking is the discrimination between subject and object, dream and reality - and what are lie or illusion, and reality. The Dominican mystics call this steps *discriminatio*; the Orientals call it *viveka*, discrimination. This is also why all true spiritual masters are very critical towards hypnosis – for example Vivekananda and Krishnamurti (read more about *Magical thinking* in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions* – also see the thought distortion *Confabulation*).

Trancelike states can occur during hypnosis, during complete absorption in reading or hearing stories, and during marked concentration. They are sometimes referred to as *altered states of consciousness*. While in an altered state, for the most part we experience an absence of our usual generalized reality orientation (GRO – which also has with discrimination to do) – that is, we are not actively noticing or aware of our environment and our part in it.
In normal waking life, our GRO is our frame of reference, serving as background to our ongoing conscious experiences, our awareness. Our GRO shapes a context within which we interpret what is going on. This frame of reference can fade away under certain circumstances: hypnosis, one-sided meditation, guided imagery, drug use, fatigue, and sensory deprivation. When our GRO is weakened, we become both more suggestible to outside influences and more influenced by inner fantasies.

A number of cults use techniques that put people into an altered state of consciousness, making them more compliant. They engage members in a fair amount of behavior that induces trances, as evidenced by the types and quality of the lectures and sermons and the required activities, such as prolonged chanting or meditation, and repetitive rote behavior. Trance induction is the model for some of the maneuvers used by cult leaders to change the attitudes and behaviors of their followers.

**Guided Imagery**

Indirect trance induction also grows out of storytelling and other verbal experiences. Cult leaders often speak repetitively, rhythmically, in hard-to-follow ways, and combine with these features the telling of tales and parables that are highly visualizable. They use words to create mental imagery, commonly called guided imagery.

In these guided-imagery exercises, the listener is urged to picture the story being told. The speaker may say, “Stop reflecting. Just go with the picture.” Those who do stop reflecting on their nearby circumstances and go with the picture suddenly feel absorbed, relaxed, and very focused. And guided-imagery stories lead many people to experience altered states of consciousness. For many persons, entering a trance state is pleasurable. It provides a respite from thought about the woes of everyday life.

A considerable number of different guided-imagery techniques (for example reading poetry or being in regression psychotherapy) are used by cult leaders and trainers to remove followers from their normal frames of reference (again: see the thought distortion *Confabulation* in my book *A dictionary of Thought Distortions*).

**Indirect Directives**

Cult members often say to their families and friends, “No one orders me around. I choose to do what I do.” Getting members to think that way is one of the manipulations mastered by cult leaders who have become skillful at getting acts carried out through indirection and implication. Accomplishing this task is easier when the member is in altered state, fatigued, or otherwise anxious or under stress.
Indirect, or implied directives are not only found in cults but are commonplace throughout society.

**Trickery**

I don´t want to convey the idea that cult leaders sit down and plan on a drawing board how they are going to proceed in great detail. But often the leaders have sharpened their techniques as time goes by. Likewise, leaders of different groups may use the same technique.

One example on trickery is the use of the thought distortion called *Truth by Authority*.

There are today a vast amount of non-enlightened, self-proclaimed New Age/self-help gurus (in science of religion they actually have no numbers of this enormous market) who get authority by claiming, that their teaching/technique, either is coming from a state of enlightenment, is being channeled from some kind of divine source, or are coming from clairvoyant abilities (see my articles [Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling](#) and [Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance](#)). They might very well have strange paranormal abilities, it doesn´t matter in this question, because if such teachers put their teaching forward in this way, you can be hundred procent sure, that this teacher has a problem with *ego-inflation* (if he is not directly a fraud -and them there are thousands of within New Age). Why? Because no real enlightened master would argue in this way. True enlightened masters, or sober spiritual teachers, speak from their own source, and are always characterized by humility. Just look at Dalai Lama, who incessantly claims, that he hasn´t reached the full Rigpa, and that he just is a beginner. True enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, are also always philosophers, who are giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions.

Truth by Authority is about taking statements to be true simply because an alleged authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities, etc.) on the matter has said/justified that they are true. A level of critical thinking is always appropriate, because the statement may be based on different kinds of thought distortions, for example *Nondual bias*.

People, who in their arguments/teachings, again and again, have to defer to some authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities) in order to justify their arguments/teachings, are hundred procent on the wrong track, even if they should have some paranormal abilities. Again it is interesting to see, that true enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers,
never do this. And interesting, that probably most of the many people, who have made a business on being clairvoyants/mediums/channelers etc., will fall for Truth by Authority.

**Revision of Personal History**

There is a widespread practice in cults of having the long-term members tell their tales, that is, stand before the group and recount for their personal histories. Groups have different names for this exercise.

Such revision of history is used in both live-in and live-out cults, and the cults’ general purpose in the exercise is “to let members see why being with us is the right place to be.”

Former cult members told Singer that they quickly learned how to tell their own histories by listening to those who had been in the organization longer. New members got the idea right away that they were to tell only sad, negative, unwholesome events, recount only disastrous relationships, and end with praise about the group.

They were never to tell about good times, fine parents, loving siblings, hardworking relatives, or positive life experiences. Families had to be portrayed as abusive, alkoholic, uncaring, self-centered, bourgeois or capitalistic, and otherwise despicable.

Since we are all prone to adapt to the environment in which we exist, it is not surprising that cult newcomers soon begin to revise their personal histories according to what they hear from others around them. With each telling, they will embellish how awful their families are; how meaningless their lives; how sinful, how drug-ridden, how selfish they were before joining the group.

There are several specific reasons why historical revision is important to cults. The group philosophy often rests on the idea that the cult is an elite organization, the new order, and made up of the most advanced beings. Therefore it is necessary for the leadership to make striking contrasts between group members and non-members in order to convince members that the outer world is bad and the group world is good.

New Age and psychotherapy cults are well known for their use of history revision to get members or “patients” to develop and accept a personal history that fits with and justifies the teachings of the cult.

Yet another kind of history revision occurs in groups that practice past-lives work. Various methods are used by the different groups, but as some point members learn they will be going back in time to “visualize and reexperience” their past lives (see
my articles Regression psychotherapy, Paranormal Phenomena seen in relation with clairvoyance and Paranormal phenomena seen in relation with channeling, and the thought distortion Confabulation in my book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions).

**Peer Pressure and Modeling**

The old maxim “When in Rome do as the Romans do” underlies much of our adaption to new social groups. It is both convenient and congenial to adapt. We look around and see models, and we comport ourselves to be like them. Most cults train new members, either through overtly stated policies or by more implicit shaping, to act in ways desired by the group. To increase members’ recruiting potential, typically cults train members to smile, appear happy, be outgoing, and give attention to newcomers.

Peer pressure is an effective means to get people to fit their behavior to group norms. In cults, this works for new and old members alike, going far beyond what is generally seen in society at large. In an atmosphere that states or implies that there is only one way to be and this is it, it is most important to have models around to imitate.

**Emotional Manipulation**

When leaders do not browbeat members into conformity but instead make use of the way people in groups learn through what they see other group members doing, personal behavior and attitudinal changes are less noticeable to individuals. As one former cult member after another have told Singer, “I changed without being aware of it.” This unconscious change is partly due to the power of the contagion of mood in the groups. Cults induce feelings of guilt, shame and fear, and use sex and intimacy controls to keep members dependent of the group.

**Psychotherapy cults**

Psychotherapy cults provide good examples of cult leaders’ use of psychological persuasion techniques, in particular emotional manipulation and peer pressure. These cults tend to arise when legitimate individual or group psychotherapy becomes corrupted, or when opportunistic nonprofessionals simply deceive and prey the unwary.

A major deviance in psychotherapy cults revolves around the therapeutic phenomenon known as transference. Transference is an important aspect of insight-oriented psychotherapy. Normally, the client and therapist examine together the
attitudes the client transfers from earlier life experiences onto the therapist as well as onto other authority persons. Often these are positive expectations, of a “good daddy” for example, but some clients transfer negative attitudes. Both the positive and negative attitudes come out of clients’ own expectations and are not founded on the therapist’s conduct and attitudes.

In cultic situations, however, rather than study and understand the transferences, the therapists/leaders promote their idolization by their patients.

Instead of having their personal autonomy encouraged, patients are led into submissive, obedient, dependent relations with their therapists. The improprieties of the role violations are compounded by the therapists’ use of indirect, deceptive, and coercive influence techniques (or thought distortions as such), which are leading patients to comply with the therapists’ wishes.

All in all: Some of the most potent and common psychological techniques used by cult leaders are trance induction, guided imagery, and indirect suggestion. These methods use thought distortions, and setting to decrease critical, reflective, evaluative thinking. But my claim is that this is not only happening in cultic environments. The whole of what I call The Matrix Conspiracy is based on a war against critical thinking.

And again: in my article A Critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork, I show why the effects of psychological persuasion techniques has nothing to do with spirituality - (though many of the descriptions sounds similar with true spiritual experiences) – and how they, on the contrary, are leading people on the wrong track.

3) Precautions in relation to New Psychotherapies (Where Do They Go Wrong?)

An inability on the part of the therapist to properly diagnose a client’s problem or determine appropriate treatment is a recurring pitfall. This hazard is often rooted in the practitioner’s “single cause – single cure” approach to therapy, which has led many a therapist down a dead-end trail and has created no end of problems for clients.

In life there can be many causes and contributing factors that bring on the various emotional disorders or discomforts that might lead a person to seek therapy. Each person’s problems are unique. Therefore, a therapist should be thought of more as a custom tailor than as an off-the-rack salesperson. The custom tailor looks at and measures the client, discusses and plans with the client what the garment will look
like, how long it will take, how many fittings are needed, and so on, so that the final product is made to fit the specific person.

**The One-Way-Only School of Treatment**

Some therapists, however, fall into a modus operandi in which they proceed as if there were only one cause and one cure for *all* mental troubles. They might apply their one therapeutic approach to everyone who comes into their office (and also often to people around them).

A devotion to one-way-only notions of treatment often grows out of certain limitations in training programs, wherein many student therapists are exposed to only a very narrow range of treatment methods. The single-minded approach also seems to stem from the fact that during graduate school, residency programs, and anxiety-producing field placements, certain therapists-in-training solve their anxiety by simply following without question the dominant theory of their most powerful, best-loved, or most anxiety-provoking supervisor.

Increasingly, however, other sources of one-way-only approaches have been pop psychology books, weekend seminars, and “trainings” from self-proclaimed gurus. In these cases, the assumptions and beliefs are often deeply felt because they resonate within the therapist, who tends to identify with something in the “new” philosophy: being abused, abducted, repressed; feeling like less than a man or woman; having unhappy thoughts about his or her own childhood. Happy to find an instant cure, these therapists actually believe that these single cause-single cure ideas are true and effective.

Latching onto a pet theory of personality or human behavior does a great disservice to clients. Too often, clients are not told that there are many, many theories of psychology, behavior, and personality, each composed of numerous constructs and concepts. A theory, after all, is a mere formulation based on hypotheses; it is a creation, not a truth etched in stone.

**Relying on Personal Beliefs and Assumptions**

Beliefs and assumptions personally held by certain therapists are either inadvertently or intentionally imposed on the client following in this vein of single cause-single cure. The therapists cling to their assumptions, using them as rationales for carrying out a personally motivated therapy. I do not propose to debate or challenge the existence of UFOs, reincarnation, spirit entities, and other notions involved in some therapies. My point is that some therapists themselves become fascinated with, invested in, and personally committed to belief systems that they then inflict on
clients as if the assumptions associated with those beliefs were universally accepted and agreed-upon single pathways to cure.

Some of the more common assumptions fall within the following several major themes:

1. Extraterrestrials exist and are abducting and experimenting on humans on a regular basis, and there is a government conspiracy to cover up this information.

2. All humans have lived one or more past lives, aspects of which interfere with our current life. A subtheme is that various “entities” (human and nonhuman) – spirit beings from “the other side” – reside within individuals and are the cause of difficulties in a person’s life today.

3. Trauma and abuse experienced in early childhood is the root cause of all psychological and emotional problems. This includes having been subjected to incest and other forms of sexual abuse, having been raised by incompetent and “toxic” parents, and even having suffered through the trauma of the birth experience itself. A subtheme is that childhood sexual abuse, including participation in intergenerational Satanic ritual cults, is rampant.

4. It is possible to regress people to their birth moment, then “rebirth” them and bring them up correctly.

5. Emptying out the emotion attached to past and present experiences will cure people. The idea that catharsis brings cure, and especially that screaming out in anger or pain brings a curative release, sort of like an ex-lax for the mind.

6. Relieving traumatic experiences will cure people. The idea is to revivify and relive the remembrance, whether real or imagined.

7. It is acceptable for therapists and patients to have sexual relations, as it makes the patients feel better and is not harmful to them.

8. There is a human mental mechanism that prevents people who have suffered abuse and trauma from remembering this aspect of their lives, and certain techniques can help people retrieve these blocked memories. As visions of specific events come forth in more and more detail, they become like a motion picture of the past abuse and are to be accepted as valid memories.
9. The world is full of certain magical powers. These powers can reside in spirit guides and angels, symbols and archetypes, inanimate objects such as crystals and wands, and potions and herbal treatments. Special, gifted individuals can also have magical powers.

**Using Simplistic Techniques**

Taking the dearly held assumption, some therapists will then concoct a treatment (or will have learned one at a workshop) based on their preferred belief system. Some of these treatments are terrible simplistic and may play out as follows:

*Technique A*

1. On the therapist’s urging, acknowledge that your parents had a terrible influence on you and, just as the therapist says, your mother was especially cold and unloving.

2. Let the therapist hold you like a baby.

3. Put on a diaper and drink from a baby bottle, which you should carry with you at all times.

4. Now you are better, if not cured.

*Technique B*

1. Relax and let the therapist hypnotize you.

2. While in the trance state, go back to a past life (guided by the therapist) and describe who you are, where you are, and what is going on.

3. Look for and encounter the traumatic event that took place during this other lifetime.

4. Afterward, in discussion with the therapist, you will come to an “insight” about how your past-life experiences are interfering with present-day events and actions.

5. Now you are better, if not cured

*Technique C*
1. Recall as much of the real-life incident that is troubling you as possible.

2. Imagine yourself back in the situation and feel the emotion you must have felt then.

3. “Let it all hang out” by expressing every primitive idea, emotion, and impulse that emerges, and this will make you spontaneous and free.

4. Now you are better, if not cured.

None of these techniques – neither A, B, or C, in and of itself – is a proven method of treatment.

**Using faulty checklists**

Some therapists’ opening maneuver is to get a brief history and then pull out one or another of the many checklists currently popular in the healing trades. Using the checklist, the therapist will indicate to the new patient that she meets many criteria of a person who has had certain specific past experiences and that therefore she suffers from x ailment, usually attributed from y past trauma.

Two factors are questionable here:

*Checklists are heavily loaded with universal items to which most people might assent.*

On these checklists we see such phrases as “I dislike speaking before large audiences”; “I do not like going to the dentist”; “I frequently feel feel tired.”

Just about anybody could answer yes to many of these items, from which the therapist concludes patients are suffering from a particular disorder (maybe also one of the reasons why the victimization culture is spreading so much?).

Such lists resemble cold readings done by magicians and mentalists (about cold reading, see my article *Paranormal phenomena seen in relation with clairvoyance*).

*Reasoning backwards from checklist responses is not an acceptable, scientific way to evaluate behavior or diagnose disorders.* In essence, this approach leads to a “formula diagnosis,” and once again fails to consider clients’ individual differences. By making a snap diagnosis and asserting to the client, “You have features in common with persons who...,” certain therapists end up going off on ventures with their clients that tend to support the therapist’s idiosyncratic beliefs by essentially training the patient to fit preconceived patterns.
All in all: the one-way-only notion of treatment is characterized by the thought distortion called Hermeneutics of Suspicion (read my article The Hermeneutics of suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing).

Doing Harm

In some New Age psychotherapies we see a pattern of abuse and harmful effects on clients. These are here described in no particular order, as the consequences may vary for each situation, but as far as I’m concerned, they’re dire on all counts:

- **Most of these therapies are based on myth and fantasy**, not on scientific study showing solid evidence of beneficial effects for the client. Clients are taught to adopt the thought distortion called **Magical Thinking**, which easily filters into all parts of their life and worldview. As a result, clients may tend to look for instant cures for any life obstacle or situation, rather than relying on logic and sound reasoning. This can affect their daily life on the job, their relationships with their friends and family, and their studies, hobbies, and other interests.

- **There is rampant misuse and overuse of hypnosis and other trance-inducing techniques and exercises**, such as guided imagery, one-sided meditation, yoga, and relaxed breathing. Meditation and yoga are useful in the course of a true spiritual practice (and under guidance of a competent teacher), and can have a noticeable healing effect. But when misused and abused – as they so often are when mixed with odd, unfounded psychotherapies and/or hypnosis adopted by poorly trained or single-minded practitioners – these procedures can in fact have a deleterious impact on clients. Practitioners of New Age psychotherapies tend to rely on a lot of hypnosis, as it makes clients more suggestible and compliant.

- **Clients tend to waste time and money on these fad therapies.** Aside from what’s already been spent, clients often need to start all over once they get away from the bogus care. Usually their original problems have not been taken care of, and often new problems develop because of previous practices. Sometimes a therapist abruptly ends the therapy when the client’s insurance coverage runs out or the client can no longer afford the sessions. Ending a therapy precipitously, especially when instigated by the therapist, can often have detrimental effects on the client.

- **In some cases, clients are led to adopt religious or spiritual concepts** in which they previously had no interest and which may run counter to their personal belief system. Although the clients thought they were seeking psychotherapy,
they were in effect put through a religious conversion. For example, being convinced by a therapist that you have lived many past lives is essentially adopting the idea of reincarnation, a concept present in most forms of Hinduism but one that is not accepted in other religions. Unexpectedly taking on this belief during the course of therapy can cause certain clients to experience upsetting internal conflict, and they may not recognize the source of their difficulty.

- Many New Age psychotherapies rely on false notion of memory and of the ability to retrieve memories. Therapists who didn’t do their homework on memory and how it works tend to convey myths and misinformation to their clients, and in some cases set about tampering with clients’ actual memory. For example, some clients are led to believe that they were abducted by aliens, a “memory” they did not have until they went to the therapist and were subjected to many sessions of hypnosis. From this, they can spin off and come up with other “memories” and begin to have an entirely new view of their life or background, which often causes separation from family and friends, who may contradict these new discoveries.

- Countless clients are harmed through sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. Some of these Singer and Lach (I myself have also talked with a lot of such former clients and/or devotees) learn about when a client manages to escape the grip of her therapist and brings charges against the practitioner. But even then, most of these cases are settled out of court and never see the light of day, with the therapist rarely facing public censure, much less revocation of their professional slap on the wrist.

- Numerous clients are not helped to become happier, better-functioning persons. Instead, there are growing legions of conflicted, lonely individuals who find themselves bogged down in interminable therapy or who end therapy worse off than when they began. As mentioned earlier, they may have new problems engendered by the therapy, ranging from serious psychological difficulties to total estrangement from their families. They may even have adopted revised, fanciful, and often tragic personal histories.

Why Did This Happen?

Well, it is a part of what I call The Matrix Conspiracy as such (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy). I use the concept of The Matrix Conspiracy because there is no simple answer to the question of how and why we find ourselves in a society riddled
with bizarre mental health offerings. In connection with New Age Psychotherapies Singer and Lalich can nevertheless identify three factors that have had a crucial influence: (1) the special nature of the relationship between client and therapist, (2) the emergence of the blame-and-change approach in the field of psychotherapy, and (3) the flight from rational thought in our society as a whole.

The Therapeutic Relationship

The relationship between patient and therapist is unique in important ways when compared to relationships between clients and other professionals, such as physicians, dentists, attorneys, and accountants. Consumers enter these relationships expecting that the training, expertise, and ethical obligations of the professional will keep the client’s best interest foremost. The consumer does not expect his accountant to lure him into accepting a new cosmology of how the world works or to “channel” financial information from “entities” who lived thousands of years ago; or for this dentist to induce him to believe that the status of his teeth was affected by an extraterrestrial experimenting on him. Nor does the patient expect the orthopedist to lead him to think the reason he fell and broke his arm was because he was under the influence of a secret Satanic cult.

But seeing a therapist is a far different situation for the consumer. The key difference is present from first contact: it is not clearly understood exactly what will transpire. There is no other professional relationship in which consumers are more in the dark than when they first go to see a therapist. In meeting a therapist for the first time, most consumers are as blind as a bat about what will transpire between the two of them. At most, they might think they will talk to the therapist and perhaps get some feedback or suggestions for treatment. What clients might not be aware of is the gamut of training, the idiosyncratic notions, and the odd practices they may be exposed to by certain practitioners.

Consumers are a vulnerable and trusting lot. And because of the special, unpredictable nature of the therapeutic relationship, it is easy for them to be taken advantage of. This makes it all the more incumbent on therapists to be especially ethical and aware of the power their role carries in our society. The misuse and abuse of power is one of the central factors in what goes wrong (see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help environment).

Blame and Change

Parent bashing is a main theme that has permeated psychotherapy since Freud’s day. This development has for the most part gone unchallenged as a core feature of much psychotherapy. Underlying this approach is a heavy reliance on one of two notions:
one, that getting insight will automatically change conduct (for example Regression psychotherapy); the other, that emotional catharsis will make you a more perfect being.

Using a blame-and-change approach, the therapist never has to have cognitive, behavioral, or psychoeducational methods to assist clients to learn new behaviors. Essentially, blame-and-change therapies imply to the client that if you find whom to blame for your miseries, you will automatically get well and feel better.

Best of all, blame-and-change therapists rarely or never have to confront clients about their characterological problems. These therapists are spared from hearing stories of conduct that might suggest a real lack of sympathy on the client’s part toward their partner, family, and fellow humans. Traits such as a sense of entitlement, self-centeredness, lack of compassion, greediness, lack of responsibility and lying require real skill of therapists to handle and help. But if the therapist is just doing blame and change, she doesn’t has to worry about these other sticky wickers.

(Note: in the area of positive thinking – New Thought, Law of Attraction, NLP, etc. – there is a lot of hypocrisy in relation to blame-and-change therapy, since the therapists/coaches within this area often are talking about that you should not blame. But mostly this is about that you should not blame/criticize their own approach. If you go into it you will soon learn how much they are resting on the blame-and-change model – see my articles The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind, and Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity).

Looking for someone to blame, or something, to blame became a big part of therapy (and also coaching). The philosophy seeped into the thinking of many mental health professionals and other types of counselors. Interwoven were the other two main threads we have discussed: (1) search your soul or memory for that one key insight that will suddenly make everything clear and better (Regression Psychotherapy), or (2) enact, reenact, and feel and emote to purge yourself of the bad feelings, and that will suddenly make everything clear and better (Cathartic Psychotherapy). Each of these three points of views presumes that there is one way and one answer: single cause-single cure.

Gone unchecked, these therapeutic trands – blame and change, insight, and catharsis – have had direct influence on the development of most of the modern New Age psychotherapies. The result has been that certain therapists tend to skip over the reality of the client’s problems, because they do not have methods for realistically helping and can only apply one method of therapy. One size fits all.

*Flight from Rational Thought*
For the past several decades there has been a trend in our society away from science and rational thought and toward magical thinking. Much of this is a result of trends that began in the 1960s with antiestablishment and antiauthoritarian movements and came to be known as New Age. Concurrently there has been a growing interest in self-improvement and self-awareness. Much of this took shape during the 1960s and 1970s and came to be known as the human potential movement. Combined, we have the potential for both expanded awareness and disaster.

But the flight from rational thought into the magical thinking of subjectivism and relativism is not anything new. We saw precisely the same in ancient Greece, with the wandering teachers called “Sophists.” Into the crowded space of Periclean Athens came these wandering teachers, selling their “wisdom” to the bewildered populace. Any charlatan could make a killing, if enough people believed in him. Men like Gorgias and Protagoras, who wandered from house to house demanding fees for their instruction, preyed on the gullibility of a people made anxious by war.

To the young Plato, who observed their antics with outrage, these “Sophists” were a threat to the very soul of Athens. One alone among them seemed worthy of attention, and that one, the great Socrates whom Plato immortalised in his dialogues, was not a Sophist, but a true philosopher.

In order to go further into this “flight from rational thought” you will need to go into my concept of The Matrix Conspiracy (again: read my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

So, as mentioned in the start of this article: a common thread in the blame-and-change model is the belief that a person having problems is not likely to be responsible for those problems. This is, among other things, due to their root in reductionism (again: see my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

4) Conclusion

In general, if your therapist is telling you that you have to get worse before you get better, is tearing you apart rather than building you up, is letting group members insult and ridicule you, is insisting that you must go deeper and deeper and deeper to feel the feeling, or is doing anything that smacks of old-fashioned ventilation theories, get out as fast as you can and look for a supportive therapist who will listen and respond with human decency.

If you are treated with disdain for asking about what you are buying think ahead: how could this person lead you to feel better, plan better, or have more self-esteem if he
begins by putting you down for being an alert consumer? Remember, you may be feeling bad, and even desperate, but there are thousands of mental health professionals, so if this one is not right, keep on phoning and searching.

All in all: you should not trust your therapist, regardless of his or her reputation, fame, diplomas, certificates, etc., if:

1. He or she tries to have sex with you or claims that having sex with one's therapist is "good therapy." Intimate sexual behavior, including erotic kissing, fondling or lovemaking, between therapist and patient is always inappropriate. (The Sexual Predator)

2. He or she tries to have you move in and do chores, keep the books, work the farm, have sex, etc. (The Exploiter)

3. He or she spends a lot of time during your sessions talking about his or her own personal problems, such as her husband's illness, his wife's frigidity, another patient's hang-ups, his sexual needs. (The Neurotic)

4. He or she requires as a condition for therapy that you cut off all relations with your spouse, children, parents and other loved ones. (The Cult Guru)

5. He or she claims to know what your problem is and how to fix it, even though no thorough history of you has been taken. (The Savant Idiot)

6. He or she claims that you must be hypnotized in order to discover either hidden memories or hiding entities which are causing your problems. (The Exorcist)

7. He or she specializes not in treating people for specific problems such as depression or anxiety, but rather in treating people as if all problems have an identical cause. (The Johnny-One-Note)

8. He or she claims to have a technique which works miracles or works like magic, curing those who had heretofore been considered hopeless. (The Miracle Worker)

9. He or she has a checklist which is claimed to be an excellent way to find out if you suffer from whatever the therapist specializes in, and you have enough checks to qualify. (The Scientist)
10. He or she requires as a condition for therapy that you accept certain religious, metaphysical or pseudoscientific notions. To have good therapy you should not be required to believe in God, reincarnation, alien abductions, possession by entities, inner children, Primal Pains, channeling, miracles, or any of the many pseudoscientific theories popular among therapists. (The New Age Pseudoscientist)

Regression psychotherapies

(This article is the second in a series of three articles on New Age psychotherapies. The first is The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy – the third is Cathartic psychotherapies).

The cause of suffering is in philosophical counseling (true spiritual counseling) due to a separation of the observer and the observed (see my article Philosophical Counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy). The investigation is directed towards the observer (the form of consciousness: the one who evaluates, who says yes and no, who accepts and denies, who compares with earlier and hopes/fears something else), and not the observed (the contents of consciousness: feelings, thoughts, experiences, sense impressions, memories, wishes, hopes, fears, lusts) as in psychotherapy. The main question is therefore in its essence philosophical: Who am I?

Regression psychotherapies are based on the notion that if you discover the cause of your troubles you will be cured. These psychotherapies are (like other New Age psychotherapies) partially attached to science (they often use a lot of pseudoscientific technical jargon without any meaning at all – most extremely this is seen in Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP)), partially to spirituality (the therapists often call themselves spiritual counselors). In this confusion they are oblivious to the observer, and are lost in the observed. Therefore they are ignorant about the one who creates the causes. The causes become built into the psychotherapy itself, and are therefore ideological worldviews, or just pure prejudice. It is causes such as inadequate parents, sexual abuse, satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, past lives, alien abduction, possession by entities, etc. Take your pick. Often they use a one-size-fits-all explanation of every emotional disorder.

These therapists are, in the best Sophist way, planting such causes in their patients minds. They give their patients books to read or videos to watch. They plant them
during hypnosis, group sessions, etc., and then these planted causes are “recovered” and offered as validation of their therapeutic techniques and theories. Patient after patient is paraded forth by the therapists as evidence of their good work, yet none of the patients seem better for the therapy and many seem hopelessly ill. The reason is, that it is not that to feel better, which is the cure, but that to have “discovered” the cause (see my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception and the thought distortions Communal reinforcement, Confabulation and Priming effect in my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

Rather than helping clients to become stronger and more independent, most regression psychotherapies, and in particular the rebirthing-reparenting sort, induce in the client an abdication of responsibility and a state of sickly dependence on the therapists.

Contrary to what they claim, then regression psychotherapies create a philosophical hindrance for the opening into the spiritual source, namely an existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt (also seen in Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)). About philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the source: see my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings.

Past life regression is considered “pure quackery” by the American Psychiatric Association.

My articles A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork and James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy are showing the dangers involved when using Regression psychotherapies in a spiritual context.

In the following I will, with Margeret Thaler Singer’s and Janja Lalich’s book Crazy Therapies, as a frame of reference, go into a closer examination of different kinds of Regression psychotherapy.

The article consists of four parts:

1) Regression, Reparenting, and Rebirthing

2) Past-Life/Future-Life Therapy

3) Entities Therapists and the Channeling Connection
4) You Were Abducted by ETs – That’s What the Matter Is

1) Regression, Reparenting, and Rebirthing

Various forms of regression therapy combined with the use of mind-altering techniques are rampant in the United States and abroad. As of 1992, one “corrective parenting association” formed in the mid-1980s reportedly had 350 member therapists. This figure represents but a handful of the therapists and counselors who believe in these unfounded theories and use potentially harmful methods.

Proponents of regression therapies often refer to their work by a variety of names, sometimes making them hard to detect at first glance, especially for the uninformed potential client. In general, these therapists combine suggestion, guided imagery, and hypnosis to reinforce their encouragement of marked regression—a method that can be psychologically disastrous to many persons.

Because objective research on regression techniques is limited, the assumptions about regression remain merely myths based on anecdotal reports form enthusiastic proponents. In fact, Sondra Ray states several times in one of her books that there is no research and there are no accurate records or statistics; she even claims that it isn’t her job: “Rebirthers consider themselves to be spiritual guides, not scientists.” So much for reality checking or scientific verification.

As mentioned in the beginning: rather than helping clients to become stronger and more independent, most regression therapies, and in particular the rebirthing-reparenting sort, induce in the client and abdiction of responsibility and a state of sickly dependence on the therapist. This is a blatant abuse and misuse of the power relationship inherent in the therapeutic process; it is in effect the exploitation of the client’s emotional vulnerability. The “Mommy” or “Daddy” therapist who is supposed to parent the client correctly is in fact playing with fire, potentially entrapping and crippling their “children,” and causing undue suffering and in some cases long-lasting damage.

Where Do These Ideas Come From?

Most schools of psychotherapy believe that childhood and the early years of life have formative influences on the adult personality. But some therapies—regression, direct analysis, reparenting, corrective parenting, and rebirthing—are based on the untested assumption that a therapist can regress patients to infancy in order to reparent them, even rebirth them, and then bring them up correctly. Believers claim that these therapies are able to alter, repair, and even reverse the alleged negative impact of someone’s early life experiences, simply by making babies out of clients and having
them relive the experiences – only this time, supposedly, the therapist is going to carry out the parenting in the right way.

The underlying assumption is that an adult first needs to be regressed in order to act like and be treated as a small infant; then, through “corrective parenting” by the therapist, the patient will emerge as a more ideal person. Some therapists who engage in rebirthing and reparenting techniques feed adult patients from baby bottles; have patients suck on therapists’ breasts, thumbs, and penises; instruct patients to wear diapers and to engage in such behaviors as being cuddled as an infant, being made to stand in the corner, and even being physically restrained and beaten, sometimes brutally, by the reparenting therapist. This type of therapy may go on for varying lengths of time. Singer and Lalich have heard of some that lasted as long as seven to ten years.

This unfortunate and dangerous theory is grounded in a widespread tendency in our society toward “parent bashing,” in which parents are blamed for not producing totally happy, satisfied, creative, wonderful offspring. For several decades, some professionals have ignored the fact that there are other significant influences on human personality – namely, genes, illnesses, physical conditions, and social and political conditions such as wars, poverty, crime, and natural disasters. Parents have been blamed for every misery their offspring have suffered: being fat, thin, sickly, depressed or schizophrenic, or just plain dissatisfied with their lot in life.

So, my point is - when we are talking about spiritual practice and spiritual counselors (which these New Age psychotherapists, as we have seen, call their practices and themselves) - that in order to understand what a human being is, what suffering and happiness are, it is, in the end, necessary to take a philosophical starting point, and not a psychological. I have tried to explain this in all my books. In A Portrait of Lifeartist, I, for example, explain it by investigating the human being as respectively a historical being, a rational being, a desirous being, a natural being, and a communicative being. The whole thing as a kind of diamond, where traditional philosophical problems are put into a concrete spiritual practice.

The tendency of “parent bashing” can be traced back to Freud. Who readily blamed parents for his patients’ supposed problems. The belief reached its zenith in the 1940s and 1950s within the ranks of traditional psychoanalysts. A primary wave of attack was on mothers. Some were labeled “schizophrenic” and accused of causing schizophrenia in their children, while other mothers were called “homosexual-inducing.” By the late 1940s some therapists were proclaiming that their patients’ parents were unloving, mean, intrusive, and controlling, and had in effect harmed, if not ruined, their offspring. From there, some therapists deduced the solution that the all-loving therapist would restore the patients by bringing them up properly.
Pioneers in Regression and Reparenting

Two therapists in particular, Marguerite Sechehaye and John Rosen, received considerable attention as forerunners in the use of regression and reparenting therapy in their work with schizophrenic patients. Colleagues in the field readily praised Sechehaye and Rosen for their innovative methods.

Sechehaye and Rosen began by claiming that their massive regression techniques, coupled with authoritarian control, would cure schizophrenia. Fortunately for them, the post-World War II period was an era when people were willing to justify extreme forms of therapy in an effort to “cure” schizophrenia. Because it was also a time when parents, especially mothers, were being vilified in the world of therapy, the severing of family ties and the regression techniques were tolerated, even lauded, by other therapists. They accepted the “logic” of thinking that perhaps rough treatment and separation from families would cure a major mental illness. But soon not only schizophrenics (who also never have a constituency looking out for their welfare) were subjected to this treatment; almost anyone who went into certain therapists’ offices was open game for being regressed and reparented to cure any ill.

Sechehaye was an academic psychologist and psychoanalyst in Geneva, Switzerland. She developed a method called “symbolic realization,” with which she treated a twenty-one-year-old schizophrenic woman for more than ten years. Sechehaye had the woman live with her; she fed her and in general parented her in a warm way. For about seven of those years, the patient was acutely psychotic and cared for as a baby would be. Sechehaye had concluded that the woman’s problems grew from a lack of maternal love.

Renee, the patient, referred to Sechehaye as “Mama.” Holding an apple against her breast, Mama would then feed the girl by cutting a piece of the apple and having the girl lie against Mama’s breast to eat. The raw apple was to be “breast milk” for Renee. Sechehaye’s treatment was far more symbolic than the reparenting therapies developed by others, which became more and more overt, and sometimes even sinister, in their “mothering” practices.

John Rosen, a physician who had been analyzed but never trained as a psychoanalyst, originally professed in 1947 that his new method, which he called “direct analysis,” led to schizophrenic patients “recovering” and having their “psychosis resolved.” Claiming that his patients had not been loved during childhood, Rosen reported spending sometimes as much as ten hours a day with one patient. What was eventually revealed about what went on in those sessions is almost too horrific to imagine. Some of the techniques were tantamount to extreme violence and torture.
An article by Rosen in a 1947 *Psychiatric Quarterly* reported on thirty-seven of his cases. Rosen claimed that all thirty-seven individuals recovered. Six years later in his book *Direct Analysis*, Rosen reported that thirty-seven of the original sample were no longer psychotic and were doing well. Yet, in a follow-up study in 1958, nineteen of the former patients from Rosen’s report were located by researchers at the New York Psychiatric Institute. They found that seven of the nineteen were not schizophrenic at that time, nor had they ever been; instead, six were evaluated as neurotic and one as manic-depressive. These independent researchers concluded that “the claim that direct analytic therapy results in a high degree of recovery remains unproven.”

Finally, in March of 1983, thanks to the courage of a number of Rosen’s former patients who came forward to speak out and expose the abuses they suffered, Rosen surrendered his medical license. He had been charged with “sixty-seven violations of the Pennsylvania Medical Practices Act and thirty-five violations of the rules and regulations of the Medical Board, [which included] the commision of acts involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption, as well as misconduct in the practice of medicine, praticing medicine fraudulently, beyond its authorized scope, with incompetence, or with negligence.”

In fact, unbeknownst to many, as far back as 1960 Rosen had lost a case in New York in which he had been accused of beating a female patient. From investigation, depositions, and testimonies given regarding the various charges against Rosen, information came forth about the kind of care patients were given at Rosen’s facilities. Striking, stripping, and beating patients were a regular occurrence. Patients were kept locked in security rooms without toilets, and at least two patients died. Both male and female patients were sexually abused by Rosen and forced to engage in the most atrocious acts with him and sometimes with other patients.

Rosen may have lost his license, and you might think that his case is an exception due to his personality, but this is not so. His therapy is called *Direct Analysis*, and the confrontational techniques that he professed live on today. The reason why patients not are exposing all this is either because of fear or embarressment, but it can also be due to the thought distortion called *Subjective Validation*. Subjective validation is active when people will validate a set of statements allegedly about themselves as highly accurate even if these statements *not* are accurate (read more about subjective validation in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions*).

**Baby Bottles, Berating, and Beatings**

As mentioned, many of Rosen’s methods have filtered into the profession and are alive and well today in various therapies that regress and infantilize clients to the point of having them drink from baby bottles and be humiliated and punished in other
ways. When asked by author and researcher Jeffrey Masson in an interview in 1986 if he still used the methods he learned from Rosen, a doctor replied that he used “physical methods that included shaking patients, sitting on them, and wrestling with them.”

Because there is more awareness and concern today about abuse and patients´ rights, the doctor qualified his comments by saying that “he would use something like the cattle prod only experimentally.”

Some regression therapists like to call what they do “little work.” You know, making patients little again.

_**Jacqui Schiff and Cathexis**_

In 1967 the social worker Jacqui Schiff turned her home into a care facility for severely disturbed young adults. A few years later she wrote a bestselling book – _All My Children._

Schiff´s establishment grew as she took in more young adults to be reparented in this way, incorporating regression techniques into the setting. She referred to these young adults as “our babies.” She wrote, “Now we out all our babies in diapers and feed them from bottles and let them sleep as much as they like.”

Virginia authorities closed the place in 1971 because the home was unlicensed and “endangered the health, safety, welfare, and lives of the patients.”

The Schiff facility moved to Alamo, California, where in 1972 an eighteen-year-old schizophrenic resident died after being placed in a bathtub of scalding water. He had been stripped naked, bound hand and foot, lowered into a very hot bath, and fatally burned.

Schiff´s adopted son Aaron, who had become a therapist at the facility, pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of manslaughter, which was reduced even further to misdemeanour child abuse.

Another resident testified that she had been kept tied to a chair for six days and five nights. She eventually managed to escape. When authorities refused to renew the licence on the Alamo facility, Schiff moved to Oakland and set up the Cathexis institute.

Jacqui Schiff was a member of the International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA); to the dismay of some, within a few years her reparenting ideas had become accepted by the ITAA. In fact, in 1974, only two years after the scalding death just
described, Jacqui and her son Aaron were given the Eric Berne Scientific Memorial Award. Before long, Schiff’s reparenting theories became extremely popular among those who practice Transactional Analysis (TA), and study of the techniques was incorporated into TA training.

**Matrix in Missouri**

Matrix (also known as the Mid-America Training and Reparenting Institute, Inc.), a Kansas City psychotherapy Institute, took up the reparenting-regression techniques popularized by Schiff. During lawsuits against the clinic, it was revealed that the clinic had a supply closet with stacks of adult diapers, a kitchen with baskets of bottle nipples, and a pantry full of baby food and Zwieback toast. Wherever one turned there were bottle warmers, buckets of baby wipes, baby silverware, even a changing table! Much of the therapy was done by unlicensed psychotherapists. Not only schizophrenic patients were treated here.

Handcuffs, ropes, and other physical restraints are also not uncommon sights in reparenting centers in US and around the world.

Between 1988 and 1994 at least four legal cases were settled by the organization – all in favor of the former patients who were mistreated and abused.

**The Case of Paul Lozano**

Harvard medical student Paul Lozano committed suicide in April 1991 after being subjected to the regression-reparenting treatment of a Harvard psychiatrist, Dr. Margaret Bean-Bayog. At the end of his second year of medical school Lozano sought treatment for depression and was seen by Bean-Bayog almost daily for the next four years.

Bean-Bayog had never before used regression therapy with any patient, but she set about regressing Lozano to the age of three: “We invented a baby version of him.” At Bean-Bayog’s suggestion, she and Lozano role-played during his therapy sessions: she would be the mother, he the three-year-old baby. With no proof, but latching onto another popular trend, Bean-Bayog concluded that Lozano must have been sexually abused by his mother as a child.

According to the records, Lozano had no history of abuse or mental illness before he entered Harvard Medical School. He said at one point that his so-called memories were brought forth by him “as a means of retaining Dr. Bean-Bayog’s interest and affection.”
After his death, two books and numerous articles on the case appeared. The dead student’s family sued the psychiatrist and accused her of seducing Paul and driving him to suicide.

Bean-Bayog relinquished her medical license. Additionally, fifty-five pages “describing the most graphic sexual fantasies in Bean-Bayog’s own handwriting,” was introduced as evidence.

**Born-again Therapy**

A variation – some might consider it an offshoot – of reparenting is the idea of rebirthing. The therapeutic schemes are organized around the birth process itself. Rebirthing therapists offer clients the idea that in ordinary human birth there is trauma, especially trauma around breathing. Some of these therapists have concocted rebirthing, which is a method of teaching patients to imagine going through the birth process in order to learn “proper breathing.” Patients are told that the traumas of ordinary birth, suffered by us all, can be cured in this manner.

**The Origins of Rebirthing**

Leonard Orr, generally regarded as the founder of modern-day rebirthing, developed his theories by spending considerable time in a bathtub having “revelations.” In 1974 he began to suspend friends in a redwood hot tub with snorkels and nose plugs. During these immersions, many of them began to get in touch with (as they said back then) certain of their own destructive behavioral patterns. A number of them said they experienced their own birth during the process. As Orr and his friends introduced it to others, rebirthing as a therapy began to spread.

After a time, Orr apparently came to realize that his very presence was an important part of the rebirthing event. He attributed this to the belief that he had released enough of his own birth trauma that other people felt safe to experience theirs with him in the hot tub. About a year later, Orr began working with the breathing pattern he felt happened at birth, but this time without using a hot tub. It then became apparent to him that it was the “rebirther” (that is, the person leading the session) and the method of breathing that were important, not so much the warm water.

In later versions of rebirthing people have been rebirthed in ordinary home tubs in blue bubblebath solutions, and in outdoor redwood hot tubs under starry skies. Others have succumbed to “dry rebirths,” being tolled into a carpet on the floor and made to struggle to free themselves in order to “reexperience the birth process.” Some have been wrapped in a series of blankets and rebirthed on an office couch.
One certified hypnotherapist who advertises on the Internet describes rebirthing as a form of hypnotherapy and as a “patterned breathing process which allows you to access and resolve blocks that are held in the body.” Without qualifiers, she asserts that hypnotherapy is safe, and a trance state is a natural and familiar state, and that it can benefit you. She states that the technique of rebirthing combined with hypnotherapy will work for dealing with compulsive behavior, weight problems, anxiety, and phobias; that it will heal the child within related to abuse, abandonment, self-esteem, and improved relationships; that it will reduce stress and improve concentration; that it will improve health, pain, cancer, and chronic illnesses; that it will elevate performance in selling, communication skills, sports, dance, and art.

As far as Singer and Lalich can tell, rebirthing is magic.

Major Leaders in Rebirthing

Sondra Ray and Bob Mandel are two big names in the rebirthing field. Their organization, previously called Loving Relationships Training, has recently taken on the new name Association of Rebirth Trainings International. Weekend sessions described as “educational and experiential” cost between $275 and $300. Participants are told that not only will they experience two rebirths during the weekend, but also “you will be helped to locate and release any negative decisions you may have made at your birth and which are still affecting your current life.”

In Ray’s and Mandel’s book, a chapter is devoted to every imaginable type of birth: premature or late, unwanted, fast or held back, cesarean, wrong sex, induced, breech, forceps – you get the picture. The authors enumerate what they view as typical traits of those who were birthed in a particular way.

Stereotyping people and giving them all the same simple solutions seems to be a major characteristic of many of the odd New Age psychotherapies that have emerged over the years (see the thought distortion Representativeness bias in my book A dictionary of Thought Distortions). Regression, reparenting, and rebirthing therapies fall on a narrow path, like most other New Age inventions. The innovators found themselves doing something: sitting in a hot tub, berating patients, or feeding them out of baby bottles. It felt good or worked for the therapists, so they made some assumptions in order to create an ideology that would support practicing the method on others. Without much thought, and little or no proof, the technique was expanded to become a “cure-all” for all people (see my article The difference between philosophical education and ideological education).

An additional factor that tends to make a risky situation worse is that some forms of therapy – which initially might gain support as “a breakthrough,” “creative,”
“innovative,” or “a paradigm shift” – are not inspected critically by the professional community. Instead, these therapies are allowed to harm a number of patients until the courts are asked to evaluate the conduct of the therapists, the rationality of the therapy, and the extent of the damage done. Sometimes public inspection or legal redress never occurs, and the therapies continue to be promoted for decades, with the on-going potential for outlandish or disastrous consequences.

Age regression, reparenting, and rebirthing are not proven helpful techniques, no matter what the therapists themselves might be writing on their websites. There is no scientifically established or objective clinical evidence showing them to be beneficial.

2) Past-Life/Future-Life Therapy

If going back to birth isn´t enough, there´s another group of therapists willing to take you even further back. They practice what’s known as past-life regression therapy. When asked during an interview how far back he’s taken people, one past-life therapist said, “To the stone age.”

How popular is this therapy? From perusing advertisements in New Age journals and alternative publications, we can surmise that in that milieu past-life work is offered more than almost any other proclaimed method of treatment (and also supported by the entertainment industry of the Mass Media).

A national professional association devoted to past-life research and therapies has close to one thousand members. One recent report claims that today there are thousands of practitioners of past-life therapy, most of them trained at seminars around the country. The more popular ones are said to charge as much as three hundred dollars per session. Responding to a question about whether people come to him not only for help but out of curiosity, past-life therapist Glenn Williston said, “Sure. I respect that people are curious. I don’t reject anyone. After all, it is their own money they are spending, so why not have some fun? I don’t mind having fun!”

Between 1977 and 1990, past-life therapist and psychic researcher Dick Sutphen has had “almost one hundred thousand people” attend his seminars throughout the United States, where he conducts past-life regressions en masse with the seminar participants. He claims to have established a “nationwide metaphysical network that communicates with millions of people a year via books, audio/video tapes, seminars, and Master of Life magazine.” He expresses pride in often being criticized as “commercial.” His book Earthly Purpose is the story of a mass reincarnation. By reading it you can discover “whether you are one of the 25,000 souls who pledged to reincarnate in a bright new age.”
Dr. Bruce Goldberg, a Baltimore dentist who began practicing hypnotherapy that evolved into past- and future-life work, has also attained national popularity. He has conducted past-life regressions on Donahue, Oprah, Joan Rivers, Montel Williams, and Kathie Lee, as well as on CNN and other television and radio stations. With more than thirty thousand client regressions into the past and progressions into the future since 1975, Goldberg claims that no patient of his has ever been harmed. Goldberg lectures, gives seminars, and is consultant to corporations, the media, and attorneys.

Brian Weiss, a psychiatrist trained at Yale Medical School and well-known in this field, is said to have a client waiting list of two thousand, with more than one hundred new referrals a week. Weiss’s first book, Many Lives, Many Masters, which has sold more than a million copies in various translations, describes his past-life therapy with one client. The book jacket includes endorsements from the chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health Sciences at the Medical College of Wisconsin, as well as from former instructor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School.

Entertainer Shirley Maclaine also deserves enormous credit for generating public interest in past-life experiences. Maclaine’s best-seller Out on a Limb, first published in 1983, sold millions of copies and continues to sell well. In this book, the celebrated actress goes on the journey of all New Age journeys in the hopes of determining whether or not she had known her current lover in a past life. Maclaine describes having out-of-body experiences and past-life recall; going to various trance channelers to communicate with entities and disembodied spirit guides; learning about the “cosmic connections” between UFOs, extraterrestrials, and spiritual intelligence; and experiencing astral projection.

Not only was there a five-hour television movie about the book, but Maclaine also took her show on the road, with a lecture tour and large group seminars. One financial writer for Money magazine estimated at the time that Maclaine would gross four million dollars for putting on seventeen weekend seminars.

There’s no denying the influence that Hollywood box-office personalities have on the general public. If Shirley Maclaine is promoting New Age and occult philosophy, from belief in the power of crystals to channeling, astral projection, and spirit guides, it must be okay. Right?

Wrong.

Besides my own experiences with a spiritual crisis, as well as having had many people in philosophical counseling who were harmed (sometimes in spiritual crises)
by all kind of misleading New Age psychotherapies, Singer and Lalich describe some examples in their book.

One unhappy gentleman called into *Larry King Live* when Shirley Maclaine was a guest on the show to denounce the ideas being put out, saying that such ideas had completely “blown apart” his family.

“My wife...in a time of depression went to a psychic healer and was told that in a past life I had murdered her and run off with her teen-aged daughter. I’ve not seen her in two years. I think she was looking for a crutch to avoid dealing with the realities of life – thinking things would be better the next time around. I think there’s a certain group of people that can be damaged irreparably by this type of thought.”

In numerous cases of which Singer and Lalich are aware, clients have been harmed in a variety of ways. When the therapy ends. Often because the client runs out of money or the client’s insurance coverage runs out, the client is left stranded with a sense of victimization and unreality.

The past lives conjured up during therapy are rarely happy ones, and the fiddling with memory that goes on in these sessions tends to leave some clients confused and dysfunctional. Victims of this kind of therapy often have complaints such as, “Every day I have problems with almost everything I do because I keep wondering if something is real or not,” or “I just can’t get anything done anymore. I feel sort of paralyzed by the godawful scenes running through my head.” Such negative aftereffects tend to occur because the type of vivid imagery invariably produced in hypnotic sessions of past-life recall are not easily forgotten: mass murder, rape, strangulation, burning at the stake, vicious physical assault. Scenes that would be X-rated in the movies become unforgettable repeat performances during so-called past-life work.

Linking such horrendous past events to something in the present prolongs and reinforces the detrimental effect. If even for a moment a person really believes, for example, that she was a prostitute in a past life, a victim of gang rape by Viking warriors, or murdered by her current best friend, certainly the aftereffects of such thinking are not so easily erased.

Singer and Lalich have never heard of a happy past-life account, the excuse being that clients are dealing with today’s problems, so naturally they’d be rooted in past-life unpleasantness. Yet how “reliving” such nastiness can be touted as healthful, spiritual, and refreshing goes far beyond the scope of Singer’s and Lalich’s imaginations.
The Concept of Reincarnation

Past-life therapy is based on the concept that we have lived many other lives before this one – essentially a belief in reincarnation. Past-life therapists tell us that identities and events experienced in our past lives are causing us hagups in this life and that we need to revisit our past lives and reexperience the trauma in order to get rid of the ghost, so to speak (the theory of the need of revisiting and reexperiencing traumas in order to get rid of them, origins in modern-day experiential psychotherapy, and has nothing to do with the spiritual traditions, and their philosophies of reincarnation and karma – I explain the dangerous misunderstanding in detail in my article A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork).

Although past-life therapy technique has become particular trendy in recent years, few realize that first Colavida in Spain and then Albert de Rochas in Paris were using age regression during trance work as the late 1800s. De Rochas is said to have written the first book on the subject, published in 1911. Past-life work has always generated controversy and skepticism, and in 1921 one critic complained about de Rochas: “Subjects are so open to suggestion during trance that their ostensible memories of past lives would be merely responses to de Rochas’ dominant and suggestive presence.” Could this also be what’s happening today?

What past-life therapists not are aware of is the thought distortion called Confabulation. A confabulation is a fantasy that has unconsciously replaced events in memory. A confabulation may be based partly on fact or be a complete construction of the imagination. The term is often used to describe the “memories” of mentally ill persons, memories of alien abduction, and false memories induced by careless therapists or interviewers (read more in my book A Dictionary of Thought distortions. Also read my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception, where other thought distortions active in hypnosis are described).

I do not intend to challenge or offend the belief in reincarnation held by many as part of their belief system. It’s also a part of my own philosophy of life. I merely hope to call attention to those practitioners who are wont to use hypnosis and suggestion to induce a supposed past-life experience in their clients. I draw a distinction between religious or spiritual beliefs held by individuals and those therapy techniques that promote the acceptance of certain concepts because of the influence of a predisposed practitioner.

Past-life therapists seem to disregard or summarily dismiss the fact that the notion of reincarnation is a religious belief, not an accepted scientific tenet of psychology or
psychiatry. Looked at in the cold light of day, past-life therapy is a form of spiritual or religious conversion intertwined with mental health counseling – although that’s rarely how it’s described by the practitioners. Rather, they would have you adopt an interpretation of reincarnation that tells you that we’ve all had past lives, that they effect our current lives, and that by remembering those awful things that supposedly happened to us centuries and eons ago, we’re going to feel better today. It’s a pseudopsychological approach to karma, a spiritual belief.

The paradox is that the problem with past-life therapy not only is a problem with pseudoscience. If you go to the traditional spiritual traditions (especially Tibetan Buddhism and Indian schools of philosophy), you will, again and again, hear the true masters tell you that nobody, and nothing, can help you with your karma, your past or future lives, etc. Only yourself can discover your karma through spiritual practice. Everything else is cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive (read my article A Map of The Spiritual Journey in my book Dream Yoga. Also read my articles What is Karma? and Paranormal Phenomena seen in relation with Clairvoyance).

As with other odd New Age psychotherapies, past-life therapy involves leading a client to accept a belief system and the language that goes with the belief system. This practice shows no respect for either the scientifical validation of mental health approaches or human individuality and freedom of choice.

**Shaping Responses Through Hypnosis**

One of the problems with past-life, future-life, and a lot of other New Age psychotherapies – and ideologies – is the misuse of and overreliance on hypnosis as a therapeutic tool. The problem is not, that hypnosis can help some people loose weight, quit smoking, or overcome their fear of flying (though I don’t recommend hypnosis at all). The problem is, as with any procedure, in the wrong hands it can be misrepresented at best and harmful at worst. It is not magic, nor does it bring about instant recovery from troubling symptoms. Unfortunately, at present, the practice of hypnotherapy is not monitored sufficiently.

In the United States today there is anywhere from ten to fifteen thousand lay hypnoterapists, many of whom became certified by taking perhaps a weekend seminar or a brief series of courses. There are no licensing requirements, no prerequisites for training, and no professional organization to which those who hypnotize others are accountable. You can be a real estate agent, a graphic artist, an English teacher, or a hairdresser and also call yourself a hypnotherapist by hanging a certificate on your wall that states you took as few as eighteen hours of courses in hypnosis (in my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy, and the art of self-deception I
have included a description from a former hypnotherapist, who today regrets his business).

This lack of oversight leads to all sorts of abuses and malpractice. Inadequately trained people using hypnosis may find themselves practicing psychotherapy without a license. They are unable to diagnose serious psychological difficulties their clients might have; should they sense that they are in over their heads, many tend not to refer clients to more qualified professionals, and many are generally not aware of the common pitfalls of using hypnosis. They are also often the same people who tend to latch onto whatever “personal development” trend may be in the wind.

**You Have Been Here Before Already Tomorrow**

Meanwhile, some therapists are supporting the idea of future-life progressions. Glenn Williston states that “our future selves affect us as much *now* as our past selves...You can influence your past and future personality aspects by knowing the truth *now*, and all are affected *now*.”

Bruce Goldberg, the dentist from Baltimore, claimed in 1982 that he knew of “no other therapist in the country who does progressions” – that is, who takes clients forward in time. Progressions require more conditioning, Goldberg unabashedly tells us, because humans are programmed to think of the future as mysterious and inaccessible. “Yet,” he writes, “if we weren´t supposed to know the future, progression simply wouldn´t work.” And it has worked big time for him: he claims to have done thousands of progressions as well as regressions with his clients.

Having heard so many of his clients talk about the future, Goldberg makes sweeping but rather benign predictions for the future, which include the following:

- Twenty-first century: Earth will undergo major geographical changes; scientific progress will be most evident.
- Twenty-second century: much advancement in medical science will be evident.
- Twenty-third century: sophisticated computers and video equipment are household appliances.
- Twenty-fourth century: a small-scale nuclear war results in a reduction of the world´s population.
- Twenty-fifth century: androids perform all menial tasks.
He describes the twenty-sixth century what could be regarded as absolute bliss.

Goldberg assures clients that they never have to worry about getting stuck in the future. As with regressions, he says no one has ever been harmed. As a safeguard, though, Goldberg uses a special protective shield. He has the client “imagine a pure white light entering the top of the head and filling the entire body...That is all there is to it,” writes Goldberg, who states that his white light wards off any harm or negativity.

Well, again, if we take the true spiritual traditions, then they say that a good philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmacially talk and experiences of the “experts” and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape.

None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. If you namely use the karma idea in that way (the idea of a person’s spiritual destiny), it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards or forwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

The genuine karmacially structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, a guru, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost. It is your awareness in the now that will find the progressive karma, and this awareness you can of course only practise yourself.

And, as mentioned, the spiritual traditions again and again emphasize that only Man himself can find the progressive karma (his spiritual destiny; the dreamtracks and songlines in his spiritual journey; the map that shows his way to enlightenment). The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what people through a system may be able to think about the collective time, or fantasize about karmacially experiences and spiritual evolution. Nobody can tell you about your karmacially structures, or your spiritual evolution (or the world’s spiritual evolution), or what will happen if you use their techniques. All people, models or techniques - clairvoyants, regression therapists, astrologers, shamans, channelers, Ken Wilber’s integral method, Holotropic Breathwork, Human Design system, Law of attraction etc., etc.,
etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmacial – that is: with your spiritual growth – are, according to the spiritual traditions, cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmacially course (a person’s life-history, destiny) and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that’s the same with all spiritual.

3) Entities Therapists and the Channeling Connection

Entities therapists teach their clients that certain beings did not at the point of death “pass over” or fully transition from life on earth to another plane or afterlife. Instead, they took up residence as spirits, or entities, living in the clients’ bodies. Depending on the situation, these therapists may wait a few sessions before introducing this idea and claiming that they will help rid the client of the spirits and the trouble they are causing.

The terms entities, spirits, discarnates, earthbounds, walk-ins, and possessors are used interchangeably by the practitioners of this trade. A few therapists advertise that they also deal with ghosts – spirits outside the client – as well as those inside a person.

These therapists assert that cure rests on the use of hypnosis and regression therapy to recall the spirits that have invaded the person, and that the spirits are the origin of the client’s conflict, pain, or other symptoms. Some entities therapists also tell clients that the clients’ descriptions of their parents indicate that they too may have been invaded by entities. At some later point, the therapist and client begin the exorcism ritual, by which the entities are dispatched, freed, and sent out of limbo into eternity. In most cases these exorcisms are emotional and quite violent proceedings.

Some entities therapists work alone, incorporating the entities idea into their therapy techniques after having attended one or more weekend seminars on channeling. Therapy may entail months of getting clients to locate, name, “experience,” and release (or get rid of) what sometimes turns out to be a multitude of inner entities.

Other therapists work collaboratively with a “channeler,” a special person who claims to have the ability to communicate with and speak for entities and long-gone beings. The entities supposedly exist on a reachable plane, from which they can be contacted by a tranced-out channeler. In such cases, the therapist, client, and channeler meet
together. While the client is in a hypnotic trance, the therapist is told by the channeler, who also goes into a trance state, which entities are present within the client. Occasionally clients are told that helpful entities reside within the channeler or that the channeler can be useful in convincing some of the client’s entities to assist in the process of getting rid of the other bad or troublesome entities.

Simply put, entities therapists combine ages-old trance mediumship with a form of modern-day exorcism. They seem to have little trouble finding a vulnerable population on which to foist their theories, for surveys show that 23 percent of Americans believe in reincarnation, 14 percent believe in mediums, and 42 percent believe they have been in contact with someone who died. That’s anywhere from 3.5 million to 10.5 million people who might make the leap to accept communication with the dead as a therapeutic practice.

In connection with terms like entities, spirits, discarnates, earthbounds, walk-ins, possessors, ghosts, entities therapy, exorcism and channeling read my articles Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena, The awakening of kundalini, Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling, Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance, Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice, and Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences.

Misuse of Hypnosis, and Other Ethical Issues

What seems astonishing is that some past-life and entities therapists, as well as others who use hypnotic regression techniques, have no grasp of the fact that through trance visualizations they are causing their patients to feel as though they had killed or destroyed living beings during the so-called releasing process. Much of this stems from the misuse of hypnosis. If therapists using trance induction fail to recognize how the patient is responding or being affected, it is likely that things will go awry.

For some reasons, entities therapy almost always tends to include violence and harsh imagery. The images visualized during trance can be so scary and vivid that often the hypnotherapist’s later explanations to bring the client back to reality simply don’t penetrate the client’s mind. The client tends to remain stuck in the very concrete and vivid early portion of the session and therefore continues to be troubled by the destructive images.

Besides the misuse of hypnosis, the behavior of certain therapists raises other ethical issues. For one, they are offering a quasi-religious/spiritual schema under the guise of scientifical psychology. They are in fact teaching their own brand of life-after-death
philosophy. By introducing this belief system as a necessary part of therapy, entities therapists, like past-life therapists, may be encroaching on the religious beliefs and rights of their clients.

Second, there is no scientific basis on which they can rest their therapy scheme, and they generally fail to warn clients that it’s an untested therapy. In fact they often, like New Age theorists as a whole, use the thought distortion Research has shown that...(see my book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions).

Third, they rarely alert the client to the likelihood that the process of dispensing the entities will be extremely emotional.

Fourth, these therapists bypass working on getting to the root of the actual symptoms that brought the client to therapy in the first place.

Most entities therapists appear to have little or no concern for these ethical issues or for patient rights. All told, entities therapy seems to be yet another potentially hazardous route for the consumer on the New Age market.

4) You Were Abducted by ETs – That’s What the Matter Is

Certain therapists have become entranced with the idea that UFOs and alien life exist. In so doing, their interests appear to have overridden their role as unbiased and objective therapists and have turned them into hunters for “experiences,” or those individuals who are not only believed to have been abducted by extraterrestrials but also to have been experimented on like lab animals. Believing as they do in this phenomenon, these alien-abduction buffs, like other Johnny-one-note therapists, tend to project their beliefs onto their clients, conveying to clients that their personality problems are due to the trauma of having met up with alien creatures, or extraterrestrials (ETs).

As with other fad therapies, more and more practitioners – both lay and professional – have jumped on the bandwagon, or spaceship, as the case may be. Most recently, Harvard psychiatrist John Mack’s book Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens hit the bestseller list. In 1992, a conference held at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T) brought together several hundred mental health professionals, scientists, and experiencers. This meeting garnered even greater publicity for the subject of alien encounters and resulted in a 683-page publication of the conference proceedings and a 478-page book by C.D.B. Bryan, a respected journalist.
The conference was cochaired by John Mack and M.I.T. physicist Dave Pritchard. According to Bryan, Pritchard told him: “It’s not that M.I.T. endorses the conference. It’s that they endorse the principle that the faculty should be given enough rope to make fools of themselves.” Although many other professionals might be looking on with a great deal of skepticism, books by professionals with respectable credentials nevertheless lend a certain credibility to this phenomenon.

Edith Fiore’s 1989 book on her experiences as an alien-abduction therapist includes a list of twenty-six hypnotherapists working with abductees. In his 1994 book, Richard Boylan, a prominent name in this field, listed forty knowledgeable counselors who work with experiences of close ET encounters. Boylan, whose name appears first, will have to remove himself from the list, however, because in August 1995 his California psychologist license was revoked on seven counts of gross negligence with three patients. “‘Space alien’ shrink loses his license,” announced the news headline. According to the State Board of Psychology, quoted in the article, Boylan “abused his role as a therapist when he imposed his personal views on the existence of extraterrestrials into the dreams and memories of two patients.”

Still, the number of people doing alien-abduction therapy is growing by leaps and bounds, as is obvious with even a cursory review of ads in New Age and alternative newspapers, magazines, and circulars, or Internet postings such as the following: “I have a MA in Transpersonal Psychology and I specialize in working with clients who have had UFO abductions and/or UFO experiences. My practice is limited to the Boulder/Denver area, but I am willing to consider doing some therapy over telephone with clients in other states. I am also in the process of starting a local support group...Serious Inquiries Only Please.”

Here is another: “Abduction Experience? Explore safely with regressive hypnosis by professional hypnotist David Bolton, using techniques developed by Dr. David Jacobs. This offer is only available in the United Kingdom and a small fee of £ 20 will be charged. If you are interested, email...for further details.”

Most ET therapists tend to believe that alien abductions of humans are a widespread occurrence. “We can estimate that an average of more than 3,000 close encounters (CE-IVs) occur in the United States every 24 hours,” writes Boylan, explaining that this is a very conservative estimate. At that rate, Boylan and others in his camp are suggesting that more than one million U.S. inhabitants are being contacted by ETs each year. Possible the gentleman featured in the following headline from the Arizona Republic was one of them: “Confessed killer says UFOs made him do it, will defend self at trial.”
ETs Are the Cause of Your Trauma

A therapist who has an overriding special interest in a single source for personal distress can soon, if not immediately, jump off the path of paying attention to the patient´s presenting problems and instead focus on those special interests. As a result of such single-mindedness, the diagnosis tends to be shaped by the therapist´s favored theory of causality – in this case, trauma based on a supposed encounter with a UFO or an ET.

Similarly, the patient´s own recounting of his or her past history is molded and reinterpreted by the UFO-fascinated therapist as one indication after another that ETs were involved in long-forgotten episodes in the patient´s life. The patient´s personal history and family experiences are reframed to fit the therapist´s notion that alien creatures are the source of the patient´s current symptoms or personal discomfort.

Alien Probes and Therapist Prods

In alien-abduction therapy, as in other enhanced-memory therapies, the therapist sets the context for the patient by indicating that she regards ETs and the so-called close encounters as central to the patient´s problems. The therapy generally involves repeated use of hypnotic techniques, putting the patient into a trance state. Sometimes patients are primed (see the thought distortion Priming effect) by being given UFO literature to read prior to the hypnotic sessions. Could anybody doubt that this would have an influence on the “memories” later “retrieved” during hypnosis?

Context as Influence

In alien-abduction therapy, the client is usually told that hypnosis will be used in the attempt to uncover forgotten ET experiences. And as we have seen, clients often are given literature on ETs and UFOs to read before the next session. In the field of psychotherapy, such preconditioning and expectations are called the “demand characteristics” of the situation.

Demand characteristics are those features of the therapy that will be experienced by the patient as cues or subtle incentives to act or respond in certain ways. Certain therapists remain blissfully unaware of, fail to consider, or deny the impact of the following:

1. The powerful influence of the setting

2. The therapist´s power position
3. The nature of hypnotic imagery

4. The patient’s fantasies about each of the above

When we go to a dentist, podiatrist, or accountant, we expect the professional to be interested in teeth, feet, or finances, respectively. How can ET specialists not be aware that their reputations and interests precede them?

Social psychologists and hypnosis researchers have for some time studied the demand characteristics of professional interactions. Psychiatrist Martin Orne writes: “The cues as to what is expected may be unwittingly communicated before or during the hypnotic procedure, either by the hypnotist or by someone else, for example, a previous subject, a story, a movie, a stage show, etc. Further, the nature of these cues may be quite obscure, to the hypnotist, to the subject, and even to the trained observer.”

As Orne noted, the patient responds to cues of all kinds. These actual and imagined properties determine and color both what is revealed and the participant’s demeanor in the situation.

When a person goes to a therapist known and spoken of in the community as an expert on ET abductions, the client is already influenced, or primed, by such ideas. She may feel, for example, that the therapist will only like her or work with her if she reports ET abductions, and that her pain and distress no matter what their origin will be treated only if she presents ideas the therapist is interested in, and she knows he is interested in ETs. Similarly, a lonely patient who feels insecure and unworthy may be fantasizing that she will become part of new, emerging “special group” – that is, those allegedly abducted and experimented on by space aliens. Being a “contactee” will allow her to be a “special person.”

Practitioners of this type of therapy, as well as those evaluating what is transpiring in the field, must acknowledge the very real possibility of this priming and influencing of patients through the therapist’s reputation (as mentioned earlier: see for example Brian Weiss’s purported thousand-person waiting list. Surely those people have an expectation of what might occur when they finally see Dr. Weiss.) And aside from the influence of ads, articles, and direct contact with others, we must not forget that this is the electronic age.

Television talk shows, twenty-four-hour radio call-in programs, and Internet newsgroups continously update and comment on what is new and trendy. Abductees
report on their experiences with ETs in all those venues. Therapists appear on talk shows supporting the “experiences.” Viewers learn which therapists provide such therapy, and pick up on the general scripts.

Many of these therapists disregard how clients who present themselves as having had such experiences could have gotten their material from all the myriad sources operating in our society. Some therapists, however, don’t seem to bother at all with reality. Fiore said, “I have no desire to prove that the experiences really happened, any more than I do with my patients who ‘discover’ they’ve been sexually abused.”

How Did UFOs Get Mixed Up with Therapy?

Throughout history people have claimed to have had contact with otherworldly creatures: spirits and ghosts; beings from the sea, the sky, and the lower world; gods, witches, werewolves, and dwarves; flying machines, monsters, and devils; angels, fairies, demons, and leprechauns. Occasionally, people have claimed that beings of one kind or another transported them to other spheres, or that they observed or were subjects of strange and improbable acts done by these beings.

The historical background that contributes to the current combining of UFOs, ETs, and psychotherapy began after World War II. The first publication reporting a person being taken by a UFO was published in 1957; it described an alleged abduction in Brazil. In 1966, John Fuller reported on an American case, which is considered to be the real introduction of this phenomenon to the American public: on September 19, 1961, Barney and Betty Hill, a couple returning from Montreal to their home in New Hampshire, reported that their car was “flagged down by small gray humanoid beings with unusual eyes” who were in a strange craft. The Hills felt they could not account for two hours during this journey.

For two years afterward, Barney had trouble sleeping and Betty had frequent nightmares. They reported after considerable hypnosis that they had been taken from their car onto a craft where sexual examinations were performed on them. They declared that the beings communicated telepathically in English and instructed the Hills to forget what happened.

Because of Fuller’s book and a made-for-TV movie about the Hills’ experience, the alleged encounter was big news, in spite of the conclusion by the psychiatrist who saw the Hills; that Betty and Barney Hills had experienced a shared dream of fantasy, or folie á deux. There was growing interest in “experiencers” and close encounters, or CE-IVs, as they came to be called in the world of people fascinated with UFOs. A close encounter of the fourth kind is supposed to be “a physical visit to the immediate
location of a human being by one or more extraterrestrial, three-dimensional, intelligent beings (ETs), usually for purposes of communication, education or removal to a UFO craft for special procedures.”

Claims of abductions multiplied during the 1970s and 1980s. UFOlogist Budd Hopkins (also a painter and sculptor) and historian David Jacobs are said to have interviewed “nearly five hundred people reporting such encounters” during a seventeen-year-period (from 1975 to 1992). Jacobs, a professor of history, performed more than 325 hypnotic sessions with abductees.

One of the climactic moments at the 1992 M.I.T. conference was the presentation of the results of a 1991 Roper national survey, used by many abduction proponents as the source of their figures to show the supposed prevalence of alien activity, contact, and abductions. Richard Boylan, for example, who we quoted as saying that there are three thousand ET contacts every day in the United States, based his estimates on the poll, during which the Roper organization carried out a wide-ranging survey of 5,937 adult Americans. Seeded with the survey were eleven questions on UFO-related and other “unusual” experiences. Hopkins and Jacobs made calculations of the number of yes responses to the seeded questions and presented their conclusions at the M.I.T. conference: that at least 2 percents of adults (one out of every fifty) in the United States may have had UFO abduction experiences.

Arriving at their own base estimate of 185 million people after certain demographic exclusions, Hopkins and Jacobs announced in effect that nearly four million Americans have had ET encounters! The idea for the poll and the publication of the results in a sixty-four-page booklet was backed by Las Vegas entrepreneur Robert Bigelow.

When abduction proponents present these figures today, rarely do they mention the reception of the data at their very own conference. Journalist Bryan, who was there, described the audience reaction: “Following Hopkin’s Roper Poll presentation, the M.I.T. lecture hall is in uproar. Scientists in all corners of the large room protest that the survey is ‘full of holes!’” Criticism centered on the faulty assumptions, lack of scientific basis, and lack of systematic pretests. One psychology professor asked why anyone “should pay attention to unvalidated poll data.” Indeed.

Unfortunately, many in the counseling field are being influenced by the alien-abduction fad, which is reinforced by media publicity; without thinking twice, many practitioners are foisting it onto their clients.

**Fact, Fiction, or Urban Legend?**
Therapists who support the idea that ETs abduct and experiment on humans on a regular basis and that the “remembering” of these incidents by clients will cure a variety of ills display some gross errors in reasoning. Let’s look at John Mack’s writings and statements about the subject. Remember, Mack is a medical doctor, a renured professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, supposedly trained in scientific reasoning. He not only disregards the contextual settings in which he meets these patients, but he also posits logically indefensible explanations for why he accepts their tales without question.

Mack’s explanation for his acceptance of what he heard from alleged abductees can be summarized as follows: (1) the stories, told by individuals who had not communicated with each other, were consistent; (2) they had some forth reluctantly, fearing that their stories would be discredited or that they would be ridiculed; and (3) they did not seem psychiatrically disturbed. “There was nothing to suggest that their stories were delusional, a misinterpretation of dreams, or the product of fantasy,” he wrote. Mack relies on these features to justify his acceptance of abductees’ reports. At the same time, he also carefully states: “I am not presuming the physical reality of the person’s experience.”

Like other alien-abduction therapists, Mack gives us a variety of catch-all symptoms and indicators. These include, among others:

- The memory of a “presence” or “little men” in the bedroom
- Vivid dreams of being taken into a strange room where intrusive procedures were done.
- Awakening paralyzed with a sense of dread.
- Intergenerational abduction experiences.
- Fear of night, hospitals, flying, elevators, animals, insects, sexual contact, of being alone, of the dark, of exposed windows at night.
- Odd rashes, nosebleeds, cuts, lesions, rectal bleeding, sinus pain.
- Difficult pregnancy, gynecological complaints, gastrointestinal complaints.

Is everyone covered? Do we all know somebody, including ourselves, who can now explain away something, if not everything, by having been abducted by ETs?
Mack says that in order for him to take an abductee seriously, the person has to show sufficient sincerity and appropriate emotion in telling the abduction story. Of those included in Mack’s sample for his book, two are two-year-olds! What exactly is appropriate emotion for a two-year-old recounting his or hers abduction by ETs?

Various researchers have cited numerous refutations and alternate explanations for the kind of thinking Mack now represents (the thought distortion *Ignoring Alternative Explanations*). For example, because many experiencers report that their encounters with UFOs or ETs were sleep related, it’s likely that these so-called experiences are simply night dreams and hypnagogic imagery. Those who describe frightening experiences accompanied by full-body paralysis possibly went through the rather common experience known as sleep paralysis, which occurs in 15 to 25 percent of the population. Sleep paralysis is typically accompanied by feelings of suffocation, the sense of a presence, and hallucinations.

As for alleged encounters that are not sleep related, the person’s suggestibility and interests must be considered. In one study of people who claimed to have seen UFOs and of other people who claimed actual encounters it was learned that “subjects in both groups believed strongly in the reality of UFOs than did comparison subjects.” Those who described more elaborate experiences also held other esoteric beliefs.

Another important factor is that there are no corroborating witnesses to abductees’ tales, except for experiencers who are married or closely related and vouch for one another.

The total lack of any physical evidence also bears some weight in any kind of objective evaluation. Even Mack says that “the experiential data, *which, in the absence of more robust physical evidence*, is the most important information we have” (emphasis mine).

In trying to make sense out of this phenomenon – that is, what some might consider a rather widespread belief among primarily U.S. and British citizens that they’ve been abducted – there are several factors to consider. If so many people in the United States claim to have had a UFO abduction experience or an encounter with an extraterrestrial being, what’s going on? There are plenty of theories, aside from those put out by people who simply believe it’s all true.

Some say that those who put forth such stories are akin to people who engage in sadomasochist activities: that they are looking to experience a loss of self, a loss of
control, including pain and humiliation. What could be more humiliating than a bug-eyed creature sticking a pipe up your behind?

Some say that those who believe they’ve been abducted were actually sexually or physically abused. Rather than face the real perpetrator, they blame poor old ET. Still others say that those who believe they were abducted by aliens have also fabricated that they were sexually or physically abused by a human. Lots of vivid imaginations out there.

Singer and Lalich’s assessment of the widespread nature of this belief in alien visits and abductions is a little more down-to-earth. As they have presented in their book Crazy Therapies, they believe that much of it comes from therapist prompting, only this time the Procrustean bed is a spaceship.

Some of it also comes from the fact that information and ideas travel so rapidly today, thanks to television and computers. In the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, there are eleven hours of talk shows every day on regular TV (not including cable stations). People are very much influenced by what they see and hear on those shows, which love to cover such juicy topics as ordinary citizens having been whisked off in souped-up space vehicles and felt up by an alien or two. Later, people tend to forget where they heard about the incident; this is called “source amnesia” and is a very common occurrence (clairvoyants and psychics are very dependent of source amnesia in their clients, who forget that they themselves are the source of information, which the psychic then later miraculously reveals – see the thought distortion Cold Reading in my book A Dictionary of Thought Distortions).

Still others take up the belief because of its popularity. The idea of UFOs and “things” from outer space has been with us for centuries. In the past few decades, the belief has become something of an urban legend – that is, it’s become part of our cultural makeup (also see the thought distortion Confabulation). Certainly the monumental success of Steven Spielberg´s films on the subject – Close Encounters of the Third Kind and E.T. – has added to the acceptance of the idea by many millions.

Another alternate explanation could, in some cases, be that the experiencers are in a spiritual crisis (see my article Spiritual crises as the cuase of paranormal phenomena).

Finally: we should not forget that the closest star (besides our Sun) is so far away from Earth that travel between the two would take more than a human lifetime. The fact that it takes our Sun about 200 million years to revolve once around the Milky Way gives one a glimpse of the perspective we have to take of interstellar travel. We
are 500 light-seconds from the sun. The next nearest star to Earth's sun (Alpha Centauri) is about 4 light-years away. That might sound close, but it is actually something like 24 trillion miles away. Even traveling at one million miles an hour, it would take more than 2,500 years to get there. To get there in twenty-five years would require traveling at more than 100 million miles an hour for the entire trip. Our fastest spacecraft, Voyager, travels at about 40,000 miles an hour and would take 70,000 years to get to Alpha Centauri.

Despite the fact of the improbability of interplanetary travel, it is not impossible. Perhaps there are beings who can travel at very fast speeds and have the technology and the raw materials to build vessels that can travel at near the speed of light or greater. Such beings must be on a very high level of intelligence, both scientific and philosophical (that is, among others: ethical). Have such beings (who by believers often are described as a kind of reptiles or bugs) come here to abduct people, rape and experiment on them – and thereafter leaving them in existential unreality? I doubt it. Therefore the whole thing sounds much more like the low level of intelligence humans are on.

**Doing Harm**

Whichever side of the fence one wishes to be on in this discussion, one nevertheless must not ignore the potential for damages and the real damages being done to clients who end up in this kind of therapy.

Alien-abduction therapists are spreading fears, encouraging magical thinking, and instilling paranoia in their patients. Some of these therapists adopt sinister theories such as those Hopkins puts forth: that aliens are among us in order to carry out genetic study, and we humans are merely a part of a massive breeding experiment. They get clients to believe they´ve been experimented on or impregnated, or that they have given birth to starchildren. Clients are led to believe that they´ve had probes shoved up their noses, rectums, and penises, or that implants were put inside their heads and various internal organs and under their skin.

Others, like Boylan, profess that the U.S. government is engaged in psychological warfare against its own citizens. Part of these “PSY-WAR operations,” as he calls them, are to dress short humans in alien costumes and have these “aliens” abduct people in order to confuse them and make them think they were abducted by real ETs. Clients are frightened into believing that they have been or might be subjected to electroshock, torture, drug injections, and cultic ritual sexual abuse. That is an example of what I call a conspiracy within a conspiracy; that is: a conspiracy theory
which creates an illusion rather than an attempt to uncover the truth (read more in my article *The Matrix Conspiracy*).

Alien-abduction therapists are misdiagnosing and in many cases ignoring serious psychological problems that should be attended to. In some cases, they are actually causing psychological difficulties in their previously normal and stable clients.

*Related videos on my YouTube Channel:*

*Ofra Bikel “Divided Memories”*

**Cathartic psychotherapies**

*(This article is the third in a series of three articles on New Age psychotherapies. The first is *The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy* – the second is *Regression psychotherapies*).*

Cathartic psychotherapies are based on the notion that if you express your feelings you will purge yourself of your troubles. We have probably all heard this because psychotherapy today have spread far out over its disciplinary limits, and have become a part of an ideology, that thinks it have to take care of, not just psychological problems, but also philosophical, political and religious problems. In schools and in workingplaces we are for example forced to lay bare our feelings on the slightest occasion. Cathartic psychotherapies are therapies such as Primal therapy, Gestalt therapy, Experiential psychotherapy, Holotropic Breathwork, Energy breathing, etc., etc.

Psychotherapy is a branch of psychology, and therefore something scientific, which has to be empirically tested (see my article *The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy*). The problem is that there is no evidence for the notion that you will purge yourself for your troubles if you express your feelings. On the contrary. The notion seem disproved by experiments with children, which find that rather than sublimate aggression when encouraged to be aggressive, the children become more aggressive. Why is that?

The problem is that cathartic psychotherapies are neglecting the importance of thoughts. Feelings are the body’s reaction on the mind (the thoughts). Feelings arise where the mind and the body meet. They are reflections of the mind in the body.
Feelings can also be a reflection of a whole thoughtpattern. A thoughtpattern can create an enlarged and energycharged reflection of itself in the form of a feeling. This means, that the whole of the thought´s past also can create a reflection of itself in the body. And if this past is filled with pain, then it can show itself as a negative energyfield in the body. Eckhart Tolle calls this the emotional painbody. It contains all the pain you have accumulated in the past. It is the sum of the negative feelings which you have ”saved together” through life and which you carry. And it can nearly be seen as an invisible, independent creature. Therefore we also could, as H.C. Andersen does in his fairy tale, call it the Shadow.

The painbody is the inner demon, or the devil in the heart. Some painbody´s are relatively harmless, some are anxietyfilled, depressive or angry, others are directly malicious and demonical. They can be passive or active. Some are passive 90% of the time, others are active 100% of the time.

The painbody is the expression of suffering itself, as well as an expression of violence (see my articles The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can´t heal it and Suffering as an entrance to the Source).

The painbody is activated in the same moment as specific challenges activate the inappropriate basic assumptions, which have been created by bad experiences in the past. And they are being maintained by the vortex of negative automatic thinking, which follows from these basic assumptions. In other words it constitutes a rather particular reaction-pattern, a manuscript, which gets you to play the same role (or the same roles) again and again. That will say, that specific situations will continue to activate it, so that your actions become an eternal repetition of the same. It takes control over you, so to speak.

Therefore you should of course not seek to activate your painbody, as the cathartic psychotherapies believe you should, because they thereby also activate the negative thoughtpattern behind the painbody. The painbody lives of, that you are identified with the negative thoughtpattern behind it. In this way the painbody gets your energy. And for that reason you also give energy to your negative feelings, when you activate your thoughtpattern. Negative feelings will in other words increase if you express them. And the painbody is, through the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around, connected with the more dangerous dephts of the collective history of the astral plane. The energies found here are unfathomable, and when you direct them into your painbody, you are really facing problems (see my article Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena).

Instead you should relate completely neutral in relation to your painbody, and through critical thinking seek to explore, re-structure and change the inappropriate
basic assumptions, rules of living and thought distortions, which are the thought pattern behind the painbody. That is how philosophy and true spirituality works (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

Also read the philosophical question What are feelings? in my book Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader.

My articles A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork and James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy are showing the dangers involved when using Cathartic psychotherapies in a spiritual context.

In the following I will, with Margeret Thaler Singer´s and Janja Lalich´s book Crazy Therapies, as a frame of reference, go into a closer examination of different kinds of Cathartic psychotherapy.

The article is divided into following parts:

1) The Venting Notion
2) Variations on Letting It Out
3) Merge, Purge, Cathart
4) What About Scream Therapies?
5) Catharsis Therapies Today
6) Counter Theories to Letting It All Out

1) The Venting Notion

As mentioned: some therapists promote the idea that airing your feelings will correct many problems, both intrapsychic and interpersonal. Emotional ventilation is supposed to relieve inner miseries. These therapists seem to assume that negative or bothersome emotions are like moths in old clothes: shaking the old clothes out and hanging them on the line to air them will make the moths go away. But is the same true for feelings?

Of course it can be helpful to talk about how we feel or to tell a therapist about our deepest or most troubling thoughts. Indeed, under certain circumstances with certain persons, beneficial results may ensue. But first, remember that talking and acting out are two different things. And second, this rather widely held notion that expressing feelings willy-nilly is just great is simply not backed up by research. Yet, a host of
therapy procedures are derived from assuming that this ventilation brings genuine, positive healing.

The venting notion did not originate with therapists; it has roots in the Greek concept that watching a stage play and emoting along with the story serves a cathartic purpose. Aristotle felt that viewing a tragic drama would allow catharsis to occur for the audience, draining off especially pity and fear.

Psychotherapists use two terms – *catharsis* and *abreaction*. Catharsis is a purifying or figurative cleansing of the emotions. Abreaction is the release or expression of supposedly repressed ideas or emotions that are believed to be causing conflict in the person. Letting out thoughts and feelings in words, behavior, or the imagination is the desired aim.

### 2) Variations on Letting It Out

Letting it out, or venting, may take many forms, and as with other crazy New Age psychotherapies, most practitioners who hold that catharsis is curative tend to add a personal twist. Although most people probably associate painful feelings with some kind of cathartic experience, one innovation, the Mystic Rose, incorporates laughing and silent meditation into the process. Based on the teachings of the late guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the assumption behind Mystic Rose is that extended fits of laughter and crying jags are doorways to personal transformation. Rajneesh had a large following and a lively commune in central Oregon in the 1980s. One historian noted that many Rajneeshees came from the “caring professions,” were social workers and psychotherapists.

A current version of Mystic Rose in Marin County, California, offers a three-day short course for $250. Each day is made up of three hours of laughing, followed by three hours of crying, followed by three hours of meditation. Enthusiasts can also take a three-week course of the same daily regimen. The Marin therapist who is leading these sessions said in a local news report that “there’s no analyzing, no therapy. It just allows [feelings] to heal. It’s very simple.”

Another local psychotherapist quoted in the same story offered some words of caution. Dr. Gerald Amada said, “It sometimes poses a risk for people to express intense feelings if they don’t have a context for those feelings, if they don’t get a sense of perspective about them so they’re not just feelings. Catharsis is not in and of itself curative. It’s naive to think that it is.”

But maybe such a naivety was the reason for why former member of the Rajneesh cult, Richard Price, considered the encounter groups taking place at the Rajneesh
Ashram in India to be authoritarian, intimidating, and violent. He observed and had learned from former members that violence was being used to enforce conformity to an emerging new order rather than to facilitate growth. Price described witnessing broken bones, bruises, and abrasions. He remarked that Rajneesh’s professed compassion was not reflected in his groups. And maybe such a naivity was the reason for why the Rajneesh cult in Oregon attempted to poison the water supply in the town of The Dallas and harm public officials in Wasco and Jefferson Counties for carrying out the laws of the state, which the group didn’t want applied to them?

Over the years all kinds of venting notions have been put forth. Letting it all out in one way or the other became a goal in and of itself. And if clients were resistant, their therapist or their fellow group members would prod them on, sometimes not so nicely. Most recently, with the advent of inner child therapy, generally attributed to John Bradshaw and his admirers, props of all sorts have been adopted to encourage the patient to play the role even more fully. Therapists themselves have engaged in this behavior, often serving as role model for their clients.

At a recent meeting attended by Singer and several thousand mental health professionals, a number of women and two men were wearing baby carriers with teddy bears or dolls in them. When asked about the carriers, each person claimed that she or he was nurturing the “child within.” Some elaborated, saying they carried the doll or bear to remind themselves to cater to their own inner child and not to be caught up in just doing what they were supposed to do, but “to do something special for myself all day long.” Others said they were giving the doll all the care, warmth, and closeness they never got from their families. Another said, “I have to constantly remind myself to be good to myself.”

One woman stood out with the unusual doll. She had a huge stuffed monster doll hanging over her arm. The creature was made up of a mixture of clothing and fur and had a completely distorted monster face with protruding eyeballs and scary teeth. The woman’s nonverbal behavior was also eye-catching. She strode in long, strident steps, much as musical comedy singers would stride onto the stage announcing some feat. Bouncing on the woman’s arm as she angrily strode along, the large doll was very ugly but obviously expensively made.

When asked about the doll, the woman replied: “It’s my monster mother. I carry this day and night so I won’t forget what a monster my mother was to me. My therapist has me do this because I keep thinking good things about my mother and forgetting how she was. But I say now: ’This is my monster mother. I won’t forget what a monster mother my mother was to me!’” She was engrossed in the role and delighted to vent venom on her monster mother. She strode off, the doll dangling and banging against her thigh.
This kind of venting – whether of hatred, anger, frustration, sadness, or even joy – if taken too far can result in extreme behavioral problems, exacerbated personal difficulties, and emotional instabilities. Often the client gets a lot worse before getting better, and he or she usually gets better only when the venting behaviors are stopped.

3) Merge, Purge, Cathart

The cathartic method as a mental practice within the field of medicine was introduced in 1877 by Josef Breuer, perhaps best known for his theory of hysteria and his use of hypnosis. Later, these ideas were taken up by Freud. These two men felt that hypnosis allowed the airing or expression of emotions that were attached to ideas and early-life memories not easily available to the patient. (Freud eventually rejected the use of hypnosis in favor of his technique of free association.)

Much of the background and beliefs about psychotherapy as it is practiced today by many therapists grew out of theories of personality developed in the late nineteenth century. Those outmoded models of how the mind, emotions, and body work were based on the hydraulic models of that time. When Freud, Jung, Adler, and others were theorizing, feelings and the mind were conceptualized as akin to fluid in a bottle that would leak over the top if the bottle got too full.

Twentieth-century science brought us other models – such as cybernetic and systems models – that more nearly represent how the complexities of the human mind and body are organized. The simple water-pressure, hydraulic model is an inadequate, inaccurate model for human functioning. Yet the impact of the period in which those early pioneers in psychotherapy wrote continues to color and actually to distort some of the constructs used today to explain behavior. One misconception is that letting it all out will make everything better.

The cathartic idea was reinforced both by the age-old folk belief that seeing a tragic drama would assist people in releasing pent-up emotions and by the perpetuation of the unfounded theory that such emotional purging was a universally useful and efficient technique. The last quarter century has seen the emergence of all sorts of “let it all out” therapies, ranging from therapists teaching people to scream and beat pillows to therapists teaching people to confront each other in groups and in other ways “abreact” and “cathart.” The idea of expression through vividly emoting is central to these ventilation therapies. The faulty assumption is that it is beneficial for a person to air anger and hostility.

*Attack Therapy*
Attack therapy is an outgrowth of ventilation theory. Here the patient becomes the subject of verbal abuse, denunciation, and humiliation. This assault may come either from the therapist in individual sessions or from peers in a group context. Sometimes both methods are used. This negative and destructive development in therapy was encouraged by two major influences. First came the growth of unmonitored group therapies, which took hold in the late 1950s and continue to this day. Second was the widespread popularity of some form of therapeutic encounter. The actual therapeutic value of much of this type of work with clients is highly questionable.

In the 1960s and 1970s the world witnessed a kind of free-for-all approach to psychotherapy (due to the spread of postmodern intellectualism – subjectivism and relativism – the same approach to science, treatment, philosophy, spirituality, etc., etc., is today seen in the New Age environment). As life became faster paced, so did the quest for a quick and radical cure for all problems, including psychological and emotional ones. Groups, which until that time were quite sedate and conventional, suddenly turned into “marathon” encounter sessions that went on for hours, days, or entire weekends. Therapy – whether one-on-one or in a group setting – took on a confrontational and piercing quality. In many cases there was no history taking at all, simply an almost coercive thrust to deal in the “here and now,” often with a stress on nonverbal techniques. As one critic put it, “Tact is ‘out’ and brutal frankness is ‘in.’ Any phony, defensive or evasive behavior...is fair game for...critique and verbal attack.”

It seems that with the acceptance of this pressing immediacy, all sense of propriety and ethics was thrown out the window. There were no rules, no standards, no guidelines in this milieu where the overarching goal was to express and experience feelings. It’s not surprising then that more violent and active psychotherapy techniques would arise in this out-of-control climate, and that the abreactionist school of thought would be adopted by so many – mental health practitioners and purveyors of self-improvement programs alike.

Theories of screaming, pounding, fighting, sitting on the hot seat, and group confrontation were put into place in a number of therapy centers. The popular therapies emerged out of Esalen and other “human potential” centers, growing out of groups like the Living Theater and the Theater of All Possibilities and evolving into myriad innovations like Bio-Energetics, Gestalt Therapy, and Psychosynthesis. Model confrontational programs, such as Synanon and its clones, were being praised left and right.

Another variant of the confrontation therapies appeared in the commercially sold large group awareness training programs such as Mind Dynamics, Direct Centering (aka Bayard Hora Associates, aka The Course, aka Naexus), Arica Institute, Insight
Seminars, and Lifespring. These programs were sold to hundreds of thousands of customers over two decades, and some still exist in old, revised, and new forms (read my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)). Marketed to individuals, organizations, and business and industry as experiential education, they typically use powerful psychological and social influence techniques, not always bringing about the advertised claims of success and profit to the buyer, and sometimes bringing psychological distress to the clients.

Varieties of these confrontation therapies and self-awareness programs are still with us two and three decades later; in fact, they’re going strong.

4) What About Scream Therapies?

One variant of let-it-all-out therapy became all the rage in the 1970s. It was known as scream therapy, and many professionals and celebrities were taken with it – probably the most well known was singer and songwriter John Lennon. The popularity of scream therapies, at least to some degree, might be attributed to the times.

The 1960s and 1970s were times of demonstrations, protests, barricades, and cries of “revolution.” Primal Therapy was a method that would let the customer feel, experience, and let out all those feelings of rage. Arthur Janov, the originator of Primal Therapy, even title one of his books The Primal Revolution.

A number of scream therapies have gained considerable attention and followings. First were Janov´s Primal Therapy and Daniel Casriel´s New Identity Process. Nolan Saltzman then developed Bio Scream Psychotherapy out of Casriel´s work. There are yet other variations and formulations that have developed over the years. Each of these therapies is touted by the originator as opening the road to happiness and mental health.

Primaling with Arthur Janov

Arthur Janov, a psychologist and psychiatric social worker, claims to have “discovered” primal therapy. It is another one of those therapies based on therapist observations of the conducts of one patient. At least Janov reports confirming the idea of a second patient. He then taught, and continues to teach, the method to countless others, professing that this is the best and only useful therapy to cure mental illness.

Janov said that he came to regard the “primal scream as the product of central and universal pains which reside in all neurotics...Primal Therapy is aimed at eradicating
these pains. It is revolutionary because it involves overthrowing the neurotic system by a forceful upheaval. Nothing short of that will eliminate neurosis, in my opinion.”

Janov’s original cases were two young men named “Danny” and “Gary.” Danny was a twenty-two-year-old college student, whom Janov described as a “poor student, withdrawn, sensitive, and quiet.” During therapy Janov instructed Danny to call out “Mommy! Daddy!” Danny refused at first, but Janov writes: “I persisted, and finally he gave in...he became noticeable upset. Suddenly he was writhing on the floor in agony. His breathing was rapid, spasmodic; ‘Mommy! Daddy!’ came out of his mouth almost involuntarily in loud screeches. He appeared to be in a coma or hypnotic state. The writhing gave way to convulsions, and finally, he released a piercing, deathlike scream that rattled the walls of my office.”

Soon Janov tried the technique again on another patient. Gary called for his mommy and daddy until “he was breathing faster and deeper. His calling turned into an involuntary act that led to writhing, near-convulsions, and finally to a scream,” wrote Janov in his best-selling book The Primal Scream.

From these experiences, Janov concluded that all neurotics have “primal pain.” Janov liked to capitalize certain words (as one critic remarked, “to underscore the monumentality of his concepts”): Primal Pain, Primal Therapy, Primal Theory, Symbolic Primal, Primal Scream, and so on. Unlike rebirthing proponents (see my article Regression psychotherapies) Janov believed that “not all birth is traumatic; it is traumatic birth which is traumatic. The trauma is laid down in the nervous system, producing enormous lifelong tension.”

Two years after writing his first book, Janov’s certitude about having found the one cure-all was established – at least in his mind. In the first lines of his second book, Janov wrote: “Primal Therapy purports to cure mental illness (psychological illness, to be exact). Moreover, it claims to be the only cure. By implications, this renders all other psychologic theories obsolete and invalid. It means that there can be only one valid approach to treating neuroses and psychoses.” A few pages later he writes: “Primal Therapy methods are replicable in the hands of any competent Primal Therapist who can produce primals and cures consistently.” Yet Janov’s World Wide Web home page warns, “It must be emphasized that this therapy is dangerous in untrained hands.”

This way of judging all other theories invalid when some new theory has been made up, is also typical within the New Age environment – often with a reference to, that there with “this revolutionary new theory has happened a Paradigm Shift!”

New Identity Process
Daniel Casriel calls his work New Identity Process (NIP), a “totally new psychiatric delivery system necessitated by the clinical observations uncovered while using the technique of scream therapy.” Casriel claims that suppression, repression, or the underutilization of feelings results from cultural and parental injunctions that can block happiness throughout one’s life. He teaches patients that there are five basic human feelings: pain, anger, fear, pleasure, and the need for love. Patients learn to use three basic attitudes: “I exist,” “I need,” and “I am entitled to my feelings/to fulfill my needs.”

According to this theory, smothered feelings prevent the experience of emotional well-being. So patients are brought together in group therapy, and by screaming they learn to feel and express feelings and to demonstrate the basic attitudes just noted. As with many therapy inventors, Casriel feels that his plan is universally useful for all except the brain damaged, explicitly noting that it is for “normals,” delinquents, alcoholics, addicts, and character-disordered and “functional” schizophrenic persons.

Bio Scream Psychotherapy

Nolan Saltzman began Bio Scream Psychotherapy as a more supportive, warm use of screaming than he felt was produced by Janov’s and Casriel’s versions. Saltzman thought that Casriel’s method was highly confrontational and too hostile and humiliating for many patients. Saltzman calls his process “Scream/Love” or “S/L.” He wanted screaming to lead patients to abandon defenses and to feel supported in a warm, empathic group.

Saltzman’s scream therapy can be done in one-on-one sessions with the therapist or in a group setting, with the good feelings and support coming from the therapist or the group to the screamer. Saltzman promoted three venues for screaming.

In one method, patients are taught modal phrases, such as “I’m scared,” “I hurt,” “I’m angry,” and “I feel good.” One phrase is selected and repeated louder and more rapidly until the therapist leads the person to a complete release.

In a second method, the patients are directed to figure out what they want to say to a significant other (such as mother or spouse) imagined to be sitting before them in a chair. The therapist helps patients identify their emotions related to what’s being said. Then patients are to repeat that over and over until the scream evolves.

A third method involves having patients lie on a mat on the floor. The therapist may hold a patient’s hand while evoking the scream.
Saltzman is more modest in his claims for who can profit from his Bio Scream method, saying that it is not for psychotics and that it is not a miracle cure.

*The Center for Feeling Therapy*

Several therapists who had been with Janov broke away and started their own practice, called the Center for Feeling therapy, in Los Angeles in 1971. One of the founders, Joseph Hart, is quoted as saying, “When we left Janov, forty percent of the patients came with us. After working with them, we found that most had been *faking* their Primals. They were simulating regression, just as some of Charcot’s patients had done in France in Freud’s time. It’s hard to say if they were consciously faking, but they had learned to do what their therapist wanted.”

There is a special mechanism at work here, known from the thought distortion called *Subjective validation*: the desire to please the therapist. This may be due partly to the consideration that by pleasing the therapist, the odds increase that the therapist will succeed in his work. But it may also have to do with a strange phenomenon that occurs in settings where a person gives up control of the situation to another, as in hypnosis or when being asked to assist a magician do a trick (see my article *Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception*). There is sometimes a kind of loss of self in those situations, and combined with a desire to please, a kind of submission to the will of another, up to a point. If such a mechanism is at work in therapy, the client may acquiesce to the suggestions or items thrown out by the therapist, not because they are true or truly significant, but out of a desire to please (read more about *Subjective validation* in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions*).

Even with this apparent understanding, Hart and his colleagues proceeded to develop their ideas of “feeling therapy.” Hart and cofounder Richard Corriere referred to themselves as the Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid of psychology. They and other center leaders claimed that patients could reach the next stage of human evolution only by following the therapists´ dictates.

The Center for Feeling Therapy followed Janov´s method of having the new client stay in a secluded motel room alone for three weeks of intensive daily sessions. A new client of the center met with a therapist in marathon three- to seven-hour individual sessions in which the person was attacked, criticized, and belabored. Deprivation was enforced during this period and afterward. Alone, when not in therapy sessions, the client was not to smoke; drink alcohol, coffee, or tea; watch TV or listen to the radio; or talk on the phone. These techniques made the therapy seem mysterious and frightening, and caused the client to enter into an anxious state.
Over the next ten years the center grew quite successfully. There were 350 patients living near one another and sharing homes, hundreds more were nonresident outpatients, and still others communicated with center therapists by written correspondence. The central theme foisted on clients was: if you do not live from your feelings, you are insane - (in my articles Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT), and The New Thought movements and the law of attraction - I show the ethical problems involved in such a point of view).

The leaders wrote books and lectured, and their power over the patients grew until the group was described as a cult and charged with scads of alleged mental, physical, and sexual abuses. All twelve therapists associated with the center lost or surrendered their licenses (in my article The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy you can read about persuasion techniques used within psychotherapy cults).

5) Catharsis Therapies Today

Today there are several high-priced institutes where a person can both engage in and study variations of scream therapy, and a number of therapists still bill themselves as doing primal or scream therapy in individual or group sessions or sometimes a combination of the two.

Promotional flyers promise the following: “The emotional atmosphere of the groups elicits deep feelings, and thereby accentuates the gains of individual therapy.”

In Singer´s and Lalich´s book there are given some examples of what can happen when all that emotion gets going:

“Matt” Learns Anger

“A couple of years ago, my wife, ‘Betsy,’ was in a women´s support group which was into exploring feelings and expressing everything. It was a continuation of an important interest Betsy had developed in college. She complained I was too taciturn and needed to get into primal or some other really expressive therapy where I could learn to feel and to show my feelings.

“So I began therapy with a female therapist recommended by Betsy´s women´s group leader. Neither the philosophy of the therapy nor the techniques seemed to grab me. The therapist assured me that I would become a new person when I finally achieved a ‘primal.’ I would never
be moody again, she said. The therapist also advised me that I didn’t have to see my parents ever again since they had so failed me. I tried to tell her about my happy childhood but she’d rasp at me, ‘Matt, you are in denial!’ I really had a good childhood. I loved my father and mother and two older brothers, and in the therapy sessions I simply couldn’t locate deep pains or feel the required deep rage against them the therapist said was buried in me.

“I went through the motions for about eight sessions, both seeing her in individual sessions and dutifully attending what I call ‘group laydowns.’ Pandemonium reigned at these weekly gatherings, with unleashed screams and moans, including mine. My voice got scratchy from my efforts at screaming out, trying to get a primal.

“The therapist urged me over and over to feel my anger. She then left the area for a better job and I was spared further treatment. My wife, oddly enough, thought I had made great progress and let up on trying to get me to see anyone else. All I can say is that I felt like a phony trying to please the therapist, trying to scream like she wanted, trying to feel deep pain and deep anger. All I could tell was that it got to the point that when my wife began to badger me about something, I began to express almost instant anger toward her and really told her off fast.

“Betsy was caught in a bind. She had wanted me to be more expressive, so I told her how the therapist was priming me to show anger and deep pain and not to fear showing anger. When I began to have a sharp tongue and lash out at her when she provoked me, she painfully asked, ‘Did ms. Therapist show you how to be kinder to your wife?’ ‘Of course not,’ I’d reply, “she just taught anger and pain as the emotions she wanted me to show.’ My wife never pushed me to go to more therapy; in fact, she dropped out of her groups and became a much happier person. You know, that therapy could have broken up a marriage and turned me against my family. I guess I was just lucky that it didn’t really take.”

“Carl” Loses His Wife

“‘Rita’ had been depressed when she was in junior high school, again in high school, and two times during college. Two of her sisters and her mother were on medication for depression and doing fine. We married when we were both twenty-four. I had known Rita since grade school. My folks knew her parents. They were from the South, bright and talented, but they had, as they put it, ‘the family condition,’ meaning some of them
were prone to periods of black, hopeless depression. It was mainly Rita’s mother’s family, but actually both sides had some depressed people. These depressions seemed to snap on like a light, and turn off just as abruptly. All in all, the relatives were okay folks; none was what you’d call ‘neurotic’ – by that I mean complaining, sour, lazy, things like that.

“Rita and I had a good marriage, until I got transferred to the West Coast. Rita went into a moderate depression. She didn’t want to go on medication like so many in her family. She saw an ad in a local giveaway paper for a clinic offering a whole roster of therapies. She went, and the woman who was her therapist told her that scream therapy would be the best for the type of depression Rita had, that she would not need medication ever if she completed the program, and that this treatment emptied out all the pain and sadness.

“Rita came home from her first meeting feeling encouraged. But soon her therapist wanted her to stop talking with any relatives on the phone. The therapist even started bad-mouthing me, saying I lacked ‘complete feelings’ and needed therapy also and that Rita might have to separate from me to get well. This was unbelievable. The therapist had never even met me! Rita felt her therapist knew something about me that she, Rita, didn’t know; maybe the therapist treated someone from where I worked or something, Rita said, because the therapist would be so forceful about how bad I really was.

“Things got worse and worse. I would leave Rita breakfast on a tray and a sandwich for lunch before I went to work each day. She only got out of bed to go to therapy. I tried to talk with her therapist and let her know how sick Rita was, but the woman wouldn’t speak with me. I even left a message saying I was afraid Rita would kill herself, she was so down. I spoke with a psychologist who shared an office with Rita’s psychologist and asked him to tell the woman I was worried and felt Rita needed to go into a hospital. I told him Rita was not allowed to talk to any of her family, so none of them could help me persuade Rita to see another doctor. He gave me a song and dance about how Rita’s therapist couldn’t talk with me, it would break confidentiality. He said I shouldn’t expect to ever speak with her.

“After each session Rita seemed worse. She said she was trying to get back every memory of every sad time she could recall throughout her life and reach a ‘primal,’ whatever that was supposed to be. One afternoon after her therapy Rita called me at work and asked me to come home,
saying ‘I want to take you with me.’ I thought she meant back to her therapist or somewhere she needed to go. When I got home I called out to her and she softly replied ‘i´m up here. I want you to go with me.’ As I started up the stairs I looked up and she had a gun in her hand. She shot at me and I fell back with a shot in the leg. I heard another shot and a thud. I crawled to the phone and called 011, and the police came. Rita had put the gun in her mouth and blew her head off. I can´t forgive myself for not making her go to a real doctor and get the medications she had had before, like had helped her and her family.”

6) Counter Theories to Letting It All Out

Catharsis theory in all its forms has been challenged repeatedly over the years. Evidence that expressing anger, violent behavior does not drain it away but increases the chances of its recurrence has been presented in the scientific psychology literature for years.

Leonard Berkowitz of the University of Wisconsin points out that acting out hostile feelings in the ways advocated by such therapists actually increases hostility: “The therapist or group members usually approve the patient´s display of aggression. As a number of researchers have shown, these rewards heighten the likelihood of subsequent violence.”

Such research is apparently not read or accepted by the many therapists who continue to ply their ventilation trade.

In 1956 Seymour Feshbach demonstrated that the Freudian ventilation notion was incorrect. Feshbach gathered a group of little boys who were not aggressive or destructive. He gave them violent toys, had them kick the furniture and “otherwise run amok during a series of free-play hours. This freedom did not ‘drain’ any of the boys ‘instinctive aggression’ or ‘pent-up’ anger; what it did was lower their restraint against aggression. On later occasions, the boys behaved in much more hostile and destructive ways than they had previously.”

Ventilation by yelling and other acts of aggression does not help either children or adults to become less angry or aggressive. Couples urged to yell at one another feel more angry after practice, not less. Researchers in family violence and violence in general have been reporting for years that all the urging to vent pent-up anger only teaches people, both children and adults, to act out irrationally, to simply rehearse and demonstrate angry, aggressive acts.
The human organism learns as it acts; the more a certain behavior is practiced, the more it becomes a part of the person’s automatic acts. Practicing being angry, then, is more like practicing swimming or riding a bicycle. One gets more proficient at it. Riding a bike does not rid one of the riding urge, rather it trains an expressive skill – and so does venting anger over and over. Demonstrating anger or any other feeling does not erase the vent or the interaction that elicited the anger or other emotion in the first place.

The best remedies for “handling” anger generated by frustration or irritation with another person appear to be those that help people of any age better understand why another person acted as he or she did (in my article *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry)* and why I am an apostle of loafing I investigate the concept of anger and how to handle it by the help of rationality). Encouraging mild, placid, and rational people to “let go” and ventilate their rage only makes them feel worse if they do.

In my article I’m not saying, though, that bottling up all of one’s anger, resentment, or frustration is the way to deal with such feelings. Rather, I believe that rational thinking (critical thinking, which uses logic and argumentation) assist people to find ways to talk with others, to change situations, and to identify socially useful and mature means to reduce anger-producing interactions and situations. My book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions* is in fact a kind of manual in such a way of thinking.

From a social influence vantage point, the let-it-all-out and attack therapies can have a major impact. Usually clients will have paid a fair amount of money for a therapy that might sound odd or bizarre to their realistic friends. Therefore, clients will feel a need to defend their actions and commitments, having made an open affiliation with the therapeutic practice and the therapist. During the course of the therapy, clients regress, become dependent, have their self-esteem and sense of self attacked and diminished, and to some degree lose touch with their previous everyday reality orientation. Nothing is the way it used to be.

Social psychology is filled with data showing that once a person makes a commitment in front of others about a position or belief, it is more likely that a person will cling to that position. Imagine the degree of commitment made by people, who at their therapist’s command, rolled and moaned, beat cushions and each other, screamed, yelled, laughed, cried, insulted others, and were themselves humiliated and insulted.

It is definitely harder to recognize problems with a particular decision when a person has spent money, told family and friends about it, and invested the extraordinary
amount of energy called for these therapies. Participants may be less prone to admit to the therapist, to others, or to themselves that they still have problems or have not become totally fixed as promised by the therapist who is saying, “See, something dramatic is happening.”

This phenomenon is based on the thought distortion called *Cognitive dissonance*. Cognitive dissonance is a discomfort caused by holding conflicting ideas simultaneously. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance. They do this by changing their attitudes, beliefs and actions. Dissonance is also reduced by justifying, blaming and denying.

So, dissonance is aroused when people are confronted with information that is inconsistent with their beliefs. If the dissonance is not reduced by changing one’s belief, the dissonance can result in misperception or rejection of the information (read more in my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions*).

In effect, clients are simply practicing expressing rage, anger, and pain in a dramatic scene that the therapist directs by reframing the clients’ activities to reflect what the therapist would have clients think is occurring. Because clients are persuaded by the status, power role, and credentials of the therapist, they tend to accept the therapist’s verbal explanations and assurances. Caught in the web of their own commitment to the therapy and the influential urgings of the therapist, once they begin to participate, people find it difficult to get away from these crazy confrontation therapies. Only later do some clients realize that they’ve been had and, in certain cases, badly abused.

In general, if your therapist is telling you that you have to get worse before you get better, is tearing you apart rather than building you up, is letting group members insult and ridicule you, is insisting that you must go deeper and deeper and deeper to feel the feeling, or is doing anything that smacks of old-fashioned ventilation theories, get out as fast as you can and look for a supportive therapist who will listen and respond with human decency.

But the theories of “if you do not live from your feelings, you are insane” have spread widely beyond the context of, for example, Cathartic psychotherapy. It is an integrated part of the self-help industry as such. It has become a philosophy of life, an ideology. Both therapists, coaches and clients within this industry, are uncritical using the theories outside contexts of therapy or coaching-sessions; that is: they are using them both in public and private discussions, as well as in education in schools, higher education and on workplaces. In that way they end up in concealing power relations at the workplace, they lead to difficulties assigning responsibility towards children in the schools, they reduce our spouses to means for our personal
development, and remove political incitation and social responsibility by disguising social problems as personal problems.

If a person really succeeds in adopting the advices of the self-help books (for example the doctrine “if you do not live from your feelings, you are insane”) she really gets a problem. Not only does she have to fight with the never-ending development, and the egoism. She is also becoming a serious problem for her surroundings. Because she is now, as the Danish psychologist, Nina Østerby Sæther, says, a potential psychopath.

On a course about psychopaths Sæther realized, that there was many similarities between psychopathic traits, and the advices, which are given in self-help books. It made her point out some frightening resemblances. And she concludes, that the self-help books don’t have any alibi against producing psychopath-like, self-actualizing humans. The psychopathic traits are simply lying smouldering in the books. Her moral is, that the self-actualizing psychopath can be seen as an “actual social character in the Western society”, supported by a whole industry of self-help books (read more about this in my article Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology).

I have several times described my own personal experiences with abusive attacks from agents of New Age and the self-help industry, after I started my critique (rational and logical) on their theories and practices. Read for example my article The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing.

A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork

The main problem in connection with the New Age movement is the attempt to integrate the philosophy of the East – and the philosophy of Western mysticism - with Western psychology and psychotherapy (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality and Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology). Psychology is after all today a science, which works with empirical proofs, or empirical content. But within the spiritual area you are precisely not working with content, but with essence, and this has not anything to do with psychology, but with philosophy.
The psychologizing therefore results in, that you direct yourself towards the contents and forget the essence, exactly what also characterizes a spiritual crisis (see my article *Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena*). It is for example my opinion, that Stanislav Grof, despite his pioneering work of mapping spiritual crises and nonordinary states of consciousness, as well as his great knowledge of history of philosophy, ends up in such a psychologizing. Here I am especially thinking about his examinations of nonordinary states of consciousness, where the touchstone of authenticity has with essence (realization) to do, and not content (experiences).

Though the descriptions of the mystical experiences of the great saints and mystics, sounds similar to the experiences of people in spiritual crises, or people who have taken LSD, or have been in a Holotropic Breathwork session, then the crucial difference is the discrimination between realization and experience.

Grof was for example seeking - first through LSD-therapy, and later, when that was forbidden, through an experiential oriented, body psychotherapeutic technique (Holotropic Breathwork) - to provoke experiences of the same kind as them you experience in a spiritual crisis – in the belief that such a crisis always has a healing and transformational potential, because he confuses authentic mystical experiences, that are followed by realization, with nonordinary experiences, that not are followed by realization.

The result is that many people, either have been injured – physical and/or psychologically – due to Holotropic Breathwork, or, spiritual seen, have been lead on the wrong track.

Grof’s concept of Spiritual Emergence is therefore misleading. At the same time as he is talking about how to support people in a spiritual crisis, his whole concept of Holotropic Breathwork (HB) is about provoking spiritual crises in people. Nowhere in his work you can find the, in the mystical traditions, very known warnings against drugs and one-sided techniques, that can lead to spiritual crises, or the techniques and exercises, that can get people out of a spiritual crisis. And this is no coincidence, because his work is based on wrong cathartic theories, which are based on the notion that if you express your feelings you will purge yourself of your troubles.

Though there certainly is some kind of scientifical research in his way of collecting descriptions of nonordinary states of consciousness, then his work, as in other New Age psychotherapies, also is filled with pseudoscientifical shipwrecks such as reductionism and testimonials. Critique from scientists is for example often met with the phrase about that they don’t understand spirituality. And if the critique comes
from spirituality (an example is the critique of Grof from the mystic Kate Thomas), then it is met with the phrase about that she doesn’t understand science. I won’t go deeper into that, though. Read for example my articles The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism and The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind.

Grof’s assertion is in other words, that you through LSD, or a holotropic session, should be able to skip many years of meditation practice and experience the same as the great enlightened masters.

But what he in reality skips are the philosophical aspects of the meditation practice (the philosophical questions’ self-inquiring practice), and when these are left out, he creates breeding ground for many different types of spiritual self-deceit. The case is namely, that an important part of the opening in towards the Source is the realization of what basically hinders this opening. Unless you know, for example the Ego’s, fundamental nature, you will not be able to recognize it, and it will deceive you to identify with it again and again. But when you realize the hindrances in yourself (your ignorance), it is the Source itself - the Good, the True and the Beautiful – which makes the realization possible; that is: through an intervention from the divine (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness). The realization can therefore only come from within, never from outside. I will return to this (also see my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings).

When Grof seeks to open up for collective nonordinary experiences, without having been working with realization of the Ego’s nature, he intervenes disruptive in the Ego’s self-regulating structures, or, said differently: he intervenes in how peoples’ karma is working in thinking and time. Therewith he also intervenes in the balancing and development-specific function of karma. Unknowing he creates heavy energetical swings without understanding, that the karmacially consequences are being equivalent heavy contrabalances and back-swings. Grof seems himself to be in a possession state, a possession of experiences, which is mirrored in the level of fierceness in his methods, which almost seem to be attempts to rape spirituality. His writings are for example characterized by endlessly using the word “experiences”.

In my critique of Grof, I will focus on HB. And in HB I will focus on its lack of ability to discriminate between experiences, which not are followed by realization, and experiences that are followed by realization. This lack of discrimination is due to the psychologizing of the philosophical elements in spirituality.

About Holotropic Breathwork (HB)
HB is a form of breathwork - developed by Stanislav Grof, MD, and Christina Grof - that claims, that it allows access to nonordinary states of consciousness. HB has some similarities to Rebirthing-Breathwork, but was developed independently. HB claims to be an approach to self-exploration and healing that integrates insights from modern consciousness research, anthropology, various depth psychologies, transpersonal psychology, Eastern spiritual practices, and mystical traditions of the world. The name *Holotropic* means “moving toward wholeness” (from the Greek *holos* “whole” and *trepein* “to turn or direct towards a thing”).

Alex Walker, a former Trustee of the Findhorn Foundation, states: “Stanislav Grof, the originator of this form of therapy, is adamant that it is a spiritual technique with an ancient shamanistic lineage.” Grof is namely an advocate for the use of drugs, or “sacred medicine”, used in certain shamanistic traditions with the purpose of healing, and HB is directly developed as a substitute for drugs (especially LSD) that now are illegal. The most precisely is therefore to call HB a form of New Age Shamanism.

The method comprises five elements: group process, intensified breathing (so-called hyperventilation), evocative music, focused body work, and expressive drawing. The method’s general effect is said to be a non-specific amplification of a person’s psychic process, which facilitates the psyche’s natural capacity for healing.

HB is usually done in groups, although individual sessions are done. Within the groups, people work in pairs and alternate in the roles of experiencer (“breather”) and “sitter”. The sitter is available to assist the breather, but not to interfere or interrupt the process. The same is true for trained facilitators, who are available if necessary.

Originally developed as an adjunct to psychedelic psychotherapy, HB is an autonomous psychotherapeutic practice, which, nevertheless, retains many of the clinical precautionary measures that were implemented in the “medical” use of LSD.

As mentioned, then “experiences” is a quite central word in HB. Participants in HB sessions report a wide variety of experiences (Taylor, 1994). From observing many people in nonordinary and expanded states of consciousness, Grof developed what he considers to be a “cartography” of the psyche, which describes four main categories of experience.

**Sensory and Somatic:** This realm of experience includes various hallucinatory phenomena, such as visualizing images of geometrical patterns. More commonly, participants report a greater awareness of an ability to act out somatic processes and bodily impulses, such as assuming postures, dancing or moving in specific ways, and
making sounds. They may also claim to feel where energy is blocked or streaming, consistent with the belief in vitalism.

**Biographical and Individual Unconscious:** As in more “traditional” therapies, participants may revisit unresolved conflicts, repressed memories, and unintegrated traumas. Compared to talk therapies, the unconscious material is more likely to be re-experienced than merely remembered. Participants report this deeper processing can be more effective at clearing trauma, especially as it relates to subtle ways that trauma is held in the body.

**Perinatal:** Along with most other HB practitioners, and in disagreement with John Locke’s claim that the infant after birth is a tabula rasa, Grof believes that the birth process is a traumatic event that leaves powerful residue in the psyche. Participants in HB sessions report having images, emotions, physical sensations, and cognitions that convince them that they are remembering aspects of their own birth. Sometimes details can be verified with medical records. Some claim that these experiences help them release the birth trauma, including deeply negative beliefs about themselves or the world.

**Transpersonal:** Referring to the possibility of accessing information outside the normal boundaries of the ego and body, transpersonal experiences reported in HB sessions include past life memories, experiential identification with other life forms, out-of-body experiences, oneness, encounters with spiritual archetypes, and connection with the collective unconscious.

In HB there is a combination of Regression psychotherapies and Cathartic psychotherapies. In the following I will give a general critique of these two theories; a critique that also shows the problems in HB:

**Regression psychotherapies**

The cause of suffering is in philosophical counseling (true spiritual counseling – read my article *Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy*) due to a separation of the observer and the observed. The investigation is directed towards the observer (the form of consciousness: the one who evaluates, who says yes and no, who accepts and denies, who compares with earlier and hopes/fears something else), and not the observed (the contents of consciousness: feelings, thoughts, images, experiences, sense impressions, memories, wishes, hopes, fears, lusts) as in psychotherapy. The main question is therefore in its essence philosophical: *Who am I?*
Regression psychotherapies (e.g.: rebirthing, reparenting, past life regression, alien abduction, recovered memory therapy, satanic ritual abuse, etc.) are based on the notion that if you discover the cause of your troubles you will be cured (the unconscious material in HB, is, in its combination with Cathartic psychotherapies, more likely to be re-experienced than merely remembered). These theories are (like other New Age theories) partially attached to science (they often use a lot of pseudoscientific technical jargon without any meaning at all – most extremely this is seen in NLP – see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)) - partially to spirituality (the therapists often call themselves spiritual counselors). In this confusion they are oblivious to the observer, and are lost in the observed. Therefore they are ignorant about the one who creates the causes. The causes become built into the psychotherapy itself, and are therefore ideological worldviews, or just pure prejudice. It is causes such as birth traumas, inadequate parents, sexual abuse, satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, past lifes, alien abduction, possession by entities, etc. Take your pick. Often they use a one-size-fits-all explanation of every emotional disorder.

In the best Sophist way the therapists are planting such causes in their patients’ minds. They give their patients books to read or videos to watch. They plant them during hypnosis, group sessions, etc., and then these planted causes are “recovered” or “re-experienced”, and offered as validation of their therapeutic techniques and theories. Patient after patient is paraded forth by the therapists as evidence of their good work, yet none of the patients seem better for the therapy and many seem hopelessly ill. The reason is, that it is not that to feel better, which is the cure, but that to have “discovered” or “re-experienced” the cause. They are ignorant about thought distortions such as Communal reinforcement, Confabulation, and Priming effect (see my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy, and the art of self-deception, and my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

Rather than helping clients to become stronger and more independent, most regression psychotherapies, and in particular the rebirthing-reparenting sort, induce in the client an abduction of responsibility and a state of sickly dependence on the therapists.

Contrary to what they claim, then regression psychotherapies create a philosophical hindrance for the opening into the spiritual source, namely an existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt (also seen in Hypnotherapy, Hypnosis, Personal development, Coaching,
NLP, Large Group Awareness Training, Landmark forum – see my article *The four philosophical hindrances and openings*.

Past life regression is considered “pure quackery” by the American Psychiatric Association. Read more about Regression psychotherapies in my article *Regression psychotherapies*

**Cathartic psychotherapies**

Cathartic psychotherapies (e.g.: Experiential Psychotherapy, Primal Therapy, Gestalt therapy, Energy breathing, etc.) are based on the notion that if you express your feelings you will purge yourself of your troubles. We have probably all heard this because psychotherapy today have spread far out over its disciplinary limits, and have become a part of an ideology, that think it have to take care of, not just psychological problems, but also philosophical, political and religious problems (see my article *The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy*). In schools and in workplaces we are for example forced to lay bare our feelings on the slightest occasion.

Psychotherapy is a branch of psychology, and therefore something scientifical, which have to be empirical tested. The problem is that there is no proof for the notion that you will purge yourself for your troubles if you express your feelings. On the contrary. The notion seem disproved by experiments with children, which find that rather than sublimate aggression when encouraged to be aggressive, the children become more aggressive. As Stephen J. Castro says: “if you have ever experienced (and it is indeed a quite unforgettable experience) someone go berserk and beat a cushion in order to express “repressed” anger, edged on by a group of onlookers displaying the fervour of a mindless mob, then you tend to value rationality, and not gestalt.” To Castro it was therefore heartening to read in the *Daily Mail* that there are more than 400 published studies that show quite clearly that when people are focused in this way they just become more angry – not better. Why is that?

The problem is that psychotherapy is neglecting the importance of thoughts. Feelings are the body’s reaction on the mind (the thoughts). Feelings arise where the mind and the body meet. They are reflections of the mind in the body. Feelings can also be a reflection of a whole thoughtpattern. A thoughtpattern can create an enlarged and energycharged reflection of itself in the form of a feeling. This means, that the whole of the thought’s past also can create a reflection of itself in the body. And if this past is filled with pain, then it can show itself as a negative energyfield in the body. Eckhart Tolle calls this the emotional painbody. It contains all the pain you have accumulated in the past. It is the sum of the negative feelings which you have “saved together” through life and which you carry. And it can nearly be seen as an invisible,
independent creature. Therefore we also could, as H.C. Andersen does in his fairy tale, call it the Shadow.

The painbody is the inner demon, or the devil in the heart. Some painbody’s are relatively harmless, some are anxietyfilled or angry, others are directly malicious and demonical. They can be passive or active. Some are passive 90% of the time, others are active 100% of the time.

The painbody is activated in the same moment as specific challenges activate the inappropriate basic assumptions, which have been created by bad experiences in the past. And they are being maintained by the vortex of negative automatic thinking, which follows from these basic assumptions. In other words it constitutes a rather particular reaction-pattern, a manuscript, which gets you to play the same role (or the same roles) again and again. That will say, that specific situations will continue to activate it, so that your actions become an eternal repetition of the same. It takes control over you, so to speak.

Therefore you should of course not seek to activate your painbody, as the cathartic psychotherapies believe you should, because they thereby also activate the negative thoughtpattern behind the painbody. The painbody lives of, that you are identified with the negative thoughtpattern behind it. In this way the painbody gets your energy. And for that reason you also give energy to your negative feelings, when you activate your thoughtpattern. Negative feelings will in other words increase if you express them. And the painbody is, through the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around, connected with the more dangerous depths of the astral plane´s collective history. The energies found here are unfathomable, and when you direct them into your painbody, you are really facing problems. You are opening a gate of darkness.

Instead you should relate completely neutral in relation to your painbody, and through critical thinking seek to investigate, restructure and change the inappropriate basic assumptions, which is the thoughtpattern behind the painbody. That is how philosophy and true spirituality works (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions is a manual in critical thinking and therefore philosophy).

Read more about Cathartic psychotherapies in my article Cathartic psychotherapies. Also read my article The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it.

HB and its lack of understanding karma
In Zen it is 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. This can also be described as the personal, collective and universal images of time, which form the astral structure under your thinking. The personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness. The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with awareness, or consciousness.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now´s lawfulness around the function of a universal negation power, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego´s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can’t say anything about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (śûnyatā) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created (read more about the philosophy of Nagarjuna in my article A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method).

This leads to the thought about that human beings 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future,
and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also
means that it in itself is without realization.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the
wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is
the area of progressive karma, spiritual development; it is the area of realization, the
area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The
Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and
wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep,
dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great
mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is:
experiences, which are followed by realization.

HB is reducing everything to the energy aspect. As with a lot of other New Age
directions it seems ignorant about the consciousness aspect, or the aspect of universal
images, though talking a great deal about it. And it is only the consciousness aspect,
which can come to insight about karmacial structures.

When you reduce everything to the energy aspect, there can’t happen any realization.
Whatever you do within this area - therapy, exercises, use of drugs, stimulation of
brain cells, Holotropic Breathwork, etc., etc., - then it only will result in experiences
without realization. It will also result in absense of awareness, because the
consciousness will be distracted by the personal and collective images of time, which
work in sequences in past and future, and in fragmentation.

Experiences without realization will therefore be characterized by existential
categories such as unreality, division, anxiety, stagnation and meaninglessness, no
matter how “divine” or “demonical” they occur to the experiencer. And that is
actually in direct opposition to the genuine mystical experience, which are followed
by realization. The mystical experience is namely characterized by the opposite
existential categories, such as reality, co-operation, safety, movement and meaning.

So in a spiritual practice it is the form of the consciousness it is about (realization),
not its content (experiences).

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now´s plane, the central is
the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness.
Not the content of the consciousness. In spiritual practice the spiritual, and spiritual
active, is the consciousness´ course towards its source (the Now, the Otherness).
What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial
importance.
So the Ego’s partial consciousness is part of a greater wholeness, which is the Now, life itself. And life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active using the pure awareness, the innermost in you, and using the heartfullness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, because the lifefulfillment, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your spiritual essence - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego’s process; that is: with your personal time and lifesituation. Admittedly it is the Ego’s actions out on the scene, which leaves karmatically tracks. Karma is the subconscious consequences of the Ego’s actions. Each time the Ego acts - and thereby changes the balance in the wholeness – then the structures and power lines in your spiritual essence changes, in the subconscious.

When your spiritual essence is sleeping, karma is automatically. The Ego’s pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the wholeness, in your spiritual essence, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma. In one life ascetic, in the next libertine, then inhibited and expelled, thereupon sybarite etc. with no end, because the Ego has freedom continual to give new momentum and new course - within the karmatical possible; that is to say: heredity and environment - to the Ego’s pendulum.

However when the Ego decides to use its free energy, its existential option to begin to awake, then the karma structures changes. Then you begin to use and work with your spiritual dimension. This dimension is not subject to the karmatically structure, it is it, or it is over it. The wholeness is over, is transcendent, in relation to the laws and mechanisms, which regulate the infrastructures of the wholeness. The wholeness is not subject to the laws and energy transformations, which rule between the constitutive parts of the wholeness.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmatically lawfulnesses and can therefore relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmatically structures, which after all not only rule between the many life´s of your spiritual essence, but all the same are known psychological mirrored from the Ego´s dreams and the Ego´s life - then you can change attitude.
Instead of swinging with the laws you can choose to observe. Instead of identifying yourself with impulses and incentives, emotions and thought tendencies, you can separate yourself, become a witness, become alert. And hereby you can break the karmatically automatism.

As mentioned: Human beings 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses.

Human beings are in that way, seen from the point of view of the ordinary ego-consciousness, inserted in two dimensions: a continuum, which streams are subject to laws; a discontinuum, for which leaps laws not seem to be effective. The wholeness, your spiritual essence, is normally the discontinuous aspect; normally, because this is of course seen from the point of view of the ego-continuum. Seen from the point of view of your spiritual essence, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the spiritual essence the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream and the continuum of the Ego-consciousness breaks and expands in a discontinuum (into the superior continuum of the wholeness – or your spiritual essence), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma, a progressive karma will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma.

The process of your spiritual essence, your process of awakening, will leave progressive karma along through the various incarnations. What you spiritual have reached to realize in one life, will in the spiritual energy be there in the next life, or in the dimension of your spiritual essence.

If your spiritual essence is sleeping, the spiritual energy is quiet. Without traceable activity. A human being can live a whole life, yes, life after life, in absolute sleep.

If you however existentially begin to seek, to seek the spiritual, the divine, to seek love, if you choose to use your energy and your life in that way, then the spiritual energy will begin to vibrate, to become active. Only the images, which have achieved to imprint themselves in the spiritual energy, will be transferred as progressive karma. Your spiritual essence will remember its dreams from life to life. And your
spiritual essence will remember and accumulate the glimpses of being awake, it might have experienced. These, the dreams and awake moments of your spiritual essence, are the progressive karma.

This is what is meant with, that people are born with different levels of spiritual development.

Concerning the progressive karma it applies, that each new life, in a quintessence, repeats the crucial stations on the development path of the spiritual essence. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma, if such is available, is therefore in the life, you have lived, in the history of your present life. It is lying as an invisible script underneath the history of your actual life. It is the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life, in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma. In your spiritual history there is a map. This map shows the dream-tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image.

There is no doubt about, that Karen Blixen, though not fully conscious, had a sense of this map. All her books are about destiny seen in this way; they are about people who either live in accordance with this map, or in discordance with it. This map, this universal image was, what she referred to as the ”ancient”, the ”original”, and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. And a universal image is of a holographic nature, therefore it contains all other images, personal, collective and universal, and therefore it contains the dream-tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life. It is the universal history of the astral plane; the Akashic records, or the wholeness, which is awake (read my article The philosophy of Karen Blixen).

You can live a whole life with this key lying in your own actual, spiritual biography. It requires work to find it. If you through development, through training, expand your consciousness to the spiritual dimension, then this invisible script will be made visible, the dream-tracks and the songlines in the progressive karma will be found.

Alaya-vijnana is a term used within Yogacara Buddhism to indicate the store-house consciousness, or the great vision, which consists of universal images. It is also called the Akashic Records (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice). These universal images are a kind of energetical mandala-structures or yantra-fields. They have a linguistic nature, but it is of a visionary kind. These images are composite by sound and color, symbol and structure. You could
also say, that they are what the philosophers call unmoved matter, a worldaspect of sound-colours and symbol-structures, an ocean of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. Altogether filled with information about life. Together the great vision, an information-ocean of holographic nature.

It has therefore nothing whatever to do with Grof´s version of Jung´s theory about the collective unconscious. It doesn´t belong to the energy aspect of Man, but to the consciousness aspect of Man. It is not a collective psychological phenomenon constructed by humans, but a metaphysical reality that not is human made. It is the thoughts of God. It is here the wrong turn is happening in the reductionism of transpersonal psychology, and in the whole of New Age´s psychologism. Religion is reduced to psychology. God is reduced to a center within the human psyche. Images are confused with reality, the map is confused with the landscape, the subject is confused with the object. The great vision is complete objectivity, a complete otherness in relation to, not only humans, but to the created world as such (again: see my article Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology).

We have historical records about this vision. For example there within Tibetan Buddhism exists a peculiar doctrine about the so-called Tertöns (tib. Gter-bston - the unearthers of the hidden books), people who are born with a special karmacial connection to a long ago deceased master, and who, because of the connection to this master´s oneness-consciousness with the universal vision, now can collect treasures of information in from the vision, or the universal images, which after all work in synchronism with the Now, and which therefore lie in the wholeness, in the continuum of eternity. The master was hiding and storing holy “texts” various places in the universal images with that purpose, that a future "Tertön" would be able to find this knowledge again, decipher and publish it.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol) is in that way one of the Tibetan texts, which is considered for having been hidden in the universal vision by the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Padma Sambhava, and which was found again by a Tertön with the name Rigzin Karma Ling-pa. Padma Sambhava is considered for having hidden many holy texts, whereafter he gave some of his disciples the yoga ability to become reincarnated in the right time - which were determinated astrologically - for here to find the scriptures again.

After an estimated judgment, the spiritual texts, which already have been taken out by Tertöns in the run of the centuries, would form a cyclopedia on around sixtyfive volumes with average around four hundred pages in each volume.
I can see no reason to deny the doctrine of the Tertöns. You can’t just deny people’s experiences (followed by realization) written down through centuries. This would in itself be unscientific, irrational, and besides, deeply arrogant. It is important though, to remember the philosophical aspects of the spiritual journey; that is: the use of rationality and critical thinking, which actually also is a central part of the training of the Tibetan monks. The problem with the alternative environment within the New Age movement, is namely, that precisely because the above mentioned, normal inaccessible, areas, in principle lie outside the area of the Ego-consciousness, yes, then they are open for all sorts of fantasies.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmacist experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to see into the collective time and its images, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore they basically do not know what they are doing. They are lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no longer are woods. There is in this area of the collective time and its images, with all its experts and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecisely guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation.

There are therefore some philosophical principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enormous, and growing market. The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that, in order to equalize old karma. It is for example a central idea in HB, that in order to access transpersonal states of consciousness a person must necessarily first regress to the perinatal state to resolve the trauma of (and/or around) birth. Other New Age psychotherapies have similar ideas, that makes it necessary to use precisely their methods in order to access transpersonal states of consciousness, against a high fee of course. A main idea is, that you should not begin a meditation proces before you have been in psychotherapy.

This is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses. It all origin from the collective time, which work in sequences in past and future, and in fragmentation, and therefore, in deeper sense, not karmacist and not in the least spiritual.

If a human being in genuine sense experiences (that is: realizes) compensatory karma, then this will precisely cause a separation, a break in relation to the automatical
identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actually realizes his karmically conditioned, will precisely, by force of realization, break the automatic process. And therefore precisely break out of, for example a spiritual crisis, instead of “having to revisit it.”

A very dangerous tendency in HB, and in cathartic psychotherapies as such, is the thought about that it is necessary to revisit/re-experience suffering, so that they become ignorant about danger signals (again: see my article The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it). This is also a part of their suppression of critique. But it is very important to understand the meaning of suffering, though. I have investigated this in my article Suffering as an entrance to the Source.

When you are in an intense spiritual practice, then you, admittedly, in a short time have to run through a lot of dark existential stuff, which are the cause of suffering. Spiritual practice is a process of awakening. But though you wake up to greater presence and intensity of life, you also wake up to your own, and others (other people, society, nature), realized or unrealized, suffering. That is the process of realization and compassion. But there is a crucial difference between experiencing suffering without realization, and experiencing it with realization. In the realization you discover the cause of suffering, you discover the nature of suffering, and therewith you will of course break with this cause.

When I had my first experiences with kundalini, I was very influenced by the many books that talked about the “necessary” in combining spiritual practice with psychotherapy. In the first part of the process I experienced all the kinds of rising processes, that are described in connection with awakening of kundalini. But there was no realization in them, they were just colourful experiences of powerful energies, which made me somehow ego-inflated (see my article The awakening of kundalini and The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment). Several times I for example experienced how the kundalini power rised out of my chrown chakra, spreading in fountains of light, but I was not becoming enlightened, I actually had no clue about what happened.

These colourful experiences continued and grew in intensity. Then suddenly they changed into something demonical. I experienced the dark night of the soul, heavy anxiety, nightmares, demons and devils attacking me. And the psychotherapists I talked with (who didn’t had any experiences of this themselves) gladly told me to continue the process, because it was “necessary” to go through it (precisely as Grof, and other transpersonal psychotherapists, wrongly are instructing people in). In order to make the stress milder, I went into periods with alcohol abuse.
But to my luck I was not dependent of any people or cults. My common sense told me, that this simply couldn’t be right. Then I began to study the original wisdomtraditions. And then I found all the explanations and warnings. I also found the focus on philosophy, the important use of critical thinking and rationality. I was simply breaking out of the process. Though the kundalini still was active in me, it was now rather functioning as a kind of energetical teacher. It showed me whenever my thoughts slipped out in extremes, activating my painbody, and it showed me this quite brutally through heavy tensions and pains. As soon as I again was breaking out of the process, and returned to meditation and neutral obervation, the tensions and pains dissappeared.

This also tells something about, that if you have come this far in a spiritual practice, there is no way back – you need to continue the spiritual practice – you can’t stop it, or break out of it, without ending in deep suffering. The Tibetan Dzogchen-practice starts for example with that the teacher gives you a glimpse of enlightenment, whereafter the whole spiritual practice begins. In this way Dzogchen, contrary to other spiritual traditions, somehow begins with the goal. The following spiritual practice is then about that you start the hard work of finding the enlightenment again. There is no way back, after the glimpse, you need to continue the spiritual practice, or else you are lost. Therefore it is not all people, that are ready for Dzogchen. But the teachers would know this. They are themselves in a state of enlightenment.

Independent philosopher Kevin Shepherd (1995) precisely argues that the spiritual practices which HB claims as inspiration can only be correctly understood in the context of their original cultures. In particular, he questions the motives and wisdom of facilitators providing Holotropic Breathwork in a commercial context.

In volume 3 of her autobiography, mystic Kate Thomas (1992) quotes extensively from correspondance relating to the controversy at the Findhorn Foundation. In this, and subsequent writing (1998, 2000), she expresses the view that Holotropic Breathwork interferes with the process of spiritual evolution in ways that she claims facilitators are unqualified to recognize or deal with. Grof himself was for example able to boast that he could convert a Jewish rabbi into a Zen Buddhist using his LSD dosages; but in reality he had no concept of how Zen monks live and think, and himself was incapable of the traditional ideal.

After my own experiences with kundalini, I have often been talking about the incompetence of New Age teachers. Traditional a spiritual teacher must be a person, who is one with what he teaches; that is: he must have experienced, and realized,
what he teaches. This requirement is removed in New Age. Here everyone can take a homemade weekend-education as spiritual teacher, shaman, clairvoyant, etc.

Another aspect of this incompetence is the unqualified talk about science, which these people often are promoting. They can be directly breathtaking in their combination of self-confidence and absurdity, where they with no hesitation are bullying highly qualified experts if they are critical, no matter whether they are scientists or mystics. Ego-inflation must, because of the magical thinking New Age is promoting, be seen as a collective spiritual crisis within the environment (again: see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

Kevin Sheperd and Kate Thomas have caught something important. Grof has admittedly an idea about that there in a human being exists some kind of resistance, an invincible inertia that reacts and protests against entering into transpersonal states of consciousness. But from here everything goes in the wrong direction.

Let me explain. I often advice my guests in my philosophical counseling sessions, and in my philosophical cafés, to find a religion that suits them; a religion that can work as a frame of reference in their spiritual practice; a religion, that has a spiritual tradition for different kinds of supporting exercises, as for example meditation and prayer. When spirituality namely requires a non-evaluating, defocused, open, surrendered consciousness, then there is an instinctive survival-preparedness in us, that reacts and protests. Man has survived on willfullness and a consciousness-structure, which mental and psychic sign is egocentredness: the work of the inner calculator. The bigger ego, the bigger survival chance.

Seen from a spiritual perspective, this instinctive survival strategy (the ego) appears as a resistance, and invincible inertia. The traditional wisdomtraditions have some very precise concepts about this. In the West it is called original sin. In the East it is called negative karma.

If a human being for real should have hopes for re-encoding this instinct-anchored (animal-like) behaviour-pattern, then this demands a radical reorganization of the mind and the thoughts. The consciousness have to train the use of its higher functions (relaxfullness, awareness, heartfullness, asking philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way, silence) by de-teaching the, for the Ego, necessary, and by the evolution, approved functions (evaluation, focusing, action, language-creating). And this is not practical possible without a long-term pedagogy, which uses religion and supporting exercises.
In order to convert or purify the evolutional inertia, religion and supporting exercises are used. You can’t, by psychotherapeutic strategies, free the consciousness for its attachment to this inertia. You can therefore not dissolve or dilute or convert the original sin through psychotherapy. The reason is, that it is only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness) that basically can help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to, that a human being should be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), then this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. And as part of this preparation religion and supporting exercises serve.

The crucial difference between psychotherapy and religion and supporting exercises is namely, as already said, that psychotherapy is turning the awareness towards the content (experiences) of consciousness, while religion and supporting exercises are turning the awareness towards the essence, or the form of consciousness (realization). (See my article The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice, and my article The Value of Religion and Supporting Exercises in my book Dream Yoga).

It is therefore important that you, in your fascination of the contents of consciousness, and the possibilities that lies in the astral plane’s collective history, don’t begin to use drugs or one-sided developmental techniques, which promise you great experiences concerning so-called “transpersonal” states of consciousness. One of the reasons why the true spiritual traditions lead people around the collective time, or shorten the passage through it, is because that discarnate entities from these areas are using people or cults (collective energy processes in mass phenomena: religious, spiritual, psychotherapeutic, political, sports or other type) as psychic channels, working interdimensionally to create all sorts of “experiences” in people, experiences that seems dazzling and/or extraordinary – but with the purpose of using their energy as food. That is: a kind of vampires, or even worse.

The spiritual process is a slow and organical growth-process that requires your own realization-work through religion and its continual supporting exercises. When the source eventually intervenes, then the religion and supporting exercises fall away. They are only a frame of reference. You can’t receive realization from any outer source, whether it is through organizations, faith, dogmas, priests, rituals, drugs, therapy, theories of dream interpretation, philosophical knowledge or psychological methods. You must remember that all such systems are build on the thought-constructions of man, and they will make you into a slave if you are identified with them. Only your own realizationwork can, step by step, year after year, clean the consciousness, increase the energy level in the consciousness, and gradually expand it out into the fascinating areas of life. And the intervention from the source is one with this expansion.
You have to have patience. Even for people with a regular and well-ordered practice (2-3 hours every day) there can pass weeks, months or years between the spiritual reflections into your life. You can concretely say, that a person, who really wants to experience an existential transformation process, shall reckon in, during a number of years to practise supporting exercises about 2 hours a day. However if practice is appropriate, the spiritual consciousness will with time automatically penetrate your life.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmacially talk and experiences of the “experts” and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, regression. None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. And if they use the karma idea in that way, it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

And this area is inexhaustible. Regardless whether you make use of psychotherapy, Holotropic Breathwork, clairvoyance, healing, body therapy, regression, dreaminterpretation, chakras, then there will always be more. You can continue and continue, you almost become dependent of it like drugs or sex, because the actual magnet, which attract the whole of this area with its energy – the Ego - has not been realized. The Ego will with its evaluations create new problems, new content, new longings, new dreams - which again is in need of therapy, consultation etc., indefinately. The spiritual development stops, it leaves the rails and ends up blind.

The genuine karmacially structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, a guru, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost.

So the universal images lie as a kind of dream-tracks and song-lines in your actual life here and now. Only here and now they can be discovered. They can manifest themselves in symbols, which contain informations about the development process of your spiritual essence. Informations from the universal images are, contrary to informations from the collective images, not contradiction-filled and split, but healing and synthesizing. They are the map, which shows the path from the Ego to your spiritual essence. When they have been discovered, the Ego knows the way to the
pure awareness and love of its spiritual essence – the home of the spiritual essence (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences).

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma. The consciousness has the key in its life. Only awareness can find the progressive karma, and awareness must of course be your own awareness, and therefore your own presence in the Now. It helps nothing, what people through HB may be able to experience in the collective time, or fantasize about karmically experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lifes) – and which have a certain reality for the client – are collective fantasies.

Collective fantasies have two aspects. The one aspect of the fantasies is a kind of archetypical, mythologically symbolizings of more personally, unclarified matter. The second aspect of the fantasies is relatively valid information about incidents, for example in other centuries. The misguiding happens because the two aspects are blended together. The client can remember, that he has lived in a past incarnation (often very romantic, for example as a pharaoh), and he can even travel to the places, where he had been incarnated and find things which "proves" his assertion. There has been made many examinations of things of that kind. But regardless how fascinating it is, then it proves nothing about past lifes. And therefore it is deceptive and dangerous to occupy oneself with. There is for example the danger of discarnate entities using you as a channel (see my articles Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance and Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling).

Nobody can tell you about your karmacially structures. All people or techniques - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans, HB facilitators, etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmacial, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. If you think that you, through HB, are able to experience your karmacially course, it would not help you. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that’s the same with all spiritual.

In all briefness you can say, that genuine spiritual practice tries to guide people, 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 you are lost in them, to lead you back on the right track.
Appendix

In July 2011, Chantal Lavigne of Quebec died as a result of a personal development seminar. Some month later a coroner’s report confirmed that Lavigne was accidentally “cooked to death” during a class called “Dying in Consciousness.” Participants were wrapped in mud and plastic, covered with blankets, and left immobilized for about nine hours. Cardboard boxes were placed over their heads and they were encouraged to hyperventilate. Lavigne died of hyperthermia when her body was unable to dissipate heat properly.

The seminar was held at a spa called Ferme Reine de la Paix and organized by Gabriella “Seréna” Fréchette. In her work as a holistic healer, Fréchette channels “Melchizedek,” a mysterious king and priest that appears in the book of Genesis (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling). Lavigne had already completed 85 personal development seminars at the spa, for which she paid more than $18,900.

This seminar may be related to the conscious dying movement, which explores ceremonies from world traditions such as Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism that emphasize both preparing for death and gaining spiritual insight through near-death experiences. In audio recordings of the session, Fréchette allegedly states, “The time has come for this body of death that you believe is yours...Death is freedom...death is the truth.”

This is not the first time tragedy has resulted from holistic therapies that involve heat and confined spaces. In 2000, ten-year-old Candace Newmaker was accidentally smothered to death during “rebirthing therapy” that involved wrapping her in blankets and sitting on her to simulate the experience of birth. The therapists received prison sentences of 16 years.

In 2009, three people died in a poorly constructed homemade sweat lodge during a five-day “Spiritual warrior” retreat organized by James Arthur Ray, a self-help expert who appeared on Oprah and in the film The Secret (see my articles James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy, and The New Thought movement and the law of attraction). The dead were among 56 participants who paid nearly $10,000 each to take part in the retreat. Participants were crammed into a four-foot tall sweat lodge, packed with superheated rocks, in a ceremony that was supposed to induce a “rebirthing” experience.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation consulted Dianne Casoni, a criminologist from the University of Montreal who studies “cultic groups” including self-help
groups. Casoni expressed concern both about the influence holistic health providers gain over their clients and the lack of oversight over such seminars. Holistic healers have, in fact, been framed as sinister and manipulative charlatans at least since nineteenth century.

The problems of traditions such as New Thought, water cure, and mesmerism (see my article **Hypnosis, hypnotherapy, and the art of self-deceit**) foreshadowed later concerns over cults. One blog has already labeled Fréchette, “a deranged New Ager.” A Quebecois commenter called her “un garou de seet” (a cult guru).

The problem is shortly told the tendency, within New Age and the self-help industry, to reduce religion (the traditional spiritual traditions and their spiritual practices) to psychology and psychotherapy. An example is Stanislav Grof, who in his therapeutic technique “Holotropic Breathwork” is combining Regression psychotherapies with Cathartic psychotherapies, and is calling this technique a spiritual practice with an ancient shamanistic lineage. He evens claims that this technique is able to skip years of meditation within the traditional practices. The intention is to provoke paranormal phenomena of the same kind as those known from spiritual crises (the awakening of kundalini, para-psychic opening, Hero´s journey, the shamanic crisis, channeling, close encounters with UFOs, memories from past lifes, near-death experiences, possession states, peak experiences – see my article **Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena**).

The misunderstanding, and the following misleading of clients, happens because of the psychologizing of these phenomena. Grof wrongly thinks, that these experiences correspond with the theories within Regression psychotherapies and Cathartic psychotherapies, and that the goal is to re-experience or re-visit them; that is: you have go through heavy ordeals of regressive and/or cathartic kind, and experience death and rebirth (especially known from the shamanic illness and the Hero´s journey) in order to experience healing and personal transformation.

**A critique of Byron Katie and her therapeutic technique The Work**

For some years ago, when I was facilitating a philosophical café, and was talking about the important in asking philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way, one of the participants told me, that the American New Age guru Byron Katie had developed a method of self-inquiry, that did, that there from now on was no need of
therapy, philosophy and religion anymore. The method is called The Work, and is said to be a revolutionary new way to resolve any problem at all, so simple that even a child can do it.

This statement made my cognitive alarm bells ring, because I had heard such statements before. It is namely a typical way that “new” theories within New Age are presented (see my article Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality). And it made me curious: what have they now made up within this movement?

Byron Kathileen Reid (or “Katie” as she is often called) became severely depressed in her early thirties. She was a businesswoman and mother who lived in a small town in the high desert of southern California. According to Katie, for nearly a decade she spiraled down into paranoia, rage, self-loathing, and constant thoughts of suicide; for the last two years she was often unable to leave her bedroom. Then, one morning in February 1986, while in a halfway house for women with eating disorders, she experienced a life-changing realization. She called it “waking up to reality.” In that moment of enlightenment, she says, “I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but when I didn´t believe them, I didn´t suffer, and that this is true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that. I found that suffering is optional. I found a joy within me that has never disappeared, not for a single moment.”

According to journalist Allison Adato, soon afterwards people started seeking Katie out and asking how they could find the freedom that they saw in her. People from her own town, and eventually from elsewhere, came to meet her, and some even live with her.

Katie is not aligned with any particular religion or tradition. She is married to the writer and translator Stephen Mitchell, who co-wrote her first book, Loving What Is and her third book, A Thousand Names For Joy.

Katie calls her method of self-inquiry “The Work.” She describes it as an embodiment, in words, of the wordless questioning that had woken up in her that February morning. Adato further writes that as reports spread about the transformations people felt they were experiencing through The Work, Katie was invited to present it publicly elsewhere in California, then throughout the United States, en eventually in Europe and across the world. She has taught her method to people at free public events, in prisons, hospitals, churches, corporations, shelters for survivors of domestic violence, universities and schools, at weekend intensives, and at her nine-day “School for The Work.”
In the following article I will show how The Work is a simplified and biased form of therapy taken from Cognitive Therapy: a “single cause-single cure” approach to therapy, which has led many a therapist down a dead-end trail and has created no end of problems for clients. The typical scene is, that the innovators found themselves doing something: sitting in a hot tub, berating patients, or feeding them out of baby bottles. It felt good or worked for the therapists, so they made some assumptions in order to create an ideology that would support practicing the method on others. Without much thought, and little or no proof, the technique was expanded to become a “cure-all” for all people.

This is precisely how the innovation of the Work happened. As mentioned, Katie said: “I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but when I didn’t believe them, I didn’t suffer, and that this is true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that. I found that suffering is optional. I found a joy within me that has never disappeared, not for a single moment.”

Another typical scene is that the innovation is based on therapist observation of the conduct of one patient. The therapist then teaches the method to countless others, professing that this is the best and only useful therapy to cure mental illness.

I will show the problematic in this. In life there can be many causes and contributing factors that might lead a person to seek therapy. Each person’s problems are unique.

I will also show this more general, and peculiarly, phenomenon within New Age, where “new” theories are exposed to have been taken (stolen) from something else, simplified/distorted, and then presented as something holy, new and revolutionary, often received in divine visions; that is: the illusion that a simplified psychotherapy should be a spiritual/philosophical practice. Besides the “inspiration” from cognitive therapy, I will show another source from where Katie has got her ideas, almost word-for-word.

Very shortly said, then the Work ends up as a “single cause-single cure” mix between Cathartic psychotherapy and positive thinking.

There is of course no need for psychotherapy if you are not mentally ill; on the contrary, it would be harmful to think so (see my article The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it).

I will use quotations from former Byron Katie devotee Janaki. Finally I will show an example from Cognitive Therapy that exposes where The Work comes from.
Problems with The Work

The Work consists in four questions you have to ask to a problematic thought of yours, and a turnaround technique. 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?

These questions can be a good idea to ask yourself if a problematic thought of yours actually is false. And there is nothing new in it. As mentioned they also use such questions in Cognitive Therapy, but not so simplified. So why not use that instead, or take a few lessons in philosophy?

Because 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. Problematic, because the training of critical thinking is the first step in a true spiritual proces, and on the whole a primary condition for a healthy mind. In Cognitive Therapy for example, they also have questions to ask to problematic thoughts, that actually have some truth in them (examples in the end of this article).

When the conclusion is given in advance then The Work’s four questions becomes so-called rhetorical questions; that is: questions which are asked purely for effect rather than as requests for answers. In that case the four questions function in precisely the same way as persuader words (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

It is comparatively easy, and certainly unhelpful, to raise four seemingly deep questions on any problem (called pseudo-profundity) – and where the conclusion is given in advance. But that is precisely what The Work is doing. It is said to work on any problem, and that it has to be used precisely as Byron Katie herself is doing it. But what is difficult and important is to investigate problems, and find answers. In a true philosophical investigation a problematic thought can very well be true, but the problematic in it could be generated by, that the person for instance can’t find any answers, any further solutions, or ways out. The investigation could then begin with finding other philosophical questions involved in the problem, for instance “What do I ought to do, or not to do?”, “How should I live in society?”, “What are feelings?”, “Is there a meaning of life?”, “Who am I?”
That is philosophical critical thinking, and such a critical way of thinking is eliminated in The Work.

Former devotees even say that The Work can get quite nasty with its turnaround technique. After that you, as expected, have “realized”, that your thought is not true, then you have to turn it upside down; you so to speak have to think the opposite thought.

Again it can be a good thing to look at problems from different sides, but that is not what you do with the turnaround technique. The turnaround technique actually sound a bit like the thought distortion called *Conversion to the opposite* (again: see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*). The turnaround technique must be a dream for any bully, liar or manipulator. If you are critical, then this is due to your own false thoughts. If someone have bullied you, and you feel hurt, then this pain is based on your own wrong way of thinking. Certainly not the bully’s (the bully is actually a kind of guru; an example of the divine). And in that we find the main problem with The Work, and the reason why I would advice people to keep a long distance from it. It is similar to other New Age therapies where everything is psychologized. If you are critical, then you have a resistance problem, and must pay for some more courses. Because, as in other New Age directions, there is also the typical cult aspect in The Work, where it is about earning a lot of money.

Here is an example of Katie’s use of the turnaroud technique. On page 35, of Losing the Moon, Byron Katie starts talking about Nazi’s taking babies from Jewish mothers and throwing the babies into a firepit near the end of WWII.

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.

The book *Losing the Moon* from which the above quotation has been taken has now been removed, but 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 subjectivism/relativism 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). I will return to this blog later.

I have several times myself discussed this kind of “examination” with Katie devotees (I have stopped with it now). Besides that it is extremely annoying to hear their “loving” voices and their use of the word love again and again, then it’s directly surrealistic how oblivious they are when demonstrating the monstrosity of their self-
deceptive work, how uninterested they are in the truth and how indifferent they are to people they help destroy with their “loving examinations.”

So, the Turnaround Technique also involves the thought distortion called *Reductio ad absurdum*, which covers positions that would have absurd consequences if true. If you for example preach the relativism of The Work and are believing that everything is relative and for that reason equally true (or good), you have thereby accepted that nazism, fascism, dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence, are as equally great blessings for mankind as democracy, negotiation and dialogue. Then you have no basis in order to criticize, because you haven’t got any rational frame to start from. You can’t criticize anyone for argumentation bungling, or to replace arguments with machine guns, because this presupposes, that there is a rational foundation in your arguments.

Many Byron Katie devotees would probably disagree with me, when I say that The Work is about realizing that your thoughts are false. Besides that this precisely is what Katie herself says - (“I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but when I didn’t believe them, I didn’t suffer, and that this is true for every human being.”) – then I have talked with several Katie devotees, both former and present devotees. I noticed how involved they were in the thought distortion called *Nondual bias* (see my book *A Dictionary of Thought Distortions*): Clear thinking, and therefore clear communication, involves, according to Taoism, an epistemological, a so-called gnoseological, dualism (*Yin* and *Yang*). 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 unambiguous. And we have to discriminate between a long line of other oppositions as well (superior seen: good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly): 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 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.

What I noticed in these Byron Katie devotees was the constant confusion of opposites. They had trained their minds to a constant use of The Turnaround Technique. The Technique can give a temporary release based on a kind of escape from reality (escapism), but can of course not remove for example anxiety, depression, anger, or other problems/negative reactions to challenges. Therefore they must start using the technique again, often, paradoxically, on a conclusion they - only a few moments before - had reached after having done The Work.
They often spoked in terms like: “On the one hand I agree, on the other hand I disagree!”; “On the one hand it could be true, on the other hand it could be false!”; “On the one hand I consider myself as perfect, on the other hand I consider myself as a fiasco!” And then they always concluded such “examinations” with the final statement that concepts such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly – both are being good; that is: the evil, the false and the ugly are as equally good as the good, the true and the beautiful – or, said in another way: the evil, the false and the ugly simply don’t exist. It’s all a part of What Is, and What Is, is good. Therefore you should love What Is.

Such statements are a variation of the thought distortion called False dichotomy which involves a Contradiction, since they can’t both be true (or good) because one denies the other. In a true philosophical argumentation you discriminate between good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, in order to find the philosophical virtues the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

An example of the variation: 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” commented on this message on the above mentioned blog Abusive Partner is your Guru? 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...
Many former Katie devotees have been in counseling for years in order to remove this way of confused thinking.

As other self-help and New Age theories The Work shows its roots in postmodern intellectualism (see my article Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry). For example you see the same in Marshal Rosenberg’s Nonviolent Communication – see my article Nonviolent Communication is an instrument of psychic terror.

Many former devotees of Byron Katie precisely describe The Work as a kind of inquisition, when it is performed. For example when it is used to eliminate people’s critique, often in a large group, with Byron Katie sitting on the stage, looking down at the critic with the whole audience on her side.

A serious problem with The Work is the feeling of guilt, or shame, it is creating. Not surprisingly. Former devotees are, as already shown, also telling about how confused their minds were getting, which again indicates, that it is based on especially two kinds of thought distortions, namely Rhetorical questions and Conversion to the opposite. The problem with Conversion to the opposite is, that it, in connection with the turnaround technique, tries to eliminate one part of a pair of opposites, namely true thoughts (which of course can have negativity in them, since suffering is a reality), and only are working with false thoughts. In this way we see, that The Work actually is a special version of positive psychology (which try to ignore all negativity by focusing only on positivity – there is no evil), and therefore has it roots in the New Thought movement (see my article The New Thought movement and the Law of Attraction). Negativity is, according to The Work, due to your thoughts. Positivity is first arising when you realize that your thoughts are false.

But in this biased way of thinking The Work actually produces a false dichotomy because it is not possible to eliminate the negative opposition. We have already looked at the special variation of false dichotomy Byron Katie devotees are ending up in. The variation is that the devotees constantly swing from one pole of a pair of opposites to the other. This is due to Conversion to the opposite (the constant use of The Turnaround Technique), and the result is Contradiction (about opposites, see my book A Portrait of Lifeartist, the section On Dualism in the chapter The Life Artist as a Rational Being).

You can for example convert your insecureness and anxiety for not being good enough to exaggerated self-confidence. Such a conversion is of course a kind of Compensation, escape, self-deceit, and will lead to a false and imbalanced way of life.
Sadly enough, it seems like the movement of positive psychology (again: see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction) directly is using Conversion to the opposite as a central part of its training. Positive psychology is marked by its attempts, through thinking, to eliminate all negativity by converting it into something positive, or simply by ignoring it, or saying it doesn’t exist. But a thought is always defined by its negation; that is: what the thought not is. This means that a thought always contains a pair of opposites. So, you can’t by the force of thinking (and therefore not by force of will or choice) convert negativity to positivity. If you nonetheless try to do this you will end up in focusing on the one extreme of a pair of opposites, which is an unbalance. The energy-laws within the wholeness will therefore seek to bring the thoughts back to the balance of middle. They do this through a contra-balancing movement; that is: a swing over in the opposite extreme. That is what is meant with compensatory karma (see my article What is karma?). Existentially seen Conversion to the opposite causes a conflict between what you are and what you want to become, or between being and becoming.

Conversion to the opposite, and the above-mentioned problems, characterize The Work, and the Turnaround technique, and are the reason why the devotees again and again need to do the technique. It actually also involves another thought distortion, namely Endless split of the thought, because that the devotees, each time they have turned a thought around, are discovering that this is causing new problems. Therefore they have to do the turnaround one more time, and so on, indefinitely. I have investigated this in my book A Portrait of Lifeartist in the section On Analysis.

In a true spiritual practice the transformation happens, partly through art of life, where you are dancing between the opposites (as in the teaching of Yin and Yang), and through deep meditative-existential inquiry.

False dichotomy is a misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for example: ”Either you are with us, or you are against us” – ”if I’m not always a success, then I’m a fiasco”. Similarly, someone who says that you must either believe that God exists or else that God doesn’t exist is setting up a false dichotomy since there is the well-known third option of the agnostic.

A false dichotomy appears when somebody sets up a dichotomy in such a way, that it looks like, that there only are two possible conclusions, when the facts actual are, that there are many other alternatives which not are being mentioned. Many inappropriate rules of living and life-strategies are based on false dichotomy. False dichotomy is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life. The false dichotomy, which the turnaround technique creates (the conversion to the opposite),
is: “If I am thinking that something is true, then this thought is false.” And, in connection with positive psychology: “If I am not always positive, then there is something wrong with my thoughts.”, and “If I am not always a success, then I am a fiasco.” And thereby it induces in people a vulnerability for guilt, shame and depression; that is: people are certainly not getting happy from using The Work, though the thought distortion Subjective validation probably will make many claim that they are. Another aspect of this is the suffering provoked through the use of cathartic psychotherapy (see below).

Another interesting aspect of The Work is that it also involves the thought distortions Self-refuting arguments and Reductio ad Absurdum. We have already looked at the Reductio ad absurdum, because we can see that The Work could be used by any bully, liar or manipulator. If we take the self-refuting arguments then The Work involves the problem of subjectivism/relativism, which considers all views as subjectivistic/relativistic, and therefore equally true (or equally good); what of course indicates that the views in absolutistic sense is false (not good). The Work is therefore logical fallacious, because it of course considers itself as being true – remember Byron Katie´ s own words: “I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but when I didn´t believe them, I didn´t suffer, and that this is true for every human being.”

But it can precisely, in accordance with its own built-in subjectivism, not itself be regarded as more true/good than the thoughts of the clients. For that reason it is followed by a long line of self-contradictions. The self-contradiction is that subjectivism makes an exception of its own position: the very assertion of subjectivism is itself nonsubjectivistic. Is the Work true? Are you absolutely sure it is true? – and so on. And you could make the same contra-examinations on almost every other sentence made by Katie or her devotees. They contradict themselves almost in every word they´re saying; that is: they are constantly telling what they think is true and false, good and bad.

A former devotee writes on the Cult Education Forum (http://forum.rickross.com), under the username jj52, how she attended Katie´s 9 day school. They were sworn to secrecy about the events that go on there so as not to “spoil it for others” who would attend in the future. She offers a small list of things that happened there:

1) A forced 36 hour fast.

2) A day long “outing” where we were left to beg for food among homeless people in the streets of Los Angeles. We were instructed not to take any ID, or anything with us but the clothes we had on.
3) A rich organic diet that sent many people’s bodies into shock. Vomiting was a regular occurrence, and was offered as “evidence” of cleansing, and of how powerful The Work really is.

4) Long days with brief breaks for meals. (7 am to 11:00 pm most days).

5) Long, intense confessional sessions

6) Deep, excessive probing into one’s past traumas. (She used violent Korn music to trigger our worst memories).

7) No contact with family or the outside world. (We turned our cell phones into the staff).

8) Not allowed to wear make-up, to exercise, or to eat outside of the diet given.

9) Eating meals and taking breaks in complete silence.

10) Going at least 2 full days as a “silent one”, unallowed to talk with others.

11) Being invited to criticize Katie and The School, and those who did were silently, subtly shunned by the group and Katie.

12) Having every doubt and concern about what was going on at The School questioned and “turned around”, until no one could trust their own perceptions anymore.

It is interesting, that this “School” is using precisely the same methods as in James Arthur Ray’s seminars. In July 2009, Colleen Conaway attended a seminar hosted by James Ray International in which the attendees were directed to dress as homeless people. She fell to her death at the Horton Plaza Mall in San Diego. She died as a result of injuries, and according to police, she had no identification on her person.

It is also interesting, that the length of the fast is precisely the same as in Ray’s spiritual warrior workshop (36 hours), where 3 people died, and several were hospitalized (see my article James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy). It is also interesting that there is used a combination of cathartic psychotherapy and New Age psychotherapeutic confessional sessions (see my articles Cathartic psychotherapy, The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy, and A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork).
Why does Katie use the same methods as in numerous other New Age psychotherapies, when claiming her method is so unique? These methods are used in order to provoke negative feelings and thoughts, which the participants then shall use The Work on. It is clear enough, that when the participants return to a normal life again, then all the physiological and psychological negative symptoms are disappearing, and then the participants will say that this healing is due to The Work. This is a typical persuasion trick used in several cult environments (read more about this in my article The devastating New Age Turn Within Psychotherapy).

A person tells the following story from a “School for The Work.” weekend intensive, which gives a picture of The School’s use of humiliation known from confrontational theories and Attack therapy, and where violation of ethical practices are obviously (again: see my article Cathartic psychotherapies):

The participants: In addition to a group (approx. 250) impressive in the number of newbies to The Work and repeaters (seeking Certification or to reprise their previous experiences in bliss), there were a remarkable number of people who were obviously mentally ill. Depression and Anxiety (Social phobias, Specific phobias, Generalized Anxiety, etc.) were to be expected, as were a fine spread of the more benign Personality Disorders (Obsessive-Compulsive, Histrionic, Dependent were all well-represented). And there were participants with milder forms of Impulse Control Disorders (ADD/ADHD and hypomania). But there were also a scattering of the scarier Personality Disorders (Anti-Social, Paranoid, Schizoid and Schizotypal). Bipolar I and II, while not admitted, were apparent. And there was undoubtedly a few people who were hallucinating, delusional, or delirious.

I'd have thought Katie would have screened more carefully to reduce her liability in these cases, but she actually seemed to welcome the more severely disturbed. I was aware that no deliberate or careful screening of mental and physical problems appeared in on-line registration. Signing up involved giving demographic info, sending money that would not be refunded, and not much else. We was not asked about diagnosis or medication until we arrived...a bit too late to shoo away people who had come from all over the world. And there was that Surrender exercise at the beginning, where the message was very mixed: give us your supplements, vitamins, medications you don't really need (as if the truly sick could make that decision well) AND if you are prescribed meds, you should take them. Several people gave up prescribed sleep medications and anxiolytics and this was applauded with comment from Katie, "If you can't sleep at night, contact the staff member on call and they will sit with you. If you experience discomfort, do it here in the room with us during the day. If you have to sleep, do that here, too.” It didn't take long beforemoaning, crying, agitated behaviors were the norm in the room well before fasting
and 15-hour days of intense emotional work took their toll. And most staff and participants just left the suffering alone, ignored it or staffed it by listening to the sufferer do The Work again and again. Some people cried off and on throughout the entire school. Often people were crying so hard or were so anxious, they could not be understood when they took the microphone and tried to tell their experience. And sharing those experiences was an expectation. If you hadn't taken the mike yet, staff asked you why. I'm unclear on this, but I believe one repeater either had to go to the mental hospital during this school or had done so in a previous school. In other words, the mentally ill and the neurotic, alike, decompensated and this was encouraged under the philosophy of The School.

The Shame module was perhaps the most disturbing unit in the School. I believe this took place in the morning of Day Three, although I admit to losing track of what day it was (we were always either in the windowless conference room, on the 30-minute silent and led walks around the blocks nearby, or, briefly, on the grassy lawn in front of the hotel or in the halls of the hotel when we were set free to do The Work with a partner). In the Shame unit, we were instructed to write down the thing we'd done in our lives that we were most ashamed of, then take the mike and tell the whole group, then do The Work on it with a partner. Shaming is a subtle but powerful component of psychological abuse used in every torture and mind control process. People stood up and, sobbing or preening, revealed everything from bestiality and zoophilia to embarrassing physical features, infidelity to poor parenting that bordered on abuse. Many people told of having been abused and shamed by that. The reward for producing a novel or particularly painful shame experience was Katie's cooing, warm approval and attention. This was such a powerful exercise that, for the next few days, Katie would interrupt whatever exercise was in process to say that so-and-so desired to tell about their shame. Folks who had kept quiet during the Shame module apparently could not resist being part of it all, taking that microphone, and joining Katie's "family." Although Katie said, after the confessions had begun, that we should not reveal anything illegal, many seemed not to understand that bestiality, child abuse, etc., were illegal in the US.

At all times, there was a staff member in the back of the room speaking very softly into a dictophone, recording every story and event. Katie's books are largely made up of these stories and a release is signed at the beginning, giving permission for your stories to be used. One could literally feel the next book taking shape in that room. It might have been a "voluntary" exploitation, but exploitation it was, nonetheless.

The short conclusion to the above investigation is that The Work ends up as 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 the four questions and the turnaround technique (The Work). The question of the truth of the evoked negativity is hereby ignored. Subjectivism and relativism justify this ignorance.

Janaki

On my website (www.mortentolboll.weebly.com) you can, on the page for this article, download a 74 pages long booklet (PDF version) by former high ranking Byron Katie devotee Janaki, who exposes Byron Katie as a typical New Age guru (click here).

In the following I will repeat the most important aspects of this booklet in order to show what is so typical about New Age gurus. There are especially two typical traits:

1) Truth by authority
2) A closed world

1) Truth by authority

Truth by Authority is a thought distortion (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions). It is about taking statements to be true simply because an alleged authority (experts, teachers, divine sources, paranormal abilities, etc.) on the matter has said/justified that they are true. A level of critical thinking is always appropriate in a true spiritual practice, because the statement may be based on false premises, faulty reasoning, wishful thinking, vested interests, and a lot of other thought distortions.

And spiritual teachers, who in their arguments/teaching, again and again, have to defer to some authority (experts, teachers, divine sources, paranormal abilities) in order to justify their arguments/teachings, are hundred percent on the wrong track, even if they should have some paranormal abilities. In Byron Katie it is her tendency to talk about herself as perfect and untouchable. True enlightened masters never do this. I here quote from Janaki, page 33-34:

Katie says, ‘I am here for your projection’, and ‘I am what it looks like on the other side’ (of doing The Work), and ‘You are what is left of my story’. For me this always meant that she had risen above and beyond all earthly vices and negative emotions (she has become perfect and untouchable). If she is here for our projection, it surely must mean that she no longer projects herself. If she is what it looks like on the other
side, it surely must mean that I still have a long way to go, since I am nowhere near that point. Then she would also say, ‘It’s not called The Work for nothing’. So in all appearances, I still had a lot to do.

This is being reinforced by Katie’s stories about her personal life in A Thousand Names for Joy and in the various Katie-isms booklets and newsletters. It paints a picture of a woman who is never unhappy, who has no negative emotions left and who can deal with any situation in a peaceful way, because she is the living example of Loving What Is. I have heard Katie say several times (on stage), that she hasn’t been angry ever since her awakening experience. To prove this she will ask Stephen who sits on the front row, ‘honey, have you ever seen me angry?’. His answer is always the same, ‘No, I haven’t’.

In private, I have rarely seen Katie go in and make turnarounds. Not with any of the feedback she ever gave me, or with any of the feedback I ever gave her. If I would give her feedback, she would immediately call me on the turnaround and want examples.

She told me in her feedback that there was a smelly flavor in the way I compare myself to other trainers, yet she says The School is unlike any other school on the planet. Is this not a comparison?

I have seen Katie get irritated and angry at people. I have seen her stressed out. I have seen how she doesn’t stay in her business, every time she gave me feedback, she went into mine. I have heard her defend, justify and explain. I have often seen her as someone who goes into a story and doesn’t question it. I have experienced how she believes the stories reported back to her by her staff members and doesn’t question those stories, or checks with the person involved.

As the above-mentioned former devotee, jj52, writes on the cult education forum:

“Although The Work is presented as for anyone of any religion, once I became a part of Katie’s captive audience, it became very clear that was no so. Katie claims to have no beliefs, because she is ´clear´ and lives in ´reality´ or ´heaven´, her belief system is actually very strong, very distinct, and very anti-Christian. And, anyone whose belief system doesn’t match hers is treated like the ´unenlightened´ sap who needs to keep questioning his/hers thoughts until they can see things Katie’s way.”

And jj52 continues: “I kept in touch with several people after The School, and when I made the decision to throw out all of my materials and abandon the process altogether, I met a lot of resistance. That was about the time her new book came out A
Thousand Names for Joy. I bought it, again out of dire curiosity. I read through it one evening, and that was all it took for me to toss it out. Hearing her tell about watching a man having a stroke, and feeling no concern for his well being because she was ‘in love’ ...was crazy. Since when did apathy become love?”

And jj52 ends her account: “But, I think it was the passage where she said that she likes pretending to be human and called it her ‘disguise’ that really put the whole thing over the top. Apathy I could probably handle...but inhumanness is going too far. I can’t even express the disturbing way I’ve felt watching all of these people (there were about 300 at The School) throwing away a normal, healthy range of emotions for ‘bliss’. And, I find it interesting that none of them have ever actually become like Katie. I guess psychosis is pretty hard to self-induce...?”

Another example is about how Byron Katie never has read any books, and that her teaching came as a kind of awakening inside her. Here I again quote from Janaki, page 28-30:

After these emails, I spoke with to an old friend who used to know Katie from years before I met her. He said, ‘And she got most of The Work from the Course in Miracles, because they were all reading that in the halfway house, that is where the turnarounds come from. She also told us that she was reading books by Ken Keyes when she was at the halfway house’.

I had never heard that name before and I became curious. I Googled him, and learned that Ken Keyes had a personal growth center in the 70’s in Oregon. I found some quotes by him on the internet, that could have been Katie quotes. Quotes like, “A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world; everyone you meet is your mirror.” And “Everyone and everything around you is your teacher.” and “I have everything I need to enjoy my here and now-unless I am letting my consciousness be dominated by demands and expectations based on the dead past or the imagined future”.

I became more curious and ordered some of his books. I was amazed. He called his process The Inner Work. He worked with worksheets that consist of 6 uncompleted sentences. I found a list of all the questions that are on the worksheet from The Work: I want, I need, he should, what I never want to happen again. I also found some of the questions, especially the 3rd question was literal, including the answers that are given to that question. I found the turnarounds, exactly the way they are done in The Work. And there was a lot more.
I scanned everything that is relevant to The Work into a pdf document and sent it to Katie. I emailed her: “Recently someone told me that you were reading books by Ken Keyes Jr., while you were at the halfway house. Having read several of his books, I put together this document, since it is highly confusing to me. The confusing part being that you always told us that you never had any teachers, or read any books, and the fact that it says on your bio on your website that: “Katie’s process of self-inquiry, called The Work, didn’t develop from this experience; she says that it woke up with her, as her, that February morning in 1986”. Would you please explain this?”

Katie replied with, ‘As to the Ken Keyes pages, I love that there are so many ways of saying the same thing as we all journey through our own experiences. I think the big difference is the four questions and turnarounds. That is The Work.

Stephen also wrote me a note, P.S. from Stephen: Dear Janaki, My goodness! Anyone who knows Katie knows that she doesn't read books. Furthermore, even if someone had been with her at the halfway house, even if that someone had given her homework assignments from Ken Keyes, how could he know that she actually read the books? Was he hiding underneath Katie's bed? It must be painful to believe that Katie is a liar and a rip-off artist. In addition to the Keyes books, I could find a hundred books on spirituality or cognitive psychology where there are echoes of Katie's words. And I could find even clearer echoes in the words of the Buddha. But nowhere are there the four questions and turnarounds, which are The Work. If you can’t see Katie's astounding originality from comparing the passages that you sent in the pdf, then you’re not seeing very clearly, in my opinion.

Very surprised, very amused, and with love, Stephen

I answered him with, Hi Stephen, Painful? No. Confused? Yes. That is why I asked. If it were just echoes, I probably wouldn’t be confused. Liar and rip-off artist are your words, not mine. I love that you are amused. Janaki

I let Katie know exactly who had given me the Ken Keyes information. After that, I received an email from my friend, saying that upon reflecting, he and his wife could not confirm that Katie had actually told them she read the Ken Keyes books. But that back in the early days, they kept pointing out the similarities to her, between Keyes’ work and her own.

I never got a response to my answers to her email.
About half a year after posting this weblog, I spoke to someone who used to live in Barstow in the early Katie days. This person told me that the basement of one of the houses was filled with boxes of books. He found all kinds of books: The Course in Miracles, all the Ken Keyes books, books by Ramana Maharshi, books by Richard Bandler, just to name a few. Many of the books had underlined sentences in them and contained notes in Katie’s handwriting.

So Katie used to read books, and why not? What I don’t understand is that Stephen Mitchell tells me that anyone who knows Katie, knows that she doesn’t read books. So he either didn’t know about the basement filled with books, or he just wanted to mock me in his email response.

Another interesting piece of information was that Paul (Katie’s second husband), used to talk about how she was reading all the time in the early years.

You can find examples on Ken Keyes quotes in Janaki’s booklet.

2) A closed world

It is clear enough that Byron Katie devotees must live in a very closed world in order to maintain their belief. What are they doing if confronted with the realities of the world (which mainly are negative and evil)? Turning them around? I don’t think a child molester, a thief, a murderer, a psychopath, a terrorist, etc., etc., then will stop their activities.

As in other New Age directions it must be an incredible experience for any scholar, to see the arrogance and incompetence of the people within this area. Here is a quote from Janaki, page 39:

It seems to me that The Work has become a religion that is now taking on global forms, especially when I see how it is being marketed through Katie’s various websites and her weblog. The four questions have become the holy bible. I get that thought when I hear Katie say that Loving What Is is the text for The Work. I get the feeling that the word text has an scriptural association, as in Holy Text. I also get that association with the Judge your Neighbor worksheet. When I needed to translate this phrase into Dutch, I told Katie that we have 2 translations for the word neighbor. One is literal and applies to the guy living next door, and the other has a biblical connotation. She chose the biblical one.

Many years ago, I sat with Katie in her room one morning. She was talking about the future of The Work and she said, ‘I have seen it Janaki, it is going to be like the
Sermon on the Mount’. I felt so in awe of her at the time. Here I was sitting with someone equal to Jesus Christ, having tea on the balcony.

As in other New Age directions, as for example The Secret, you also see how the authors are peppering their thoughts with quotations from spiritual traditions (taken out of context), in order to make it sound holy. What is incredible is how Byron Katie and her followers are totally oblivious of how they are demonstrating the monstrosity of their ignorance about how everything in the Work already is known, and much better worked out, and also scientific investigated, in Cognitive Therapy. Here is a quote from Janaki on page 34-36:

Katie emphasizes very strongly that The Work is not therapy. She has always done this. On the Release of Liability form for The School it says, It is not therapeutic in design. I was always completely in line with this, and whenever anyone would compare The Work with therapy, I would argue against it quite strongly. The comparison that I heard most of all was with Cognitive Therapy. Last year I realized that I actually had no clue about Cognitive Therapy, (or any therapy), so I decided to buy a book and see for myself. I ordered a book called Feeling Good by David Burns. I was amazed, and I came to the conclusion that The Work indeed comes very close to Cognitive Therapy. I have to keep referring to Cognitive Therapy, because I know nothing about any other kind of therapy.

Personally I don’t see any harm in this, but I can understand why Katie needs to emphasize that The Work is not therapy. After all, she is not a licensed therapists and nor are most people who are licensed by her to facilitate others with four questions, and America is the country of the ‘Sue you, Sue me’ culture. So precautions need to be taken.

In Cry in the desert, there is a story where Katie would say to Paul, ‘take me to my people’. He would then drive her to Los Angeles, to the area where homeless people used to hang out. Later I learned that she was in fact looking for a lady therapist that she knew from the halfway house. I also heard that this lady lost her job at the halfway house over Katie and was now homeless and living on the streets. This last piece is just hearsay, and I can’t know that this is actually true. The story has it that Katie would then stay with her for a couple of days before Paul would collect her again. During the first Certification training in the Netherlands, this therapist came and attended. There was a little buzz going around the staff, because it was quite unusual to have people around from Katie’s past. At the end of the Certification Katie stood on the stage. All the participants were standing in half a circle, waiting for their names to be called (it was quite small in those days, only 60 participants). When your name was called, you would walk up to the stage and Katie would hand you
your certificate. When Hannah’s name was called, she remained where she was. She looked at Katie and said, ‘Katie, I want you to step down to me’. Katie said, ‘Hannah, I already have’. Hannah just stood there and didn’t say anything. Katie did the same, but finally stepped down from the stage and handed her the certificate. Only Katie and Hannah know what the reason was for this behavior.

However, Katie does make a comparison between The Work and therapy. On one of the forums on the Institute for The Work website, there is a ‘topic of the month’ forum. Katie posts a new statement each month, and people get to discuss this, or reply to her question why she is saying this. In February 2009 the topic of the month was, ‘What happened? If someone has had panic attacks for years, and they have done therapy and many self-help methods, and then they do one or two one-hour sessions with you and never have another panic attack, why would this be? From your own experience, internally what happened?’. From what I read here, it seems to me that she is making a direct comparison between The Work and therapy (and self-help methods), by claiming that The Work is far superior, even though it is not said in so many words. (Ah... this is where the power of literal listening and literal speaking steps in!).

This is very interesting. What comes to my mind is this: when I look at an infomercial on the television, I hear only the benefits and all the reasons why I need to have this item they are advertising. And to be honest, I want to have nearly everything that I see on nearly every infomercial! When I see the little movies, I am fully convinced, the proof is right there in front of my eyes, and all these people that tell their experience, surely they can’t be lying? Then when I look up the so much wanted item on Google (and my husband thanks me for this!), I get to hear all the other sides and the downfall. In the infomercial they say, if you get this grill or turbo oven, you can throw away all your other pots and pans. And basically what I hear Katie say here is, if you do The Work, you can throw away all therapies and self-help methods.

It is also interesting, that when Janaki is speaking about therapy (as such) on page 37, she is only mentioning a lot of different New Age therapies, as for example Avatar, NLP, Bio Energetics, Satsang, the Journey, the Great Freedom, Deeksha, being hugged by Amma, Landmark, Tony Robbins, etc. But she is not mentioning any scientific based therapy forms. It seems like this is a closed world, where everybody are reading the same literature, and are ignoring everything else.

It is the same with the Law of Attraction followers, who repeatedly teach people in wrong interpretations of Quantum mechanics, without seeking any other knowledge about it, than what they have read in New Age books (see my article **The New Thought movement and the law of attraction**).
Don’t these people even consider the thought, that if their teachings have to be spread out to the whole world, then they have to meet, and argue, with people with scientific knowledge about these things?

In my articles The Sokal Hoax and The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines, I show how dangerous the naive faith in subjective attitudes and rejection of scientific methods and content can prove to be for all, who are involved in these things. You can mention a vast number of crazy New Age therapies, which are taken at their face value. Just try to follow an Oprah Winfrey show. These people are often breathtaking in their combination of self-confidence and absurdity, where they with no hesitation are bullying highly educated experts and scientists if they are critical. Subjectivism namely opens them for the danger of magical thinking and Ego-inflation (see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

The Socratic Inquire technique used in Cognitive Therapy

In the following I will give you an example of a Socratic inquire technique, which I use as a help in my supporting exercise The Philosophical Diary (see my book Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader). This inquire technique is also used in Cognitive Therapy. As you can see, it implies Byron Katie´s four questions, but also many other questions, which are necessary so that the technique can be so flexible, that it doesn´t end as rhetorical questions. You can also see where Ken Keyes has got his ideas from (see examples on Ken Keyes quotes in Janaki´s booklet). And even this is not enough in a spiritual practice.

In order to understand spirituality, you must focus on the thought-process, you must understand, that spirituality is philosophy and philosophical practice, not psychology and psychotherapy (see my article Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy). You must focus on the form of consciousness, not on its content; you must turn your awareness towards the observer, and not the observed. Therefore spiritual questions are philosophical questions, such as Who am I?

To ask philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way has nothing to do with those enquire techniques used in psychotherapy and coaching. Its quite central that the true masters of spirituality are using philosophical questions, because such questions ask for what is common to all mankind, the universal - what you could call the essence of Man and reality. This is because that the Source, the essential in Man and in reality, precisely is something common to all mankind, or universal. In other words: philosophy directs itself towards the essence, and not towards the content.
Psychotherapy and coaching are only able to ask for the personal (or the content), and therefore they can never open the consciousness in towards the Source (the essence).

The following exercise is therefore only a supporting exercise turning around your personal history, and which you eventually have to leave behind, when you reach the collective and universal areas of history (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice):

**Investigative and transforming questions**

*Questions to investigation and analysis of the problem-situation*

- What happened in the situation? (who said/did what, when?)
- What did you feel then? How were you? (how angry/sad etc. were you on a scale 0-10?)
- What did you say to yourself, immediately before you felt that? What were you thinking? If it is true, what does it tell about you? About the other?
- What did you then do in the situation?
- Which of these thoughts are specially affecting your feelings, burdening you the most? Central thought.

*Questions to transforming and restructuring the central thought*

- How convinced are you, that this thought is true?

**Argumentation**

- What do you base the thought on? What substance do you have for it? What is the evidence for it?
- Is there anything in the situation, which can point in another direction?
- Is there anything in your life, which can point in another direction?
- Do you have experiences, which could suggest, that this thought is not completely true?

**Alternatives**

- Could you think different in this situation? (More self-supporting and constructive?)
- What would a more realistic/self-supporting way to think be in this situation?
- Does it feel different, when you imagine, that you were thinking in that way?
- What is most realistic to think?
• When it feels better, and also more realistic, to think alternately, what would you then choose to think?

Worst and best
• What would the worst be, if your thought is true?
• Would it be so bad?
• What could there come out of it, that would be beneficial/good for you, if it is true, what you think?

Problem-solution
• If your interpretation/thought is true, what could you then do in order to manage the situation better?
• Could you lay a plan, so the situation is getting better now/onwards?

Distancing
• What would you tell your best friend, if he, in the same situation, was thinking in that way?
• How would you perceive the situation in three months/six months?

Thought distortions
Which distortions characterize this thinking? Examples on the most spread distortions (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions for more examples):

Dichotom thinking: which means that you arrange the surrounding world in a pair of opposites (for example life and death, past and future, subject and object, good and evil, justification and condemnation, love and hate, power and powerlessness, perfect and fiasco). This is a degraded and one-sided division, which happens when the Ego, through evaluations, splits the more universal images of time in pieces. These images are in themselves a kind of syntheses, because they always include the opposite pole. But the dichotomous thinking expels the opposite pole, removes it, and by doing so you are coming to live on postulates, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives. Dichotom thinking – or thinking in opposites – is the central thought distortion. All the below thought distortions arise on the background of dichotom thinking.

Selective abstraction: selections and exclusions - which means that you, usually unconscious, choose to perceive special parts of reality and leave out other.
**Generalization:** which means that you expect, that something, which has taken place in one situation, also takes place in other situations, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

**Personalizing:** which means that you see independent incidents, which happen in the surrounding world, as related to yourself. To take something personally, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

**Enlargement and reduction of elements in the surrounding world:** To make a problem much larger than it in reality is, or to make the number of your life-possibilities much lesser than they in reality are. You overestimate or understate - exaggerate or understate, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

**Catastrophe-thinking:** Unrealistic thoughts that are being connected with a harmless fact. For example when you under a dizziness-attack think: ”I am going to die”, ”I am going mad”. Or when you receive a bill a bit larger than expected and you think: ”Everything is lost”. Catastrophe-thinking is out of proportions with reality, and you don’t ask, or seek for contra-conceptions and alternatives. Follows often from black and white thinking, and is closely connected with anxiety-development.

**Attribution:** Misleading way to explain incidents. One-sided ascribing the reason for, or the responsibility for, negative incidents, to yourself, or to other people or circumstances, without including other elements in the situation. Is closely connected with sense of guilt or anger.

**Black and white thinking:** To classify all situations, incidents or things, as an example of one of two extremes, when the facts actual are, that there between the two extremes exists a complete spectrum of other possible viewpoints. Black and white thinking is a variation of false dichotomy. Black and white thinking arises when you try to get the world to fit into very simple prejudiced categories. Words characterized by black and white thinking are words such as must, shall, never, always, as for example ”all of it is hopeless”, ”it cannot possibly succeed”, ”I have to be better than the others”, ”nobody likes me”. Often the most basic assumptions about yourself and the world, are based on black and white thinking. Black and white thinking is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life. You come to live on postulates, without asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives.

**False dichotomy:** A misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for
example: "Either you are with us, or you are against us" – "if I’m not always a success, then I’m a fiasco". A false dichotomy appears when somebody sets up a dichotomy in such a way, that it looks like, that there only are two possible conclusions, when the facts actual are, that there are many other alternatives which not are being mentioned. Many inappropriate rules of living and life-strategies are based on false dichotomy. False dichotomy is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life.

*Arbitrary inference:* which means, that you make a causal linking of factors, which is accidental and misleading.

*Thought reading:* You are convinced, that you know, what others think about you. You don´t investigate if you are right by asking or searching for contra-conceptions and alternatives. Without deeper reflection you just conclude, that others for example are critical.

*Rhetoric or subjective argumentation:* an unethical way to convince others about your opinions, because it doesn´t show, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case, but manipulates with it. Contains some of the following elements: innuendoes, distortions, generalizations, over-/understatements, sarcasm, satire, irony, postulates, emotional affections, coloured diction, choices and exclusions, subjective style. - **objective argumentation** therefore is a more ethical way to convince others about your opinions, because it actually shows, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case. Contains some of the following elements: summary or abstract, information, description, reasons, concrete diction, nuanced objective statement.

*Wishful thinking:* To think, that because it would be nice, if something was true, then it actual must be true. This thoughtpattern is very common, and very seductive because it allows us to avoid unpleasant truths. But it’s a form of self-deceit. Wishful thinking for example often ignores the possibility of plausible alternative explanations on exactly the same observations.

*Prejudice:* a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. Philosophy – that is: rationality and critical thinking – is opposed to prejudice. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question. Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to *some* beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (see wishful thinking); however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.
Ad hominem move: A Latin phrase meaning “to the person”. The devious move in debate, where you shift attention from the point in question to some non-relevant aspect of the person making it. Calling someone’s statement ad hominem is always a reproach; it involves the claim that the aspects of the arguer’s personality or behaviour, which have become the focus of discussion are irrelevant to the point being discussed. Often ad hominem move is simply based on prejudice. It can also be a rhetorical move. Ad hominem move is a very widespread, and problematic, move among psychologists and psychotherapists, who can’t limit their theories to clients, wherefore it can be very difficult to have a normal discussion with these people.

Could you catch yourself in the above distortions? Try to do it by observing the pain-body’s negative feelings in your body. Remember that the thought distortions are false, while the feelings are true. Be aware, that these thought distortions try to lead you on the wrong track. If you can catch them in misleading you, what could you then do to change them?

Dilemma-training
- What can the advantages and disadvantages by doing so and omit to do so, be? Use for example a sheet of paper which you with a vertical line divide in the middle. Arguments, both for and against to do so, are written on the right side, and arguments, both for and against omitting to do so, are written on the left side.

Supplementary questions to inappropriate assumptions and rules of living
- How is that assumption/life-rule good for you?
- How is it hindering or obstructiving for you?
- How should a better, more functional, and less obstructive, assumption/life-rule be?
- Setup of behavioural experiment to investigation of the new assumption/life-rule.

Questions to activation of alternative thoughts by anxiety

1. Is your evaluation-basis correct? Is there evidence?
   - What do you base your assumption on?
   - What speaks for and against the assumption?
   - Could there be other ways to perceive the situation?
   - What would another person think in the same situation?
• Do the assumption build on selffocus and feelings rather than on outside facts and logic?

2. **Do you overestimate the probability?**

• How convinced are you, that your assumption is true?
• How probable is it, that the feared will happen?
• How often has it happened in earlier situations?

3. **Do you overestimate the negative consequences?**

• What is the worst, that could happen?
• If the worst imaginable happened, what would then happen?
• Could there happen something else?
• What will most realistic happen?

4. **Do you understate your ability to manage the anxiety?**

• What have you done in other similar situations?
• What could you do, if the worst imaginable happened?
• What would you propose, that another person did in a similar situation?

**Part 3: Constructivism and its method: Coaching**

**Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry**

The Self-help industry is characterized by two specific methods: psychotherapy and coaching. Psychotherapy and coaching are by no means methods, which only exist within a defined theory, as for example NLP (see my article *Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large group awareness training (LGAT)*).

NLP (as an example) is a very open therapeutic method, which draws on a number of other therapeutic methods and psychologies, and at the same time the people, who for
example start a NLP education, are people, who carry the psychologizing world-view of their age. The two methods therefore don’t origin from NLP – they rather become reinforced and ritualized through NLP as just one of a number of therapeutic methods, which today are being spread on the market for personal development and therapy.

So the interest in the authentic human life is not a NLP invention but a trait of the age of authenticity, and the two methods refer after all also to the most spread psychological world-images of our age: the humanistic psychological world-image, and the constructivistic world-image.

In a secularized culture of growth, where religion and ideologies play a constant lesser role in everyday life, psychologizing theories about the fall of the self, its regeneration and realization, apparently get a constant larger spread. Yes, my claim is that we in fact have to do with a new ideology, which danger can be seen in that secularization here has been removed. The pseudoscientific psycho-religiousness, which characterizes the self-help industry and its promises about personal development, is directly written in EU’s project on education and lifelong learning, and therefore it becomes systematically introduced in schools, further and higher educations, companies and management theory. I call this ideology The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

Today we do not need to open many weekly magazines, bestseller books about personal development, or newspapers, in order to discover, that the two methods are recurring everywhere, where modern people are concerned with telling and interpreting their life into a superior connection. The psychotherapeutic method especially appears through a long line of self-help books and books about spirituality, which are selling extremely well these years, and it also exists in countless versions of women’s magazines, and their many articles about women who have found their own true self again, and thereafter have taken the leadership in their own lifes (see my articles Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology, and The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines).

The constructivistic method is on the other hand more outspread in books about personal development (self-improvement or self-guided improvement) self-improvement based management and coaching.

A bit caricatured you could say, that the prototype on the psychotherapy-oriented method is a spiritual seeking woman, who often is going in psychotherapy, while the
prototype on a constructivist is a ranger, who is interested in personal development and works with coaching.

But as mentioned, they can’t altogether be separated; often they are mixed together, and under one you can say that they both are a part of the self-help industry.

In my article on humanistic psychology, I have already investigated the psychotherapeutic method. Hereunder also belongs the more popular movement of New Age psychotherapies (see my article The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy).

In this article I will concentrate about the constructivistic method, which more belongs in management theory and the postmodern intellectualism (see my article Management theory and the self-help industry).

There both exist a social and an individual version of constructivism. The social constructivism is outspread on universities and therefore in much degree on all educations. The individual constructivism is more outspread in the coaching environment on for instance work places. However they are both included in modelling the concept about what constructivism is. I will start the article with an examination of the social constructivism, and end it with an examination of the individual constructivism.

Social constructivism

The first time I was introduced to the strange world of social constructivism, was by my professor David Favrholdt, and I could hardly believe my own ears. The following account is inspired by Favrholdt’s celebration lecture November 2, 2001, in the occasion of the end-of-master celebration on Center for Philosophy, University of Southern Denmark.

The latest craze in reductionism is social constructivism (read more about reductionism in my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind). Actually we ought to speak about a sociologism, but the dance was opened in 1967 with Berger and Luckmann´s work The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. And the term ”social constructivism” has been stuck and is used with much pleasure by the followers of the movement.

In today´s literature social constructivism occurs in a weak and in a strong version. The weak version is about, that a line of institutions in society have been produced, and have to be explained, only from social/sociological causes. Examples on such
institutions are legislation, for instance about traffic, monetary matters with everything that this include of banks, credit institutions, stock markets etc., standards of behaviour, ethical systems, religion and much more, but not scientific results such as the explanation of the periodic system of the elements, of the chemical connections, or of the laws of gestalt psychology, for just to mention some examples.

The strong version - which among others are framed by the Edinburgh sociologists David Bloor, Barry Barnes and Steven Shapin, and since followed up by a long line of others, among these Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar - is about, that not just the mentioned institutions, but also all scientific results and discoveries, are social constructions.

With the words of Favrholdt, then we here speak about a reductionism, which conclusions are so rabid and stark raving stupid, that we hardly can give an account of them without immediately becoming accused of having distorted them – what Favrholdt at that time also was by colleagues on the philosophical institute on University of Southern Denmark (by the way a bit the same experience I myself have had with my discovery of the Matrix conspiracy. I will return to that).

But Favrholdt must tell them that they are barking up the wrong tree, and in his examination of social constructivism there is, as he say, not any distortion. He has with much care worked himself through the many social constructivistic works with constant thought on, that we have to give the opponent all the credit, which at all can be mobilized, before we present our critique.

**The sources of inspiration**

The social constructivists have many different starting points for their argumentation. Favrholdt begins with a short outline of these sources of inspiration, and waits with the critique of them until the whole of social constructivism has been characterized.

A quite obvious starting point is the demonstration of the actual differences, which exist between all the world’s cultures. From the 16 century and forward, where they through expeditions and colonization got to know many new cultures, people were inclined to perceive foreign cultures as primitive, and at best, as early stages for our own blessed civilization. In the 20 century ethnographers and anthropologists taught us to perceive foreign cultures as cultures in their own right – even customs, which to us appeared absurd, had their meaning, when you looked at the cultural wholeness, which they were a part of. Herewith was opened the way for relativistic views concerning standards of behaviour, rules of moral and religions. What if we generalized this relativism to all world-images? Could it be thought, that other
cultures could contain valid alternatives to our own concepts of truth and indisputable logic? Repercussions of this cultural relativistic wave we among others find in W.v. Quine, who thought, that our time’s natural science, as a key to explanation, in the principle is lying on line with the Greek mythology – not more true than this, though a bit more complex.

Unfortunately there arised a myth, which, according to Favrholdt, has shown to be the most firm lie in the 20 century science, namely The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which is about, that the Hopi Indians in New Mexico have a quite other language than ours, and therewith quite other concepts about time and space, concepts, which even should be closer to the theory of relativity than our own concepts about it. It has since shown, that this hypothesis has no foundation in reality.

A part of the success of the Sapir-Whorf-myth, has been the structural linguistics, which was developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev. Instead of studying the development-story of language, or the meaning of the word’s content, or conceptual extent, we should study language itself as a structural formation – in the starting point without looking for, what language was about. This led to the conception, that language so to speak rises before reality in the sense, that we structure reality from language. The baby is at the beginning in what Bergson called a stream of experience, but as it acquires language, it structures reality from the given linguistic structure. There are, as Favrholdt says, pieces of truth in this point of view. For instance it is clear, that our division of humans in children, teenagers, youngsters, adults, middle aged, elderly, old and very old, is included in forming our experience of the surroundings – and it is also clear, that this division is cultural dependent. We also see, that the division of the spektrum of colour varies from language to language. For instance in the language Bassa, as spoken in Liberia, the colours yellow, orange and red, are under one called ”ziza”. An even larger incongruity in the area of colours you can find between our division of colours and the division of the Bellona-people. On the Bellona-islands they simply haven´t got our superior concept ”colour” and not the ordinary main categories yellow, green and blue, but only three colour terms: light, dark and red.

Oh yes, Favrholdt hears someone says, in Greenlandic they have 35 terms for snow, what cause, that the Eskimo sees something quite different, than we do, when he looks over the landscape. But here we again have one of the popular myths, which hasn´t got any foundation in reality. There doesn´t exist more terms for snow in Greenlandic than in English. But correct is it though, that colour terms, division of people in age groups and other linguistic structures, have a certain influence on the experience of the surrounding world. However, Favrholdt says, unfortunately we also on this area see that philosophers generalize a valuable observation to an all-
embracing vulgarity. For now again to refer to Quine, whose influence on contemporary philosophy not must be underestimated: Quine thinks in fully seriousness, that we never fully can understand what a person with a, to us, foreign tongue, means with the words he uses. There will always be a fundamental uncertainty in a translation from one tongue to another – by Quine formulated in *The Principle of Indeterminacy in Translation*.

That tongues can be different regarding divisions, categorizations, and that language can be determinant for, how we structure parts of reality, are relationships, which, according to Favrholdt, have lead several social constructivists on the wrong track. The relativism, which they have thought to be able to find support in here, have many of them furthermore seeked to substantiate with reference to the late Wittgenstein, to Karl Popper and to Thomas Kuhn.

Because, have we not learned from Wittgenstein: There doesn´t exist a sacred formation, which is called ”language”; but there exists a number of ways of using language, the so-called language-games, which are connected with different ”life-forms” in the language users. The individual words and concepts are not labels on things in a reality different from language. Their significance, meaning, appear by the way, they are used in. ”The meaning is the use”, as it is claimed. Looked at in this way, language is nothing else, and more, than a defined way of behaviour, and herewith the way is opened up for a relativism, because just like our daily behaviour is controlled by some norms, which we more or less unspoken have accepted, in the same way our words and concepts are controlled by some rules of use, which in similar way have been created through a mutual agreement. We give hands, when we say hello to each other – and in a similar way we state, that it is a matter of an electrical spark, when we see a lightning. The first we call convention, the other we think is truth. But to speak about a lightning as an electrical spark is just a linguistic convention, which isn´t truer than a handshake – it is claimed. To use the expression ”electrical spark” correct, just means, that we follow some agreed on rules. The rules are social constructions, - and therefore not anything, which a physical reality imposes us – it is said.

H.M. Collins, one of the leading social constructivists, writes, that if we ask a person, who is educated in an European school, to continue the row 2, 4, 6, 8, he or she will probably continue this by saying: 10, 12, 14, 16, etc. True enough, Favrholdt says. There are many possibilities. In other cultures they will perhaps continue the row in a quite third way. According to Collins – who, according to Favrholdt, is a master in fallacies – this is a proof of, that the series 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 etc. - that is: the two-times table – isn´t anything else than a social convention.
Theorists of science such as Russell Hanson, Popper and Kuhn, have made a big thing out of, that all data are theory-loaded, which means, that we never are confronted with a theory-neutral observation. Once we have a theory about something, we begin to see all experiences, observations, data in the light of the theory – they are being distorted, so that they come to be consistent with the theory. As a rule the presentation hereof is illustrated with the figures from gestalt psychology, for instance Rubin´s vase, the stair, which can be seen either from below or from above, the figure, which can be seen as either a bird or a bunny, etc.

When they give examples from science it is always from physics, which, because we haven´t concluded the whole story about the elementary particles, the super string theory etc., is an open-ended affair, which gives scope for ontological interpretations. Social constructivists often refer to these relationships, just like they find support in Popper´s falsification criterion and Kuhn´s paradigm concept. That a theory according to Popper has to be fundamentally falsifiable in order to be able to count as scientific, is taken as an expression of, that no theory is absolutely true. Theories therefore don´t seem to be dependent on a special correspondence with actual conditions, but rather to be human formations, social phenomena.

Kuhn´s theory about the development of physics – implemented in the concepts about normal science, anomalies, crisis, revolution and the formation of a new paradigm – contains a relativistic moment, which Kuhn never succeeded in getting eliminated. Thereby his whole presentation comes to stand as a sociological account for the development of physics – by many conceived as the final explanation.

Many find a confirmation hereof in the condition, that a line of data often can be explained from more than a theory. Here we have, what is called the Duhem-Quine-Thesis: our experiences are underdetermined. We form theories to explanation of them, but we can´t exclude, that they can be explained from quite other theories. In extension hereof we find several philosophical conceptions, which are characterized as anti-realistic, because underdetermined theories can´t commit us in ontological sense.

I will explain Thomas Kuhn in relation to how he is abused in NLP (read about NLP in my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)).

NLP is founded by Richard Bandler and John Grinder.
John Grinder denies, that his and Bandler’s work is an eclectic hodgepodge of philosophy and psychology, or that it even builds from the work of others. He believes that what he and Bandler did was “create a paradigm shift.”

The following claim by Grinder provides some sense of what he thinks NLP is:

My memories about what we thought at the time of discovery (with respect to the classic code we developed – that is, the years 1973 through 1978) are that we were quite explicit that we were out to overthrow a paradigm and that, for example, I, for one, found it very useful to plan this campaign using in part as a guide the excellent work of Thomas Kuhn (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions) in which he detailed some of the conditions in the midst of paradigm shifts. For example, I believe it was very useful that neither one of us were qualified in the field we first went after – psychology and in particular, its therapeutic application; this being one of the conditions which Kuhn identified in his historical study of paradigm shifts. Who knows what Bandler wasn’t thinking?

As a comment to this the critical thinker Robert T. Carroll says: “One can only hope that Bandler wasn’t thinking the same things that Grinder was thinking, at least with respect to Kuhn’s classic text.”

Kuhn did not promote the notion that not being particularly qualified in a scientific field is a significant condition for contributing to the development of a new paradigm in science. Furthermore, Kuhn did not provide a model or blueprint for creating paradigm shifts! His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occurred in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy and he certainly did not imply that anything NLP did, or is doing, constitutes a paradigm shift.

But the use of the concept of paradigm shifts is very popular within New Age, where a constant stream of new (revolutionary) systems (New thinking), often contradictory, are claiming, that it from now on is impossible to think in “old” ways anymore, without accepting their systems. The failure is due to their constructivistic ways of thinking; that is: relativism and subjectivism.

In the Danish philosopher Finn Collin’s very instructive book Social Reality is stated a line of the sources of inspiration which form starting points for social constructivism – also some of the above-mentioned. But there are many. Here just yet an example:
Knorr-Cetina has written an article with the title "Strong Constructivism – From a Sociologist’s Point of View", in *Social Studies of Science*, 1993. Herein she claims, with Immanuel Kant as support, that reality is amorphous, structureless. Kant discriminated, as well-known, between "Die Welt an sich" and "Die Welt für uns". The world in itself has no structure. It is first through our perception, that it appears as something in time and space, with things, substances, cause-connections etc.; – that is: as ”Die Welt für uns.” That is to say that the world, which existed before humans arised, neither existed in time or space, nor did it consist of things and properties, jungles, blue fish or dinosaurs, - we can’t say anything about this at all. Knorr-Cetina compares this with a dough, which we cut up and make cookies of – which, according to Favrholdt, is a false analogy, because the ”Ding an sich”-world accordingly can’t have any substances – and herewith she introduces the point of view, that all scientific theories must be understood as ”cookie-cutters”, as social constructed cuts in the formless dough.

If you as an intellectual want to have success in the world today, you need, according to Favrholdt, to be relativist. The social constructivism is in fine harmony with both Derrida’s deconstructivism as well as Lyotard’s postmodernism. “Who decides the conditions for that something is true?” Lyotard asks. His answer is, that the only ”proof” of, that the rules of science are good, is the agreement of the experts, concensus. Therefore truth must be replaced by force.

You might think, that most people will find Lyotard´s statement frightening. Unfortunately this is not the case. Far the most think it is a fantastic expression of wisdom. Management theorists continue the thought in their favorite slogan: ”It is not facts, but the best story, which wins!” It is also an example of the hate towards truth-seekers, scientists, philosophers and other critical thinkers, which exists today. And we also see it in the New Age environment and self-help industry, where they demand that science has to be integrated with ”alternative sciences.” A typical sign of that ideology has replaced science and philosophy. As mentioned: this ideology I under one call The Matrix Conspiracy (see my articles The Matrix conspiracy, The difference between philosophical education and ideological education, The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism, and Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality).

**Social constructivism. The weak version**

The first time social constructivism marks itself is in science of sociology, among others in Max Scheler (1874-1928) and Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), but both give place for scientific facts that can’t be explained sociological. It is continued by Robert K. Merton (b. 1910), who points out, that different social and economical...
needs develop technological innovations, and herewith begins the long controversy between externalists and internalists within the history of science. It is Merton’s conception, that social factors for instance can influence the way a discovery is expressed and practised, but not the content of the discovery itself. This is accepted by most historians of science, but the externalists think that even the progression of the exact sciences have to be explained only from social, political, cultural and economic conditions, whilst the internalists accentuate, that it is “the problem´s inner logic”, which runs the work.

Favrholdt has, in his scientific-historical work with Niels Bohr´s cultural and philosophical background, struggled for an internalistic conception, but such is, according to Favrholdt, dependent of who you are, and what you are researching in (see my article Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr). If it is about H.C.Ørsted’s discovery of electromagnetism, then you are forced to work externalistic. And there are now many, who claim, that only the externalistic approach has meaning – because even discoveries are social constructions.

Here they go a step further than Berger and Luckmann did in The Social Construction of Reality, but it is a step, as Favrholdt says, they have set the scene for themselves. The social reality is, according to Berger and Luckmann, fully created by Man himself. In all societies Man forms habits, and out of these habits there grow institutions. The habits are in this way externalized, and the institutions are understood as objective formations, which come to constitute the whole social world. When children are born into this social world, the habits are internalized, the children are socialized, and therewith the social world in a certain sense exists independently of the people who are populating it. And in this sense society is a human product. When a human being is born, the institutions are there already. When we – us now and here – were born, there not just existed sun, moon, stars, mountains and trees, but also weekdays, hours, degrees of longitudes and degrees of latitudes, money, universities, religions, nations etc. And there also existed the institution science. Is this more real than for instance the money institution, with thereto belonging banks, stock markets etc.? That is the question. If the answer is yes, there are, according to Favrholdt, needed a profound argumentation – and Berger and Luckmann abstain from giving a such with the reason that truth and falseness are concepts which philosophy must take care of. If the answer is no, we end, according to Favrholdt, in the strong version of social constructivism: all scientific data and lawfulnesses – also of natural science – is social constructed.

**Critique of the weak version**
But already in the formation of the weak version sociologism ought to put the brakes on. Because what is meant with that society is a human product? Is Man only a social being? We must take it for given, that a number of traits of the human behaviour are hereditary determined; that is to say: either present at birth or as something, which are developed through maturation – for example in an interplay with the surrounding environment – but as something, which under normal circumstances can’t develop different than they do. When we are born, we are as human beings endowed with a line of reflexes, which aren’t social constructions. Breath, heart function and everything else, which are controlled by the autonomous nervous system, are neither social constructed. The condition that we grow through childhood, achieve a certain height and weight, that our arms are of equal length, that we have five fingers on each hand, a defined eye colour etc., are neither social constructions, but genetic controlled conditions. All biological maturation phenomena are hereditary determined – regardless of whether they are marked by environmental factors.

The English psychologist Macdougall tried in Introduction to Social Psychology (1908) to clarify which human instincts are involved. He pointed, among others, at the following: hunger, thirst, sex, exploration of the surroundings, parental care, and something so simple as to avoid dangers. Whether we here will speak about instincts or needs is in a way all the same. What is the case is, that at any rate some of these forms of behaviour, for instance those, which are due to needs for sex, food and drink, are genetical determined. The way in which we eat, drink, and practise sex, can vary from culture to culture, but the needs are common to all humans – they are trans-cultural.

Man is a thinking being and Macdougall was hardly on the wrong track, when he thought, that also the human curiosity, the desire for investigating things, for investigating his surroundings, also is genetical conditioned. On his time they knew nothing about the genetic code. Now we know, that a great deal of the human behaviour – and probably also a great deal of our thinking and life of feelings – are genetical conditioned.

When we now closer have to define the social or cultural in relation to the natural given, we must, according to Favrholdt, turn to social psychology – not psychology and not sociology. Social psychology deals with the interaction between individuals; that is to say: the investigation and clarification of, how individuals are affecting each other, communicating with each other, forming groups and norms in community etc., etc. An example on a social psychological research could be the clarification of ”the pecking order” within a class or a rocker group: Who is ”the alpha dog”, how does he practise his power, how are the group’s norms formed, etc. Do there apply
lawfulness for groups in general (sport clubs, street gangs, religious movements etc.)?

But since many of such structures seem to be genetical determinated – we find them for instance in lions, wolves, baboons, bees and ants - , then you can´t claim, that they just are social constructions. They can to a certain degree be cultural dependent, what therefore means, that they can appear in a way, which vary from one culture to another, but they are not just something social.

In the same way we must realize, that a line of norms concerning everyday dealings, dressing, moral etc., etc., are geographical determinated, for instance the Inuits´ old custom of the host making his wife available to the overnight staying male guest in the igloo. There of course exist many thousand of such examples. Here we again have to state, that it is not a question about something, which only has a sociological explanation. Other conditions are demographic determinated. For instance can a small society get along with ordinary exchange of goods, but with the formation of large societies and large cities, a monetary system becomes a necessity. And demographic conditions are not something, which can be explained only from sociology.

In the weak version of social constructivism there is a constant reference to the diversity the cultures between as explanation of, that everything must be social constructions. What they overlook are the common features of all cultures, from the most primitive to the most complex. In all cultures there are strict rules of moral and standards of behaviour concerning the fundamental needs; in all cultures there is a religion; in all cultures they discriminate between good and evil, between children and adults, between women and men, between health and sickness, between life and death. Death, the biological death, is not a social construction. Whether one believes in an afterlife, a never-ending bliss, a transmigration of souls, or whether one considers the biological death as the individual’s final extinction, are of course defined by a line of social factors, but also by other conditions. But the physical death, and the disease, which leads to it, is not a social construction.

Favrholdt says, that we generally can criticize the supporters of the weak version of social constructivism for not giving a clear definition on objective existence. It is of course correct, that we are born into a society where there beforehand not just exist sun and moon, but also traffic regulations and monetary systems. But both traffic regulations and monetary systems can be changed, and even be abolished, through common human decisions. That is not the case with the sun and the moon – and unfortunately neither with disease and death. In the weak version of social
constructivism it is necessary to draw a line between the absolute and the conventional – something which is neglected in the greater part of the literature.

Social constructivism. The strong version

As mentioned, the Edinburgh-sociologists represent, inspired by among others Kuhn, social constructivism in the strong version. To any scientific theory applies that it is a social product. The possible truth or falseness is not determined from whether it is consistent with reality or not, because reality is – as they claim – also a social construction. So here there is no need for drawing a line between the absolute and the conventional. As Mary Douglas formulates it, then there are some, who think, that logical and mathematical truths are indisputable, and others, who think that, quote: ”the physical world is real and thought is a process of coming to know that real external reality”. Absurd talk, according to her. What we need is ”a theory of knowledge in which the mind is admitted to be actively creating its universe.” What is worth researching in - for historians of science and theorists of science - is how theories become produced in the different societies, why they become produced and why they become accepted.

Sociologists such as H.M. Collins, Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, have taken the consequence of this program and have carried out studies of scientific environments in the same way as ethnographers study primitive people, or as animal psychologists study the behaviour of packs of wolves. Famous is Latour´s and Woolgar´s work Laboratory Life. The Construction of Scientific Facts, which is a close study of the work on The Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California. In the book there is a careful account with illustrations of the institute’s arrangement, the behaviour of the individual researchers, the titles of the books which are lying on their desks, who eats lunch together, who talks with who, which microscopes, there are used etc. The book reproduces taped conversations, but the only thing, which isn´t an object for Latour´s and Woolgar´s investigations, is the scientific content of the conversations, the articles, the experiments and the microscopic investigations. They only register the external circumstances in connection with what they call ”a construction of a fact”, and they state, that what some considers true only shows in a consensus among the colleagues of the institute. The scientific results appear by negotiation, is their claim.

It is in accordance herewith, that Latour and Woolgar in the rest of their works not are able to discriminate between discoveries and inventions. Latour thinks for instance that it can´t be true, that newer investigations of Ramses 2´s mummy shows, that he died of tuberculosis. Because how should he be able to die of a bacillus, which first was discovered, and therewith social constructed, by Robert Koch in
1882? Because, as Latour writes: ”Before Koch the bacillus had no real existence”. This absurd claim he follows up with a presumption about, that Ramses 2 must have died of a tuberculosis-like sickness, without making himself clear, that such a sickness, according to his own theories, also must be a social construction. And the same must by the way apply to the whole of the Egyptian antiquity. And to both Ramses 2 and Robert Koch.

A similar absurdity we meet in Woolgar’s book *Science. The Very Idea* in which it is claimed, that America didn’t exist before Columbus discovered America. He tries to show, that our concept about America is a social construction, and that Columbus and Amerigo at that time disagreed highly about what it was they had discovered, and on basis hereof he claims, that there wasn't any physical land – what we now call America – before Columbus discovered it in 1492. His thesis is, that it is not the physical, which is represented in the discovery, but the representation, which is creating the physical data. H.M. Collins agrees and writes, among other things, “It is not the regularity of the world that imposes itself on our senses but the regularity of our institutionalized beliefs that imposes itself on the world.”

The strong version of social constructivism often uses quantum physics as a kind of “proof” for its claims, but this is based on another great lie in our time. I have shown this in my article *Quantum mysticism and its web of lies*. Favrholdt has himself made account for it in his work with Niels Bohr’s philosophy. This you can read about in my article *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr*.

Alan Sokal, a physics professor at New York University, was also shocked to see the absurdity in social constructivism and its abuse of quantum mechanics. In the autumn of 1994 he submitted an essay to *Social Text*, the leading journal in the field of cultural studies. Entitled “Trangressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity,” it purported to be a scholarly article about the “postmodern” philosophical and political implications of twentieth-century physical theories. After review by five members of *Social Text*’s board, Sokal’s parody was accepted for publication as a serious piece of scholarship. It appeared in April 1996 in a special double “Science Wars” issue of the journal devoted to rebutting the charge that cultural studies critiques of science tend to be riddled with incompetence. At that time, the journal did not practice academic peer review and did not submit the article for outside review by a physicist.

On its date of publication (May 1996), Sokal revealed in the journal *Lingua Franca* that the article was a hoax, identifying it as “a pastiche of Left-wing cant, fawning references, grandiose quotations, and outright nonsense...structured around the silliest quotations (by postmodern academics) he could find about mathematics and physics”.

225
The article was stitched together so as to look good and to flatter the ideological preconceptions of the editors.

Sokal´s hoax is today acquring the status of a classic *succès de scandale*, with extensive press coverage in the United States and, to a growing extent, in Europe and Latin America (see my article *The Sokal Hoax*).

Nonetheless we see the same postmodern claims in the New Age environment. In the New Age movie *What the Bleep do We Know* we see a combination of documentary-style interviews, computer-animated graphics, and a narrative that describes the spiritual connection between quantum physics and consciousness. The plot follows the story of a deaf photographer; as she encounters emotional and existential obstacles in her life, she comes to consider the idea that individual and group consciousness can influence the material world. Her experiences are offered by the filmmakers to illustrate the movie´s thesis about quantum physics and consciousness.

Some of the ideas discussed in the film are:

- The universe is best seen as constructed from thought (or ideas) rather than from substance.
- “Empty space” is not empty
- Matter is not solid. Electrons pop in and out of existence and it is unknown where they disappear to.
- Beliefs about who one is and what is real is a direct result of oneself and of one´s own realities.
- Peptides manufactured in the brain can cause bodily reaction to emotion.

In the narrative segments of the movie, Marlee Matlin portrays Amanda, a deaf photographer who acts as the viewer´s avatar as she experiences her life from startlingly ned and different perspectives.

In the documentary segments of the film, interviewers discuss the roots and meaning of Amanda´s experiences. The comments focus primarily on a single theme: *We create our own reality*. David Albert, a philosopher of physics and professor of Columbia University, who according to a *Popular Science* article is “outraged at the final product” because the filmmakers interviewed him about quantum mechanics unrelated to consciousness or spirituality but then edited the material in such a way that he feels misrepresented his views. The same trick is used in another New Age movie *The Secret* (see my article *The New Thought movement and the law of attraction*).
The director, William Arntz, has described What the Bleep as a movie for the “metaphysical left”.

In the film, during a discussion of the influence of experience on perception, Candace Port (a neuroscientist, who discovered the cellular bonding site for endorphins in the brain, and in 1977 wrote the book Molecules of Emotion) notes a story, which she says she believes is true, of Native Americans being unable to see Columbus´s ships because they were outside their experience. According to an article in Fortean Times by David Hambling, the origins of this story likely involved the voyages of Captain James Cook, not Columbus, and an account related by Robert Hughes which said Cook´s ships were “...complex and unfamiliar as to defy the native´s understanding”. Hambling says it is likely that both the Hughes account and the story told by Pert were exaggerations of the records left by Captain Cook and the botanist Joseph Banks. Historians believe the Native Americans likely saw the ships but ignored them as posing no immediate danger.

It is also very likely that Candace Port has heard about Steve Woolgar´s book Science. The Very Idea.

The movie has been described as “a kind of New Age answer to The Passion of the Christ and other films that adhere to traditional religious teachings.” It offers alternative spiritual and scientific views, characteristic of New Age philosophy, including critiques of traditional science, as well as critique of religion´s moral values (for my view of the problem of dismissing traditional religions, read my articles The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice and A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork).

Critique of the strong version of social constructivism

There exists an argument, which you can use against all reductionisms, namely that they relativize themselves (see my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind). Against the strong version of social constructivism the argument would be like this: Since all scientific laws are social constructions and therefore not true, but just conventions like the road traffic act, then all social lawfulnesses and all social data are also just conventions, which haven´t any absolute validity. Therefore social constructivism is not true – we can at all times come to an agreement, that it has to be replaced by another conception, which at all points contradicts it.

Another and even better objection is, that you as social constructivist necessarily must presume the existence of other humans – otherwise we would never be able to establish anything social and never any consensus. But that implies that we can´t
claim, that other humans are social constructions. They are not ”cookies” cut out of a dough. They exist. They are living organisms, in which there happen biological processes, which not are social constructions. The metabolism, absorption of oxygen and segregation of carbon dioxide follow laws, which not are social constructions. But that implies, that the molecular biological laws, the chemical laws and the quantum mechanical laws neither are – and herewith the whole social constructivistic program in the strong version is wiped out.

In his book *Socialkonstruktivisme* the Danish author Søren Wenneberg attacks the strong version, but according to Favrholdt he doesn´t quite get to the bottom in his critique, because he in fact accepts one of the main theses of the social constructivists, namely that language is a social construction – or with Saussure’s phrase: Language is a social institution. It sounds reasonably and plausible, because we can all agree about, that language has been created in the human community, and since this is a social formation, language must be a social product. Said in another way: Though we feel, that scientific concepts have some superhuman character, then we must accept, that all scientific concepts, just like all other concepts, are human made. But this implies that all science, also natural science, is a social construction.

The strongest argument against this conception is Favrholdt’s own argument, which he has developed on the background of inspiration from Niels Bohr and the quantum mechanics – paradoxically enough, since social constructivism sees quantum mechanics as a argument for their thesis (again: see my article *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr*). In addition the argument is in accordance with traditional spiritual conceptions and mystical experiences, as for example the Taoist philosophy of Yin and Yang.

Language is, according to Favrholdt, in one sense human made, but contains a line of traits, which aren´t human made. That something is human made doesn’t mean, that all its essence is human made. Human beings have created the gunpowder out of saltpetre, coal and sulphur, but the very condition, that the gunpowder can explode by ignition, isn’t created by Man. Human beings have created the clock, but the very condition, that a stretched spring can drive the gear wheels around is not human made.

Take something like the concept π. Humans have created the concept ”circle”, the concept ”circumference”, the concept ”line”, the concept ”line segment” and the concept ”diameter”. But even though all the concepts are human made, then the relationship between the concepts isn’t human made. The relationship between the length of the diameter and the length of the circumference for any given circle is π. π is an irrational number, an endless, non-periodic decimal fraction which first ciffers are 3,14159……………..Since the number of decimals are endless, π can in a certain
sense never be thought by any human being, if you by thinking understand, that we should be able to create a conception, which we should be able to see “for our inner eye”. But JI is a relationship, which must be accepted, if you will carry out calculations, in which it is included. According to Favroldt we here has an example of, that two concepts, which are human made, and in addition can be visualized, are standing in a relationship to each other, which not is human made.

Well, somebody might say, mathematics has always been something strange, perhaps we can, as social constructivists, put brackets round this science – so far. But the case is after all, that a line of the concepts, which we have to create, in order at all to be able to describe everyday relationships, also are in specific relations to each other – relations, which not are human made. For instance it is in all tongues so, that we speak about distances from one place to another. And all humans agree, that it takes a certain time to walk or run from one place, A, to another, B. Moreover we realize, that the faster we run, the lesser time it takes to reach from A to B. Here we have a set of concepts: ”distance”, ”place”, ”time”, ”movement”, and ”speed”, that have relations to each other, which not are human made.

What does Favroldt mean with this? He means, that if we want to describe, or just speak about, how long time it takes to walk from Odense to Gudme, then we must use these concepts in a certain way in relation to each other if we want to discuss that problem. It was also so 1500 years ago. At that time our ancestors knew, that the faster we move from Odense to Gudme, the lesser time it takes. And should someone at that time have claimed, that the faster we run, the longer time it takes, then his fellows would have taught him, that he hadn´t learned to speak correctly.

But what is it that dictates the correct speech here? It is the constitution of reality. We can arbitrarily create thousands of concepts – about animals, vegetation, humans, stars, actions, weight, heat, light etc. – but if we want to communicate unambiguous, then we must use a line of concepts in a quite certain way in relation to each other. And this way is not always human made. Often it is nature, which dictates how we have to use the concepts in relation to each other in order to be able to think and speak unambiguous.

According to Favroldt the natural sciences are precisely characterized in relation to the social- and human sciences by, that there all the way through only is one possible way to use a given concept in relation to other given concepts. For instance: before Ørsted people had formed concepts about electricity and magnetism, but it is first after Ørsted’s discovery of electromagnetism, that we know how these concepts have to be used in relation to each other. Here we have to do with a dictate from nature, so to speak, a dictate, which is not cultural determined. And if we look deeper we see that there in language are a number of traits, which not are cultural determined. For
instance: all humans, regardless what tongue they express themselves in, have to keep the principle of contradiction if they want to communicate unambiguously to each other. But regardless how we formulate the principle of contradiction – for instance "a thing can not both exist and not exist" or "a sentence can not both be true and false" – we must add ”in one and the same moment”, and hereby we see, that the principle can´t be understood, unless we have a concept about moment, what again implies a concept about coincidence between two things, which move in relation to each other, with which the concepts movement and distance also enter into the image.

Therewith it appears, that if you want to think and speak unambiguously, then logic can´t be seen as isolated from a line of fundamental concepts in everyday language and the specific way, which they have to be used in relation to each other. Favrholdt has analysed these things in what he calls the core in everyday language, and it appears, that the core in everyday language is a common area for all the about 6000 tongues, which exist. The core in everyday language is closely connected with our possibilities of action, and since humans have similar conditions of action, regardless what culture they belong to, their use of a line of fundamental concepts is the same all over the world. In the daily dealings with things it is, in any culture, so, that we burn ourselves on fire, that we drown, if we are too long time under water, that we die (that is to say: that our bodily functions cease sometime), that we can´t sense without sense organs, that we can´t move without having a body, that actions can´t be reduced to sequences of experiences, etc.

So language is, according to Favrholdt, not a pure social product. Its structure is in large scale dictated by the physical constitution of reality and by our active and sensuous approach to this reality. All concepts are human made. But to a great deal of language it applies, that the relations between the concepts not are human made.

**Critique of the sources of inspiration**

When we in the light of this return to the many sources of inspiration for social constructivism, which I mentioned in the introduction, we see, that already these contain fallacies. In a certain sense the whole program of Saussure and Hjelmslev is mistaken. You can very well make a structural analysis of language isolated from everything else, but you can eventually not explain, why language has the structure it has, without implicating semantics, without looking at what language is about. The structure of language is defined by the constitution of reality and our cognitive situation. And therewith lapses also Wittgenstein’s thesis, that the use of words and concepts just is certain arbitrary – social – determined rules.
Also Kuhn and Popper are touched by this critique. Perhaps it is not so evident, that the point of the theory about, that all data are theory-loaded, also falls away. But it can be refuted otherwise.

The mistake in the viewpoint is, that we claim that all scientific data is theory-loaded. In fact it is rare that data is distorted in the light of a theory. The normal is, that we have to do with contradictory theories, which deal with the same – not theory-loaded – data. For instance: both Lamarck’s evolutionism and Darwin’s theory of evolution are about the same: the development of the species. And the examples are in a certain extent the same, when the two theories are placed towards each other: the long throat of the giraffe, the fur of the bear, the claws of the cat, etc. The two theories were based on Linné’s classification of the, at that time known, animal- and plant species. Linné had himself the theory, that the whole system once and for all was created by God. Linné, Lamarck and Darwin all the time speak about the same data, but interpret them different.

And concerning the relativity people wish to stick on scientific theories, the relationship is the same. It might well be that change of paradigms takes place and that some theories are in danger of becoming falsified, but will anybody claim, that Harvey’s theory of the blood circulation is false or just a temporarily guess? Can you claim, that the theory about that Earth is round, is not fully verified?

**Individual constructivism**

Central in the discussion about human nature has always been the question, whether this nature is innate and therefore a more or less eternal and changeless entity, or whether it, in the main, is a result of the outer circumstances, whereby it can be changed through a change of these.

Today this theme is discussed under the slogan about heredity and/or environment. A bit simplified you can sketch out the two extremities as follows: on the one wing they claim, that it only is the hereditary – today understood as biological and genetic – factors, which determine the human nature, and that the individual person fully is a result of the concrete genes. The human nature is universal and changeless in the same way as the genes are common and unchangeable. A science fiction perspective, which perhaps soon is a reality, is that a genetic manipulation of the genes can be a possibility for changing the nature of Man. The apprehension, that human nature in the main is universal and changeless, can be seen in for instance Plato, Christianity, Freud and Lorenz, whose theories by the way are very different.

The other wing claims however, that it only is the outer circumstances – for instance environment and upbringing – which plays a part in the individual person’s
development. In accordance with this conception it is practical meaningless to talk about a human nature as something wonderful and universal. If you in a certain historical period, in a certain society, think that you can find a line of common traits in Man, then this is merely due to, that these individuals all are a result of the same outer influence – the same environment. If you can control and change these outer circumstances, you can also fundamentally change the nature of Man. Here is the apprehension of the relativity and varibleness of the human nature, represented by names such as Nietzsche, Marx, Sartre and Skinner, whose theories meanwhile in other definitive points are highly contradictory. Both social constructivism and individual constructivism belongs to this other wing.

In the following I will discuss the individual constructivism.

According to Nietzsche the will to power is the basic power of all life. He therefore thought about a special meaning of the word will. Normally the will is understood as Man´s ability to bring a more or less reasonable decision out in life. And ahead of the will´s effort goes the consideration. But Nietzsche´s will to power is neither connected to reasonable considerations, nor consciousness. On the contrary it describes life´s fundamental character of striving towards increase.

Will is normally a psychological concept. It describes an ability, or an aspect, of the human consciousness. In contrast to this Nietzsche is seeing it as an ontological, or metaphysical, concept. The fundamental idea is, that if we shall understand the multifold expressions of all life, then we must interpret them as outcome of will to power. This idea led to Nietzsche´s revaluation of all values. The eternal values are only a slavemoral without reality and truth. They are illusions or fictions. Therefore he dethroned reason as the ability to insight in the eternal values. Body, desires, and nature, are the central in Man, not reason. God is dead and the world is chaotic, empty, absurd; something, which Man himself must control. Man must himself create his values: a master moral created by the so-called superman.

Now, if we take Nietzsche, then his idea about the will to power has to do with the outgoing movement of time, the future; but as an ontological principle. He would reject the whole above-mentioned cosmology, the divine source of it all, the destructive backmovement of time, the past, all the karmacial energylaws etc. So what he is talking about is the becoming of everything, becoming and not being; that is: a state of non-being, nothingness, which only you yourself can fill with meaning. So - though Nietzsche is talking about the will to power as a creative force - this is not something positive connected with life itself. Nietzsche´s view of life itself, the eternal recurrence of the same, is a view of life devoid of values. God is dead.
According to Nietzsche there neither exists a sensuous, a material, or a spiritual world given in advance. Everything are created by being interpretated. Nietzsche believed that the will - that is to say: the defeating, the remodeling, the striving - is something creative. As told, then the will to power, according to Nietzsche, is a creating power. That this power is the basic power in Man means, according to Nietzsche, that all expressions of the human life must be understood as forms of will to power; intake of food, arrangement of the everyday life with home and clothes, cultivation of nature, as well as sensation, feelings, thinking and will in usual sense - are expressions of the will to power. Nietzsche is not least thinking about the will to power in the image of art. All human unfolding is actually a creative process where a content, or a material, is formed. Life is seen as a work of art.

A similar thought exists in the so-called self-production thesis, which is the thought about, that Man is the being, who creates himself through his history, and thereby controls his own freedom. The thought exists in the German idealism, for instance in Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. Both Existentialism, as well as Marxism, also builds on the understanding of the freedom of Man to form his own life, and that this is an unconditional value. Freedom is a good thing, a demand and a responsibility. What it is about, is the freedom to be the creative power in your own history. In the Existentialists it is the life-story of the individual, in the Marxists it is the world-history of the community.

The self-production thesis builds on the thought, that Man is in a continual state of becoming. The concept formation also often becomes used in connection with the concept of becoming. In my book A Portrait of Lifeartist I have examined this in details in the section The Life Artist as a Desirous Being.

With this Nietzsche introduced a quite central concept: perspectivism. Through our interpretations (language) we directly construct the world. And you must therefore have the will and power to create new values, and you must have the power to give them name in a new way, because namegiving is the same as an unfolding of power. Or else you end up as a slave.

To live is to will, to will is to create values. The will to power is becoming through us, and in that way we get control over the things through a perspective.

It is now easy to see how much the modern management theory and coaching industry is inspired by Nietzsche: the relativistic and subjectivistic ideas about that it only is the individual himself who, through his interpretations, or stories, can supply the world with values – or rather, not supply, but directly create it like a God; the denial of the past, and the orientation towards future; the superman idea about being a
winner, a success, a person standing on the top of the mountain; the preaching about that it is not facts, but the best story, which wins.

Also existentialism can be used to justify these thoughts. The act-oriented ideas of existentialism match as hand in glove with a capitalistic-liberalistic ideology about being the architect of your own fortune, the right for each individual person to seek his own idea of happiness – the philosophical point of view, that there isn’t any objective value-goals for the human life, only individual subjective choices. That is: value-subjectivism.

In my article Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology, I have mentioned the danger of cutting off the otherness in existence. Heidegger and Sartre both think from Kirkegaard’s philosophy of existence, but without his Christianity and humanism, and therefore they end in subjectivism and irrationalism. They both show, in different ways, what the danger is in subjectivism and its belonging irrationalism. Irrationalism led Heidegger to Nazism, though only for a shorter period, and Sartre had difficulties explaining why you not as well could choose an anti-humanistic project of life such as Leninism or Nazism.

The New Thought movement, or New Thought, is a spiritual movement, which developed in the United States during the late 19th century and emphasizes metaphysical beliefs. It consists of a loosely allied group of religious denominations, secular membership organizations, authors, philosophers, and individuals who share a set of metaphysical beliefs concerning the effects of positive thinking, the law of attraction, healing, life force, creative visualization, and personal power.

The three major religious denominations within the New Thought movement are Religious Science, Unity Church and the Church of Divine Science (so it is important to know, that there is a special religious movement behing the management theories and the self-help industry, which everyone today, through education and work, is forced to accept).

The main theory is also here the subjectivistic belief, that your thoughts create reality. By focusing on positive thinking, and by avoiding everything you find negative, you can create your life in accordance with your needs, feelings and wishes. The “positive” is identified as success, money, sex, material glory, etc. Examples of book-titles are: “Prosperity Through Thought Force”, “The Science of Getting Rich”, “Think and Grow Rich”.
All the above theories is today seen in a whole tendency of time within school, folk high school and continuing education, where you focus on so-called ”personal development” and ”Personality-developing courses” in connection with demands about lifelong learning, continuing education, readiness for change and flexibility; precisely what management theory and coaching are all about.

For instance they use Sartre´s scriptures as a request for uninhibited and egoistic self-expression, where the individual person is letting his choices decide everything. The existentialists say that Man has the freedom, through his choices, to be the creative power in his own history. As management theorists and coaches say: ”It is not facts, but the best story, which wins!”

In the existentialists the choice gives reasons for all meaning, but can´t in itself be given reasons for in anything. The viewpoint is called decisionism, because values at base are founded on a choice, or a decision.

The ideology is in that way extremely ingenious, because it precisely is based on an assertion about, that you have the freedom to create your happiness.

Ideologies have always been destructive for Man. They are a psychic disease. Where the destruction in the great totalitarian ideologies obvious comes from outside, then the destruction in Consumer Capitalism comes from the inside. It is namely so, that the demand about lifelong learning, continuing education, readiness for change and flexibility, have led to, that human being's freedom, contrary to the assertion, becomes taken away from them. It is for instance impossible in the society today to follow a feeling about having a call in life. Unless what you dream about, matches into society, you will be forced to change, to find a new project. You shall be able to become a success and a winner, and this you can only become within the society's frames and ideals.

And the coercion is there. In order to be able to have a job today, you have to go on personality-developing courses, which all are based on management theory, coaching and psychotherapy, frightening often mixed with New Age religiousness, for instance Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) – again: see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT). And it is all more or less governmental accepted as valid curriculum in all educations (management theory seems directly to have been imported into the state as ideological weapon). Frightening because we in other areas are so much concerned about separating religion and state. There is no secularism when it comes to the psycho-religiousness of the self-help industry.
Personality-developing courses are about that you should be able to adapt the company's development. And this change-demand is not only applying to the working-life. You shall also be able to change your private life, your personality, your thoughts and feelings, so that they fit into the company's ideals. And all of it happens more or less in a context of treatment. Personality-developing courses are virtually the same as being forced in psychotherapeutic treatment – psychotherapy is namely an integrated part of the whole ideology.

If you are unemployed the coercion is much more obvious. Here the, often hopeless uninducated, coaches and psychotherapists, are in clover days; an abuse of the intelligence of those of the unemployed, who have a much higher education.

We live in a postmodern society, where the distinction between reality and appearance/superficies is about to disappear. Reality is often the images, we receive through the stream of information. And it becomes more and more difficult to see, which objective reality that lies behind. It seems more and more to be the images, which are real, and not some behind lying reality. In that sense all images are equal true - (because there is no objective instance to decide what is more true than something else) - but they are not equal good, for some images are more fascinating than others, some images affect us more than others. Therefore the expression of the image has come in focus. The expression of the image – its aesthetics – decides, whether it fascinates us or bores us. What apply for today, is the intensity and seduction of the expressions. The new truth criterion is, whether something is interesting or boring. Eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away.

The death of the eternal values doesn't only apply for reality, but also the personality. The individual human being lives in a space without truth, in a time without direction, and with an information flow so huge, that the manageability beforehand has to be given up. How are we to live then? Well, the management theorists claim, you do this by creating yourself in a never-ending new production. The personality then becomes a persona (mask), an eternal change of role, because when the role begins to stiffen, it becomes uninteresting and boring. New is good, as these theorists say. What before characterized the personality’s relationship to the world, was a call. Now the relationship has become a project (or as the management theorists say: a good story, a good branding, a good spin), which is formed, quickly is being carried out and dropped for the benefit of a new project, that can maintain the constant demand for intensity and seduction.
It is precisely the management theories, which are lying behind the companies´ much talk about the employees´ willingness to personal development, flexibility, innovation and readiness for change. Words, that appear in almost any job advertisement.

And therefore also so much bet on PR; that is: not only concerning consumer goods, but also concerning people, for example politicians. The image of the politician in the media is today more important for his choice than the politics, he may advocate. Politics becomes, like everything else, a ware, which has to be sold through good stories (branding, spin). Everything becomes a business, which have to be runned economical. The business community of the management culture, with its active leaders, is being transferred to all areas of life, where everything is being evaluated from if it can be sold, not from the Source of wisdom: the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

So the management theories, and its belonging self-help industry, have actual become a common accepted ideology. The intention is to help people using their full potential, to help them in having success, both in work and in private life. The management theorists call it a win-win situation: both the private life of the individual, as well as the company, where the individual is employed, get profit by it – as they claim. What it in other words is about, within these theories, is to become something (be focused on the future), to get success, to conquer a place on the top, to become a winner. The virtues are self-assertion, storytelling, ambition and will to change. The terms of coaching and self-help are closely connected with these ideals.

As mentioned I claim that this is part of a very dangerous ideology, which I under one term have called the Matrix Conspiracy. The background for the word Matrix, used in my context, is the movie Matrix (the word Matrix is actually a mathematical concept, which is too complicated to be explained here).

In our time it is the very popular to compare the consciousness with a computer. Among others in the supporters of the new materialism, which the development of computers with still more extensive programs, neural networks and so on, have been a source of inspiration for. For instance the American philosopher Daniel C. Dennett, who in his book - with the ambitious title Consciousness Explained - seeks to explain consciousness, partially through computer analogies, partially through neurology and psychology.

Within cognition psychology the so-called ”information processing theory” has been dominating for a number of years. In this theory is focused on the ”inner psychic” processes looked on as symbolic information processing in analogy with the processes which happens in computers.
Both in Eastern and Western philosophy they have always worked with the so-called Dream Hypothesis; the philosophers have always reflected over, whether life is a dream. These philosophical questions have always followed them: whether we sleep, whether we dream this long dream, which is life? How can we know that life not is a dream? How can we know, that we are not lying sleeping somewhere, dreaming the whole world?

Descartes created his own variant of the Dream Hypothesis, the Argument of the Evil Demon: How can I know, that I am not deceived by an evil demon concerning all realization?

In the discussion about the reliability of our realization you often meet a variant of Descartes’ Argument from the Evil Demon. The variant (the so-called Brain-in-jar Hypothesis) says as follows: Some day surgery will have reached so far, that you will be able to operate the brain out of a human being and keep it alive by placing it in a jar with some nutrient substratum. At that time the computer research will perhaps have reached so far, that you will be able to connect a computer to such a brain and feed it with all kinds of data, so that the brain thinks that it is a human being, who lives in the real world with all the experiences, memories etc., this is implying, while the fact is that it only is a brain in a jar (read more in my article The Dream Hypothesis and the Brain-in-jar Hypothesis).

It is this hypothesis the movie Matrix is based on. Here humans are used as a kind of batteries (slaves) for machines, that get their energy by supplying them with a virtual reality, while the fact is, that they only are lying sleeping in a jar, giving their energy away.

There certainly exist computer scientists, who think, that you can understand the consciousness as ”soft-ware” and the brain as a ”hard disc” - (Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) is for example very close to this thought) - and that you in very few years will be able to decode a human being for its whole content of consciousness, immediately before it dies, and therewith provide its soul an eternal life – admittedly on a discette, but what the hell, it is after all always better than to pass into nothingness, and the discette will after all be able to be played again and again.

I don’t talk about people as batteries for machines, but as batteries for an ideology: The Matrix Conspiracy. An ideology is a malfunction in the human mind, which functions with Machiavelli’s implied, terrible, assumption, that the end justifies the means, and where the means to get there is to make people into slaves for this goal.
Today people undoubtedly are being made into empty consumer machines. There is no doubt either, that we, through the teachings of the Matrix Sophists, are being supplied with some kind of virtual reality, that seems to justify Machiavelli’s famous and notorious assumption – for instance through elimination of critical thinking, which thereupon is replaced by magical thinking.

It is a fact, that we today see an ideology behind the democracy, where true spirituality, philosophy and science systematical are seeked destroyed; that is: the destruction of the best tools Man has in his love of visdom, and quest for truth.

The main theory of this ideology is relativism. As mentioned: there both exists an individual version of relativism, and a collective version. The individual version is called subjectivism (or individual constructivism). This version is often connected with a right-wing liberalism. The other version is a collective relativism, cultural relativism (or social constructivism), which often is connected to a left-wing socialism. However both are common in distorting both science and human rights. Both are demanding “alternative” views of science, and for example also human rights. And both are introducing intellectual apartheid in different ways, by seeking to eliminate critical thinking.

Both subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn’t exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith they also say, that we live in a Matrix, a dream, a kind of virtual reality, we have created ourselves, and that there is no chance of getting out of this. Therefore the best is to be interested in finding ways of getting on in this world, rather than being interested in finding ways of discovering the truth (read more in my article The difference between philosophical education and ideological education).

To teach people this, is the main job of the Sophists of the Matrix Conspiracy: Management theorists, New Age coaches, Nonviolent Communicators, Neuro-linguistic Programmers, Law of Attraction gurus.

But this is in opposition to the message of the movie the Matrix, which is, that we should create a rebellion, and try to get out of the illusion. In that way you can say that the new Sophists are the “machines”, or the rulers of the Matrix, which keep people as slaves.

All truths are in this Matrix said to be equally true and equally valid, and if one person´s truth, or one culture´s truth, try to intervene in the truths of other individuals
or cultures, then this is considered as an aggression. Here the mind-control, the ingenious manipulation, of peoples’ minds, begins. Because through this we have reached the highest level of postmodern development for better or for worse. The same fully individualized core of personality, which makes us able to step out of the past’s fixed and subconscious attachment, has itself become our main interest, center for our identity in a degree, that almost all our awareness are directed inwards in a global seen exceptional narcissism. That is one of the ways the Matrix keeps us in the illusion.

But isn’t narcissism what for example social constructivists try to avoid? Yes, but with the opposite result – they haven’t examined the inner thinker’s (the Ego’s) ingenious ways of using thought distortions in order to defend itself. Individually we have namely created a large scale self-image, which in a quite high degree is based on assumptions/ideas. This self-image we almost continuously defend, by filtrating the impressions we receive from the world. We want to be in peace with our self-images, and quite convenient the Matrix therefore has created a cultural pluralism (=culture relativism), which forbid actual value judgment. I have my truth, and you have yours. Respect! Self-accept! I am Okay, you’re Okay! It all run together in a fear of hierarchies, where it is political incorrect to claim that something is higher than something else. “You judge”, is the same as “you condemn.” (see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

The Matrix Conspiracy has in this way succeeded in creating an illusion of, that it is a kind of sacrilege (intolerance/thought-crime/old-thinking) wanting to utter yourself about, what is good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, at the same time as the Matrix Sophists do this themselves in all possible quibbling ways, under cover of concepts such as tolerance or new-thinking – a kind of thought police.

Ego-worship has in that way become a common accepted ideology. All this is a part of the Matrix Conspiracy. But why is the Matrix Conspiracy so focused on the ego? Because the ego is the central element, that is feeding the Matrix with energy. The ego is the main battery of the Matrix. The reason is, that the Ego always is in a state of becoming. Becoming is the central concept in personal development: all the time to be in a state of becoming something else than what you are, a constant striving from past to future, where the goal is constantly increasing success. In this you give your energy to that part of the Matrix ideology, which is Consumer Capitalism.

(Another part of the Matrix ideology is Chinese Communism, which I fear will melt together with Western Consumer Capitalism in what I call the Matrix Hybrid - read more about this in my articles The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help-industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing and The new
feminism and the philosophy of women´s magazines. The left-wing side of constructivism, social constructivism, could very likely replace Chinese Communism, and the right-wing side of constructivism, individual constructivism, is already a central part of consumer Capitalism).

Contrary to true spirituality where being is the central, being in the sense studying what you are, to be what you are, to give up past and future, and be in the Now with what you are. In this the energy is flowing away from the Matrix, back to yourself. That is also why I´m considering the art of loafing as a part of the rebellion against the Matrix Conspiracy.

Becoming is the central concept in the false spirituality of the Matrix Conspiracy. Being is the central concept in true spirituality.

So, psychotherapy (humanistic psychology) and coaching (constructivism) can be seen as new, large, meaning-carrying world-images in a psychologized and therapized age. Even though they, in their sources of inspiration, at first specify two quite different views of Man and his possibilities and purposes in the world, they are common about explaining humans from a conception about, that humans have lost (or all the time are in risk of loosing) himself and therefore constantly have to work with personal development in order to find himself (psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past) or to become himself (coaching and the hope of a richer future). You can say that the two world-images both are based on the claim, that a human being not is himself, before he becomes himself, and that both world-images see lifelong therapeutic self-improvement as a presumption for, that a human being can become and live authentic.

The two world-images can in other words be seen as two versions of the same superior psychologizing understanding of life, which the Danish researcher of religion Iben Krogdal calls the mythology of authenticity. This mythology is so to speak a compilation of the two world-images into one. According to the mythology of authenticity the course of a human life is as follows (here inspired by Krogdal´s examination (Krogdal 191-192, 2011):

- Man comes to the world as himself: as untouched core (humanistic psychology/psychotherapy) or unlimited possibility (constructivism/coaching).

- During childhood other humans, or the culture, takes over the management of Man. Thereby he looses himself (his self-possession) and becomes another.
Human beings live unconscious without awareness about, that they don´t possess themselves. they live non-authentic as a ”we” (instead of an ”I”), and out of what they ”ought” and ”must”, (instead of what they ”can” and ”will”).

Humans experience problems (life crises, sickness, divorce, low selfesteem etc.), or they experience a need of changing in connection with challenges on for instance the workingplace.

Through psychotherapy or coaching Man discovers, that he has lived non-authentic; that is to say: controlled by others and without contact with himself (with his own core – psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past - or with his own potentials – coaching and the hope of a richer future). He discovers, that his problems or wishes of change are due to, that he not so far has been in possession of himself.

Through psychotherapy or coaching Man begins to disentangle from the leadership of others and takes himself in possession. The other humans exist in the subconscious mind and therefore have to be segregated through therapeutic self-cultivation. When this has happened, Man can himself decide, how he will react to reality. At the same time he gets in contact with his hidden resources (to either becoming himself as he was once – psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past – or to become the other, he wants to become – coaching and the hope of a richer future).

When the individual human being through the subconscious mind has taken over the control of his own life, he can place life-goals, which is in accordance with the one, he is or chooses to be. The authentic human being lives with inner accordance – and he expresses himself by creating accordance between his inner and the external world.

Because he has realized, that the explanation of problems has to be seeked in his relationship with himself, and because this relationship all the time is under influence from outside and can’t be expressed once and for all, Man is in need of regularly repeating a therapeutic journey towards himself. He has to work with himself continuously in order to remain loyal towards himself as ”greater than” his conscious self.

So the mythology of authenticity defines Man as a being, who continuously need to cultivate himself therapeutical. The mythology does so by making Man into a problem to himself. In the constructivistic world-image (coaching and the hope of a richer future) the problem becomes formulated very positive as a promise: ”You have
not yet actualized what you have the potential for”. In the humanistic psychological world-image (psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past) the problem rather becomes formulated as a threat: ”You are all the time in danger of, that others draw you away from yourself”.

But as Krogsdal points out: when the self-help industry tells people, that they through personal development and self-cultivation, can become themselves, it opens the doors for its own built-in paradox. It promises people liberation and praises the responsible and self-leading human being – but creates at the same time people, who are dependent of continued therapeutic intervention. The more people are told, that they can treat themselves, the more they are in the risk of being made into uncritical objects for therapeutic treatment.

The widespread psychologized, emotionalized and therapized belief in the hidden aspects of humans (the unconscious) has not only given humans a new way of self-creation, but also a new outer definition of new authorities (self-help consultants, practitioners, identity-experts, therapists, coaches, spin doctors), who are characterized by, that they neither want to be authorities or to be looked at as authorities. People in the mythology of authenticity will no longer suppress others or be suppressed from the outside, they want to express others and themselves be expressed from within. But the expression doesn’t come by itself; it has to be established in a self-help process, which builds on the idea that people have a chronic authenticity-problem and therefore are in need of treatment.

The self-help industry, and its belonging therapeutic techniques, thereby exposes the paradox, that the more resource-filled a human being is conceived to be, the more it has to be supported therapeutic. The more self-actualizing a human being becomes, the more it is in need of help to actualize itself. And the more responsibility a human being is said to have for its own life, the more this same human being, basically, is considered as a victim, as non-authentic, and therefore as powerless (read more about this paradox in my article Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity).

The paradox is rising because of the self-help industry’s goal-oriented ideology, where the supreme good is lying out in the future, and where the end therefore justifies the means. The goal is an idea, a point out in the future, projected by the mind, where salvation is coming in some form; a form which is based on the ideals created by the New Thought movement: success, prosperity, personal power, health, beauty, material glory.

Philosophy and spirituality are in opposition to all kinds of ideology (again: see my article The difference between philosophical education and ideological
education). In philosophy of existence (and in true spirituality) the concept of being are covering the concepts of being yourself, of authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. It is also covering the concept of happiness: the existential and life-philosophical concepts of reality, co-operation, movement, safety and meaning. Being yourself is therefore the same as being yourself present in the now, no matter what you are, no matter how much you are suffering, how poor you are, or how incompetent other people are conceiving you to be (see my article Suffering as an entrance to the Source). Being yourself present in the now (passive listening presence, silence, or meditation) will by itself awaken a spirit of greatness.

In the self-help industry all this is turned upside down because of the ideological aspects. The second aspect of the above-mentioned paradox is therefore, that instead of focusing on being (where the self-help industry has the word authenticity from), it presses people to focus on becoming. In philosophy of existence (and in true spirituality) the concept of becoming is covering the concepts of trying to become something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. In short: non-authenticity. It is also covering the concepts of suffering: the existential and life-philosophical concepts of unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness.

It is this aspect of the self-help industry that has made me puzzled over that this industry actually is supporting what you in traditional philosophy and spirituality consider as the four philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the Source. But not enough with that, it directly hates the corresponding four philosophical openings (see my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings).

This leads to the third aspect of the paradox, namely the thought distortion I have called The Hermeneutic of Suspicion (see my article The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing). The self-help industry ends up in a prejudiced worldview, where it condemns being; that is: it not only condemns what people are (we saw that it basically considers people as non-authentic and powerless if they have not accepted their ideology and therapeutic techniques), it also condemns people who actually are themselves present in the now, people who live in accordance with their own essence, and who have achieved that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom: critical thinkers, (think for yourself), the true philosophers and spiritual masters (read more about this paradox in my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).
Why? Because the teaching of such people will be in direct opposition to the teaching of the self-help industry: they will focus on being and not becoming

Latest news!

Strasbourg, April 7, 2011. The 47 Member States of the Council of Europe are close to finalizing a new convention that defines “gender” as Social Construct.

So, a quite certain trend within a quite certain single branch of science (Sociology), shall from now on define what a human being is. This trend is called social constructivism (or social constructionism), and is the latest craze in reductionism; that is: a pseudoscientific point of view with a political agenda.

So, we see, that my theory about the Matrix Conspiracy is very well alive and in progress.

Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity

In my first book *Meditation as an art of life – a basic reader* I presented what I call the four philosophical hindrances and openings in towards the Source. I presented them in order to show what I think characterizes the spiritual practice, as it exists in all the traditional wisdom traditions. Ever since I have become increasingly puzzled over, how the self-help industry - which claims to work in accordance with spirituality, and also are inspired by philosophy of life and philosophy of existence - is turning all this upside down. The paradox is that while the self-help industry is claiming to create the authentic, autonomous, resource-filled and competent human being, at the same time is doing the exact opposite: it is making people dependent of therapeuts, coaches, others ideas and ideals; making them modeling and imitating so-called successful people, etc., etc.

The one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture, the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement).

In this article I will explain this paradox, and I will show that the difference between the self-help industry and spirituality is that where authenticity in the self-industry is the same as becoming another (authenticity is a dream, a mythology), then authenticity in spirituality is the same as being what you are (authenticity is reality);
or said shortly: the difference between becoming and being. I will also show, that the reason for this turn is ideological founded.

The article is divided into eight parts:

1) The two world-images of the mythology of authenticity

2) Central aspects of the mythology of authenticity

3) The dream about becoming another

4) From religion and philosophy to psychology

5) From religious myths and rituals to psychology and therapy

6) The ideology of the authenticity-mythology

7) The four philosophical hindrances and openings

8) Becoming versus being: false spirituality versus true spirituality

**1) The two world-images of the mythology of authenticity**

The Self-help industry is characterized by two specific methods: psychotherapy and coaching. Psychotherapy and coaching are by no means methods, which only exist within a defined theory, as for example NLP (see my article *Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large group awareness training (LGAT)*).

NLP (as an example) is a very open therapeutic method, which draws on a number of other therapeutic methods and psychologies, and at the same time the people, who for example start a NLP education, are people, who carry the psychologizing world-view of their age. The two methods therefore don´t origin from NLP – they rather become reinforced and ritualized through NLP as just one of a number of therapeutic methods, who today are being spread on the market for personal development and therapy.

So the interest in the authentic human life is not a NLP invention but a trait of the age of authenticity, and the two methods refer after all also to the most spread psychological world-images of our age: the humanistic psychological world-image, and the constructivistic world-image.
In a secularized culture of growth, where religion and ideologies play a constant lesser role in everyday life, psychologizing theories about the fall of the self, its regeneration and realization, apparently get a constant larger spread. Yes, my claim is that we in fact have to do with a new ideology, which danger can be seen in that secularization here has been removed. The pseudoscientific psycho-religiousness, which characterizes the self-help industry and its promises about personal development, is directly written in EU’s project on education and lifelong learning, and therefore it becomes systematically introduced in schools, further and higher educations, companies and management theory. I call this ideology The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

Today we do not need to open many weekly magazines, bestseller books about personal development, or newspapers, in order to discover, that the two methods are recurring everywhere, where modern people are concerned with telling and interpreting their life into a superior connection. The psychotherapeutic method especially appears through a long line of self-help books and books about spirituality, which are selling extremely well these years, and it also exists in countless versions of women’s magazines, and their many articles about women who have found their own true self again, and thereafter have taken the leadership in their own lifes (see my article The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines).

The constructivistic method is on the other hand more outspread in books about personal development (self-improvement or self-guided improvement) self-improvement based management and coaching.

A bit caricatured you could say, that the prototype on the psychotherapy-oriented method is a spiritual seeking woman, who often is going in psychotherapy, while the prototype on a constructivist is a former soldier from the special forces, who is interested in personal development and works with coaching.

But as mentioned, they can’t altogether be separated; often they are mixed together, and under one you can say that they both are a part of the self-help industry.

*Humanistic psychology*

Humanistic Psychology (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Rollo May) is a fundamental inspiration for the management theories and therefore for the whole of the self-help industry (see my article Management theory and the self-help industry).
The humanistic psychology is based on a biological view of human nature; or said in another way: it believes that humans entirely are desirous beings (see my book A Portrait of Lifeartist). Carl Rogers is therefore in his self-actualization theory focusing on the emotional experience of the individual. Abraham Maslow is in his self-actualization theory focusing on different levels of needs in the individual. Rollo May is in his existential psychology focusing on the will and wishes in the individual.

If you focus on these aspects of the human nature you will find your true authentic self, they claim. Like the wisdomtraditions Humanistic Psychology namely have an idea about, that Man has a sovereign (or even spiritual/divine) core. So, it is from here we have the concepts of the self-actualizing and personal developing human being, and, as a result: the authentic, sovereign, autonomous, competent, resource-filled human being; concepts, that are central in the whole of the self-help industry.

What is common in humanistic psychology is that the individual actualizes his full resources or potentials; that is: that he finds his authentic self. This thesis has been developed in many various forms, for example it is also this thesis that is lying behind the concept of positive psychology. Positive psychology has its roots in the New Thought movement, and is claiming that if you focus on your positive thoughts, feelings, needs, wishes and will, and are ignoring the negative oppositions, then you can attract anything you want (the “positive” is in New Thought understood as material glory, money, success, personal power, sex, health, beauty) – see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction.

It is, according to the Humanistic Psychology, therefore only the individual’s own subjective evaluation, which can provide something with value. There neither exist valid values, which come from the community, or objective values, which come from nature, the universe, or life itself. Nothing has value in itself, unless it comes from the individual’s subjective experiences, needs, will and wishes.

The Humanistic Psychology’s view of morals is namely not only a subjectifying, which attributes the source of morals to the subjective itself, but also an emotionalizing, since it is the individual’s feelings, which decides the moral quality of something. What it is about, is to do what ”feels” right. It is the individual’s emotional experience of something, which defines values, not conversely. And this is fully in thread with the ideology of Consumer Capitalism, where the customer (and his or her’s experiences, wishes, will and needs) always is right. The consumer society, the therapeutic self-actualization and the subjectifying of the moral, go hand in hand. The moral – the individual’s relation to himself – is therapized, and the moral is subjectified.
But religion has in humanistic psychology and self-help industry been reduced to psychology (feelings, will and wishes, – Carl Rogers and Rollo May), spirituality has been reduced to biology (needs – Abraham Maslow), and philosophy has been reduced to ideology (consumer capitalism). So, traditional religious and philosophical practices have in Human Psychology, and in the self-help industry as such, been reduced to psychology and psychotherapy. Spirituality has this way been turned upside down. See my article The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy. Read more about humanistic psychology in my article Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology

Constructivism

There both exist a social and an individual version of constructivism. The social constructivism is outspread on universities and therefore in much degree on all educations. The individual constructivism is more outspread in the coaching environment on for instance work places. However they are both included in modelling the concept about what constructivism is.

The latest craze in reductionism is social constructivism (read more about reductionism in my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind). Actually we ought to speak about a sociologism, but the dance was opened in 1967 with Berger and Luckmann´s work The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. And the term ”social constructivism” has been stuck and is used with much pleasure by the followers of the movement.

In today´s literature social constructivism occurs in a weak and in a strong version. Both the weak and the strong version somehow claim that reality is social constructed from our language, or linguistic mappings.

The weak version is about, that a line of institutions in society have been produced, and have to be explained, only from social/sociological causes. Examples on such institutions are legislation, for instance about traffic, monetary matters with everything that this include of banks, credit institutions, stock markets etc., standards of behaviour, ethical systems, religion and much more, but not scientific results such as the explanation of the periodic system of the elements, of the chemical connections, or of the laws of gestalt psychology, for just to mention some examples.

The strong version - which among others are framed by the Edinburgh sociologists David Bloor, Barry Barnes and Steven Shapin, and since followed up by a long line of others, among these Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar - is about, that not just the
mentioned institutions, but also all scientific results and discoveries, are social constructions.

The individual constructivism has the same ideas. According to Nietzsche there neither exists a sensuous, a material, or a spiritual world given in advance. Everything are created by being interpretated. With this Nietzsche introduced a quite central concept: perspectivism. Through our interpretations (language) we directly construct the world. And you must therefore have the will and power to create new values, and you must have the power to give them name in a new way, because namegiving is the same as an unfolding of power. Or else you end up as a slave. To live is to will, to will is to create values. The will to power is becoming through us, and in that way we get control over the things through a perspective.

Nietzsche believed that the will - that is to say: the defeating, the remodeling, the striving - is something creative. As told, then the will to power, according to Nietzsche, is a creating power. That this power is the basic power in Man means, according to Nietzsche, that all expressions of the human life must be understood as forms of will to power; intake of food, arrangement of the everyday life with home and clothes, cultivation of nature, as well as sensation, feelings, thinking and will in usual sense - are expressions of the will to power. Nietzsche is not least thinking about the will to power in the image of art. All human unfolding is actually a creative process where a content, or a material, is formed. Life is seen as a work of art.

A similar thought exists in the so-called self-production thesis, which is the thought about, that Man is the being, who creates himself through his history, and thereby controls his own freedom. The thought exists in the German idealism, for instance in Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. Both Existentialism, as well as Marxism, also builds on the understanding of the freedom of Man to form his own life, and that this is an unconditional value. Freedom is a good thing, a demand and a responsibility. What it is about, is the freedom to be the creative power in your own history. In the Existentialists it is the life-story of the individual, in the Marxists it is the world-history of the community.

The self-production thesis builds on the thought, that Man is in a continual state of becoming. The concept formation also often becomes used in connection with the concept of becoming.

To live is to will, to will is to create values. The will to power is becoming through us, and in that way we get control over the things through a perspective.
It is now easy to see how much the modern management theory and coaching industry is inspired by Nietzsche: the relativistic and subjectivistic ideas about that it only is the individual himself who, through his interpretations, or stories, can supply the world with values – or rather, not supply, but directly create it like a God; the denial of the past, and the orientation towards future; the superman idea about being a winner, a succes, a person standing on the top of the mountain; the preaching about that it is not facts, but the best story, which wins.

Also existentialism can be used to justify these thoughts. The act-oriented ideas of existentialism match as hand in glove with a capitalistic-liberalistic ideology about being the architect of your own fortune, the right for each individual person to seek his own idea of happiness – the philosophical point of view, that there isn’t any objective value-goals for the human life, only individual subjective choices. That is: value-subjectivism.

For instance they use Sartre’s scriptures as a request for uninhibited and egoistic self-expression, where the individual person is letting his choices decide everything. The existentialists say that Man has the freedom, through his choices, to be the creative power in his own history. As management theorists and coaches say: ”It is not facts, but the best story, which wins!”

In the existentialists the choice gives reasons for all meaning, but can’t in itself be given reasons for in anything. The viewpoint is called decisionism, because values at base are founded on a choice, or a decision (read more about constructivism in my article Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry).

2) Central aspects of the mythology of authenticity

So, psychotherapy (humanistic psychology) and coaching (constructivism) can be seen as new, large, meaning-carrying world-images in a psychologized and therapized age. Even though they, in their sources of inspiration, at first specify two quite different views of Man and his possibilities and purposes in the world, they are common in explaining humans from a conception about, that humans have lost (or all the time are in risk of loosing) himself and therefore constantly have to work with personal development in order to find himself (psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past) or to become himself (coaching and the hope of a richer future). You can say that the two world-images both are based on the claim, that a human being not is himself, before he becomes himself, and that both world-images see lifelong therapeutic self-improvement as a presumption for, that a human being can become and live authentic.
The two world-images can in other words be seen as two versions of the same superior psychologizing understanding of life, which the Danish researcher of religion Iben Krogsdal calls the mythology of authenticity. This mythology is so to speak a compilation of the two world-images into one. According to the mythology of authenticity the course of a human life is as follows (here inspired by Krogsdal´s examination (Krogsdal 191-192, 2011):

1) Man comes to the world as himself: as untouched core (humanistic psychology/psychotherapy) or unlimited possibility (constructivism/coaching).

2) During childhood other humans, or the culture, takes over the management of Man. Thereby he looses himself (his self-possession) and becomes another.

3) Human beings live unconscious without awareness about, that they don´t possess themselves. They live non-authentic as a ”we” (instead of an ”I”), and out of what they ”ought” and ”must”, (instead of what they ”can” and ”will”).

4) Humans experience problems (life crises, sickness, divorce, low selfesteem etc.), or they experience a need of changing in connection with challenges on for instance the workingplace.

5) Through psychotherapy or coaching Man discovers, that he has lived non-authentic; that is to say: controlled by others and without contact with himself (with his own core – psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past - or with his own potentials – coaching and the hope of a richer future). He discovers, that his problems or wishes of change are due to, that he not so far has been in possession of himself.

6) Through psychotherapy or coaching Man begins to disentangle from the leadership of others and takes himself in possession. The other humans exist in the subconcious mind and therefore have to be segregated through therapeutic self-cultivation. When this has happened, Man can himself decide, how he will react to reality. At the same time he gets in contact with his hidden resources (to either becoming himself as he was once – psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past – or to become the other, he wants to become – coaching and the hope of a richer future).

7) When the individual human being through the subconcious mind has taken over the control of his own life, he can place life-goals, which is in accordance with the one he is or chooses to be. The authentic human being lives with inner accordance – and he expresses himself by creating accordance between his inner and the external world.
8) Because he has realized, that the explanation of problems has to be soughted in his relationship with himself, and because this relationship all the time is under influence from outside and can’t be expressed once and for all, Man is in need of regularly repeating a therapeutic journey towards himself. He has to work with himself continuously in order to remain loyal towards himself as ”greater than” his conscious self.

So the mythology of authenticity defines Man as a being, who continuously need to cultivate himself therapeutical. The mythology does so by making Man into a problem to himself (I explain this problem-making of oneself in the last section of this article: **Becoming versus being: False spirituality versus true spirituality**).

In the constructivistic world-image (coaching and the hope for a richer future = the empowerment culture) the problem becomes formulated very positive as a promise: ”You have not yet actualized what you have the potential for”. In the humanistic psychological world-image (psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past = the victimization culture and the connected recovery movement) the problem rather becomes formulated as a threat: ”You are all the time in danger of that others draw you away from yourself”.

The mythology of authenticity, as Krogsdal here has described it, very much reminds about what the American psychology professor Frank Furedi has called ”The Therapeutic Manuscript” (Furedi 2004, 91). This manuscript is a kind of un-written and very outspread script about how life typically forms itself to a human being, and how a human being through therapy all the time is in need of becoming healed. In accordance with this manuscript every single plane in a human being´s life represents a kind of risk: human relations are the source of repeated emotional damages, and these damages have to be healed again and again through therapeutic intervention. Frank Furedi therefore sees the therapization of the late modern society as a kind of cultivation of fragility.

It can sound paradoxical in a time which praises the autonomous and self-responsible human being, but the spread of the therapeutic manuscript through psychology and therapy is precisely participating in educating people in believing, that they are irresponsible, helpless and therewith dependent of treatment (Furedi 2004, 119). People quite simply learn to see themselves as vulnerable victims, who all the time become exposed for assaults and therefore constantly have to be helped, supported, healed.
With the industrial modernization Man has cultivated a mind, which can solve almost any technological problem; that, which the German philosopher Habermas calls the instrumental reason. But apparently human problems have never been solved. On the contrary mankind are about to be drowned in its problems: problems concerning communication, the relationship with others, heaven and hell. The whole of the human existence has become one extremely complex problem. And apparently it has been like that through the whole of history. Despite the knowledge of Man, despite his millenniums of evolution, Man has never been free from such problems.

The solutions to such problems require a communicative (philosophical/spiritual) reason, a reason, which understands the human community. But as Habermas says, then we are not using such a reason, on the contrary we are using an instrumental reason on human problems, where it only should be used on technical problems. We seek to solve human problems technically, where they should be solved in a philosophical way. The systems (the market, the economy, the bureaucracy, the systems) have colonized the lifeworld.

An aspect of, that the instrumental reason has conquered territory from the communicative reason consists in, that we in connection with human problems treat each other as means or as items, which have come on the wrong course (the treatment society). It is interesting, that the New Age movement, which actually should be a spiritual alternative to this, and be an advocate for a communicative reason, on the contrary is one of the most aggressive advocates for the instrumental reason. This is due to its psychologizing of philosophy. New Age is possessed with all kind of self-invented forms of treatment, and with pseudoscientific attempts to justify them as science. Often they manipulative use instrumental/scientific inspired terms about their methods, but which are without any scientifical meaning at all. It is just a rhetorical trick to persuade people to pay the fee.

So, in the mythology of authenticity people are seen as a kind of victims. Through childhood and the influence of others they have lost themselves or their original self-feeling. In the therapy – as Krogadal understands broadly as all personality developing work, whether it takes place at a therapist, in courses, in in-service training, or at home alone – people once again get the possibility for letting go of their roles of victims. At the same time they also, in accordance with the mythology of authenticity, get the possibility for actualizing their subconscious potentials.

In this way the mythology of authenticity keeps, in accordance with Krogadal, its own practice – that will say therapy in broad sense – alive through the assertion about the chronical lack of authenticity. This lack comes to expression in the myths about Man as a victim of others’ assaults, or as victim of the who-do-you-think-you-are
attitude and other cultural limitations. Krogsdal says, that just like the Christian
close-in church (especially formerly and in its Catholic form) roughly said determines Man as
a sinner, which regularly has to get absolution, and just like the church through this
ritual revival of the faith keeps the faith ”alive”, in the same way the mythology of
authenticity defines Man as a lost or not yet gained self, who regularly has to heal
(humanistic psychology) or form (constructivism) himself in the therapeutic practice.
In this fundamental way the my-rite-system maintains itself: the mythology refers
to the therapeutic practice, and the practice revives and revitalizes the mythology. All
in a continuous, circular movement.

So, as Krogsdal says, on the one hand the authenticity-mythology paradoxically
enough confesses Man as independently, while it on the other hand makes Man
dependent of therapeutic help (broadly understood as both therapy, dialogues or self-
therapeutic work) by defining him as a damaged or not-yet-genuine individual, which
is in need of constant personal development.

3) The dream about becoming another

The conception about that a quite ordinary person in the starting point not yet is
himself or not yet is fully realized, is in accordance with Krogsdal also the conception
about, that Man in reality is another (psychotherapy and the dream about a lost past)
or ought to become another (coaching and the hope for a richer future). The problem
”I am not authentic” becomes today often expressed more positive in the mainstream-
assumption that people always are something more and greater than they believe they
are. There are always hidden potentials and resources to fetch in the individual. To
become yourself is therewith in accordance with the mythology of authenticity the
process, with which Man actualizes himself as potential and goes through an
extensive transformation to the better.

With the promise about a transformation to the better the mythology of authenticity
has in accordance with Krogsdal a fundamental feature in common with another of
the large-scale suppliers of myths in the age of authenticity: the advertising industry.
The modern advertising culture induces the hope, that you quickly and easily can
replace one identity with another, that you through a consumer-defined change of
life-style can transform your life thoroughly. You can so to speak through consumer-
choices become an other and better version of yourself. The problem of authenticity
(that you not yet are yourself) and the longing, which arises from this problem (the
longing after becoming yourself) is in this way today parallel with the indirectly
claim of the advertising-world to people about, that they constantly need new
products, which can make them into new and better people.
Both the advertising-industry and the self-help industry draw on the story about Man as a not-yet; a story which reduces the present to branches of the future and looks at people as potentials, and not as something already realized. Both industries profit in this way, Krogsdal thinks, from the authenticity-mythological propaganda about the dream about, that you in reality are another (humanistic psychology) – or that you always can become another (constructivism). In the now Man is insufficient, he is always on a station before himself, and therefore all the time must be future-oriented. You can also say, that both advertising-industry and authenticity-mythology put forward growth as the solution to the late modern human being’s problems.

In the humanistic psychological world-image and in the constructivistic world-image this growth-ideology not only expresses itself as a promising invitation to become a better, more fantastic and life-capable other, but also as a threat. Lack of authenticity actually becomes connected with danger: the person who lives unconscious without knowing and unfolding himself, basically risks to become both psychical and physical sick. In accordance with humanistic psychology restrained feelings will at some point begin to express themselves in inappropriate ways, for instance as pains, illnesses, depression or stress.

The request for growth becomes in this way not alone what Krogsdal calls carrot-stories which focus on the possibility for getting a better life – but also a kind of whip-stories. They are whip-stories because they tell Man that he is a self-explaining being with positive intentions alone, and whose suffering always is a symptom on, that something is wrong (that he thinks wrongly). Therewith they also tell that suffering is a from within coming request for personal growth, which – if it isn’t obeyed – leaves Man as self-made (though unconscious self-made) inappropriate behaviour, illness and suffering. The punishment of lack of authenticity – that will say: lack of personal development and self-expression – can in the growth-ideology be tough.

So personal development is in accordance with the world-images not only about all the good, you can become, but just as well about the evil, which can happen if you don’t obey the demand of growth. You can say that the growth-conception of the authenticity-mythology not only solves “the problem of happiness” by justifying achievement, success and health from within, but also solves “the problem of evil” by explaining fiasco, unsuccessfulness and illness from the individual human being's lack of authenticity. To be in non-growth is to risk yourself and your own health.

In that sense the growth-demand in the two world-images is so fundamental, that non-growth is being made sickly. The healthy person is the person who works with himself – the sick person is the person who not yet has reacted on himself, realized
himself, actualized his symptom-giving potential. Growth is considered the touchstone of normality, and therefore absolutely necessary.

In that way we, in accordance with Krogsdal, today see a rising tendency to anomalalizing or making non-growth sickly. Today we increasingly adapt or treat conditions, which before were regarded as normal conditions (this also happens in the pharmaceutical industry). Today the therapeutic market with its enormous supply of everything from self-help books which is sold in bestseller-numbers, to therapy for couples, birth coaching, communication training, general personal development, life-coaching, management training and business-coaching, obviously isn´t reserved sick people, but on the contrary is a market which recruits clients alone in these clients´ quality of being parents, partners, mothers, fathers, child rearers, employees, leaders, colleagues – shortly said: in their quality of being humans in an individualized and psychologized culture. You can say that being human in the age of authenticity is to have constantly ”potential” for therapeutic treatment – a potential which becomes mythologized and legitimized through the new world-images, while they increasingly becomes outspread as the mainstream-understanding of life.

From many interests, for instance professionalism and economical, the late modern world in this way treat people as ”not-yets” with constantly referral to authenticity-mythological stories about human psycho-social development. Seen from this growth-perspective the individual person as ”present” is being problematized and therewith made to subject for therapeutic attention, at the same time as the now in more general sense has lost its right.

In a growth-oriented culture which praises Man as resource-strong, the eye of what someone or something not yet are, has paradoxically enough become immensely sharp. When people and professions in the age of authenticity look at themselves and each other, they in large scale do this with the future´s eyes, and seen with the future´s eyes the now has not yet become future, and therewith basically not good enough. When the future becomes everythings scale, change becomes, in accordance with Krogsdal, to a touchstone of human normality. The late modern Capitalistic society praises the changeable, growth-oriented, personal developing and flexible person – contrary to the stable, past-oriented and finished person (Sennett 1999).

The Danish ethnologist Kirsten Marie Bovbjerg has with starting point in NLP Courses shown how this future-orientation come to expression in the working life, where the view of Man as a potential in large scale forms the starting point for the industry of employee-development and modern management (Bovbjerg 2001). Through the potential-idea the Capitalistic growth-ideal therefore increasingly colonizes humans’ experience of themselves. As potentials people get market value...
and are being made into substance as merchandise or shares you can invest in; the self becomes habitat of resources, which can be extracted and cultivated with the future as only horizon.

This therapeutic potential-eye on Man comes in accordance with Krogsdal to expression in a number of other places than in the actual psychological and therapeutic practice. It also appears in the spread of personal development methods to the pedagogical world and to the school system, where teachers increasingly have taken the emphatic therapist’s role, and where acknowledgement and focus on the individual pupil’s resources and development-potential has become a quite natural approach. It also appears in the rising demand for self-improvement techniques, in the last years especially in the phenomenon coaching (constructivism) which focus always is concrete action, and which therefore expresses the conception, that you always can do something about something.

The increased speak of and use of sexologists is an expression of the same development. And finally it is in accordance with Krogsdal quite certainly not accidentally that they also in the entertainment-industry in these years are intensely occupied by the undiscovered and un-cultivated talent; by exposing the ordinary person who in reality appears to be unusual fantastic, to be a hidden star, to have so-called X-factor.

4) From religion and philosophy to psychology

In the traditional religions the divine is defined as an otherness which transcends Man. Man only becomes himself by being in relation with this otherness, which precisely in its power of otherness is eternal and endless, and which determines Man both existential, conceptual (thought and language), ethical, cognitional and metaphysical: that will say: it defines Man in philosophical sense.

Through a few truly spiritual practising men and women there has in all great religions arisen a spiritual practice which represented, not only a rediscovery, but in some cases an intensification of the light of an original teaching, universal and common to all mankind. Thus Gnosticism and Mysticism arised in the early and medieval Christianity, Sufism in Islam, Hasidism and Cabbala in Judaism, Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism.

Unlike the established religions this teaching is laying its emphasis on realization and inner transformation. And it is this which constitute the philosophical element in the spiritual practice.
It is therefore I make much out of involving the concept of philosophy, for thereby to explain the essential role this concept has in the meditative process. This is because that the concept of spirituality, with the progress of psychology in the Western countries, far too often is being psychologized, with a lot of distortions, and misleadings as result. The psychologizing of the meditation-concept itself - that is to say: the psychologizing of the philosophical aspects of the meditation-concept - is namely a reductionism; that is: a distortion of human nature.

In the following I will use the word God in the above-mentioned sense, and describe the psychologizing tendency. Note, that even though they in some of the above-mentioned directions use similar concepts as in self-help industry, for example the concept “self”, then this “self” also is defined in relation with an otherness.

In a secularized world, where God as ”explanation” of the occurrences of life plays a still lesser role, psychology steps in on the ground with a modern system of explanation. Today, where people long ago have stopped explaining the ups and downs of life through a God or other cosmic powers, still more people explain themselves through psychology. They turn their eyes inwards. Introspection is a quite central concept in the method which is used in the self-help industry; contrary to the traditional spiritual traditions where the only possibility for discovering yourself is to see your relationships as a mirror.

The system of explanation which today replaces the old cosmic system with for example God and Devil, is in this way in very high degree a system of self-explanation, which in widely extent draws on psychology as the teaching about, and the interest in, the human inner. People today more than ever relate to themselves, and their own past, when they have to explain why they are standing in a given life-situation. And when the course of the world has to be explained in a psychologized age, it often becomes explained as a product of the growing up conditions of single individuals and consequently psychical conditions.

This psychologizing of Man has with the self-help industry been led to its temporarily extremity. In self-help environments most people try to find an autobiographical-psychological explanation of everything: the individual person is fully explained from within by the subconscious mind. In the self-help industry the explanation of the world’s condition is basically the hidden positive intention in the individual person, which has a line of inner hidden agents in form of the so-called subconscious parts. It is these parts, and their mutual interplay or struggles, which create a human being’s behaviour. The behaviour is all that, which as outcome of something else, come to expression in a human being’s thinking, feelings, conceptions, body and communication with others.
A self-help practitioner refers (as a principal rule) neither to God, society or coincidence, when he becomes ill, abandoned, sacked, loved, employed or healed. A self-help practitioner will typically look into himself, into his own subconcious, after explanations. In the same way the world´s general condition to a high degree also is understood from the inner of single individuals. After all, the world´s problems are essentially the result of single individuals´ lack of personal development and self-insight, and they can therefore best be solved by that every single person so to speak gets control of his personal development. The more authentic people, the better the world.

As a kind of psychologized utopia the mythology of authenticity promises, in accordance with Krogsdal, salvation through the individual human being´s work with himself. When the individual becomes authentic (find again and expresses himself) it is happening for the best of both own and the collective. There is no opposition between personal development and community; the individual´s journey inwards expresses that the individual is on the way into a collective journey; when the individual becomes whole, the collective becomes healed. Conflicts, crises and class struggles basically arise because people not have worked with themselves; because they not are enough personally developed, because they act from un-released childhood traumas (psychotherapy) or un-released potentials (coaching). The world is problematic because it consists of psychical wounded or un-unfolded humans, who are acting from a lack of consciousness about themselves.

Until people becomes aware and able to integrate the repressed parts in themselves, until they therewith become whole and healed, they are in accordance with the new world-images reduced to be limited and as such not appreciative towards others; they are reduced to be un-constructive, intolerant and in other ways inappropriate in their behaviour towards both themselves and others, not at least the children they are parents of.

Krogsdal refers to a NLP-practitioner who says:

“Original sin is that we carry our childhood´s traumas with us. If you for example have grown up with an absent father, then you often come to be absent towards your own children.”

So, victims without self-insight are in accordance with this way of thinking inclined to produce new victims in a world, where original sin has been reduced to the determinism of the childhood trauma.
We here explicitly see the reductionism. I have before explained that our thinking, as well as our painbody, not only has a personal history, but also a collective and universal history (see my article The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it – where the concept of original sin is explained). And I am not speaking about the collective or the universal in psychological sense, as for example Jung’s or Stanislav Grof’s collective subconscious. I speak about both the collective and universal history as ontological and metaphysical karmically structures, which are lying in the wholeness; accordingly not in the psyche (see my article What is karma?). The psyche doesn’t contain the wholeness as humanistic psychology is claiming. That would be an example of 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. The wholeness is lying in human relationship with the otherness, and only in the relationship it can be discovered, not by way of introspection. See my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with mystical experiences, A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork, and my book A dictionary of thought distortions.

Both the collective and universal history are in this reductionism cut away, and that is a problem, when you at the same time work with spiritual practice, for example meditation, which with time will bring both the collective and universal history for the day, and that will say karmically structures. It will cause the danger of spiritual crises, perhaps especially the ”positive” aspect of a spiritual crisis, namely the ego-inflation (see my articles Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena, and The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

Within the alternative environment of New Age and the self-help industry intellectual ego-inflation is extremely widely spread, and when the game, as here, is about the development of Man, about the depths of the mind, about archetypical powers, about the source of life, then intellectual ego-inflation can be a hazardous play. When the intellectual knowledge begins to approach philosophical and religious areas, wisdom of life, meditation, spirit, then the ego can misjudge itself by being intoxicated by its intellectual understanding of deep phenomena.

The reduction of all this to something inner-psychic (where the deeper collective and universal history have been reduced to the personal history) is self-deception, it is ego-inflation – and it will unavoidably lead to misguiding of others.

The psychologizing of explanation has a line of historical causes, but when it today has become so outspread, then this, in accordance with Krogsdal, is closely connected
with, that many people find it difficult to navigate in a globalized and increasingly unpredictable world. Many structural connections are today out of human control, the everyday life has to the individual person become risky and unpredictable, and therefore many increasingly turn to themselves and their own control sphere, in order to practise a kind of control with themselves, their own body, their own life style.

Control makes us feel powerful, which is a good feeling. And feeling that your own thoughts are in control of everything that happens is comforting to many people, for example the New Thought idea about that your thoughts can control an universal law called the law of attraction, which will give you anything you desire, if you just use your thoughts in the correct way (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

Is there any harm in this? What´s the harm in obliterating truth and reality in favor of what you want to be true? A great deal of harm can come from deluding yourself that you can control your health or your wealth, or somebody else´s health or wealth, by your thoughts and prayers or other superstitious actions.

In my article The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can´t heal it, I explain how the painbody, through the inner evaluating ego, is connected with the more dangerous depths of the astral plane´s collective history; you might call it original sin or negative karma. This you can´t control.

In my article The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice I describe that only an intervention from the source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a trancendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to be able to receive this help you must do your part of the work: the spiritual practice. Many years. And this means that you need to re-structure the ego´s ownership to things, food, power, sexuality and emotions. First thereafter the mystical process can begin.

The magnet of attraction, which the ego is controlled by – (the ego´s identity with the material world: instincts, sexuality, emotions, desire, collective ideals, ownership, power) – will in a true spiritual practice loose its attraction. Very few people will be willing to do this. On the contrary many people have today done an illusory work of trying to re-define this ancient wisdom, so that the magnet of attraction directly is becoming the object of worship. That´s what the law of attraction movement is about.

Another aspect of the true spiritual practice is that you break the automatic process of compensatory karma, which is closely related to laws of nature, cycles of life, yes actually pure causal regularity of mechanical kind. It would an illusion to connect
such things with a superior intentional divine order (see the thought distortion Intentionality bias).

Furthermore you have your free will either to continue to be identified with the area of compensatory karma, or break with it, into the area of progressive karma (where the mystical process begins) – about karma see my articles What is karma?, and A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork.

In Taoism and Zen they talk about the concept of Wu Wei which means non-activity, passive listening presence, non-control, non-interfering, which lead to Tzu-jen, spontaneity and naturalness. In Zen they for example talk about that when practising Wu Wei you are letting the grass grow by itself. Also the Stoic concept of Apátheia (the Stoic calmness) is about this - which you by the way find in all wisdom traditions. So, it is puzzling that they in the Self-help industry often quote these wisdom traditions as if the self-help ideology is in perfect harmony with these. The fact is that the self-help industry is an extreme example of the illusion of control, when believing that you via the "power of thought" can attract (control) everything you can dream of.

Illusion of control is related to Ego-inflation

That the eye for larger structural connections falls away for the benefit of focus on the individual person and his problems can in accordance with Krogsdal be seen as a kind of resignation, where people draw themselves back to themselves and at the same time give up themselves as cultural critical beings. Yes, critical thinking – and that will both say philosophy and science - is directly under attack, partly from constructivism, which forms the postmodern intellectualism (and therefore the ideology) behind New Age and the self-help industry (see my article Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry); partly from the psychologizing demand for therapeutic solutions to everything.

In a complex world, where problems are explained from the actions of the individual, and where actions are explained from psychological dispositions, it is not strange, that you increasingly turn to therapeutic solutions to enormous structural problems. The psychologizing therewith risks to contribute to a kind of cultural anaesthesia, or intellectual laziness, which all the time reduces the individual person to have to explain himself from within, instead of relating critical to things which may arrive from outside. Conversely the self-help industry’s reaction to outside coming critique indeed also - rather than answering the critique in objective form; that is: via argumentation – is demanding that the critic has to explain himself from within – as if it was a kind of psychotherapeutic inquisition. And this explanation is demanded to
avoid philosophical argumentation; that is: critical thinking. It requires that you accept to be in a therapeutic situation, and explain yourself only in psychological terms. This therapeutic approach to everything is seen in its most extreme form in Nonviolent Communication (see my article Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is an instrument of psychic terror).

Krogsdal claims that with the psychologizing of everything, the subconscious in Man quite simply becomes ascribed the intentions which before were ascribed to God. "Response" becomes increasingly inside; meaning is coming from within; both the world and the individual are depth-psychical defined. The struggle for a better world therefore no longer takes place on an outside political, philosophical or religious scene, but rather on an inner battlefield. It is not the world, which has to be controlled – it is the individual human being's own hidden inner.

5) From religious myths and rituals to psychology and therapy

Dependent on definition of religion and agenda you can discuss, whether the new world-images and psychotherapies together constitute a new kind of religion, or whether they otherwise constitute something quite different. It is characteristic of both New Age and the self-help industry, that the fewest practitioners want to hear talk about, that they should be part of a religion – partially because religion in accordance with the common comprehension is about God (and self-help isn’t), because religion is a teaching (self-help only consists of techniques), and because religion often suppresses the individual person (self-help is claiming to set Man free).

But both psychology, and the many methods which belong to the psychologizing, in many ways look like religion in more traditional sense, and there is quite explicitly talk about a new ideology; that is: ideology as understood in relation to philosophy, which I will explain later in this article.

Both religion and psychology are using certain world-images which explain the world, and make use of a line of rituals which are used to change the individual and the condition of the world. And what is more important: both within religion and psychology they all the time refer to something which is hidden for the individual person, but which can be contacted and interpreted both by Man himself and by the experts.

In the classical Christian system the experts are first of all experts in God, but in the psychologized system the experts are experts in the psyche with all its hidden, subconscious layers. You can in accordance with Krogsdal claim that "the subconscious" has taken over the transcendent God’s function as place of explanation,
and that this subconscious now becomes interpreted by therapists as a kind of priests who are experts in interpreting the signals of the subconscious mind. Since we have to do with a hidden power – something invisible which works on a different plane in life than what we directly understand or have access to – the experts get a very big role to play. They have as experts precisely specialized in understanding this invisible reality, how it arises, how it gives signals, and how it works both inside the individual person and in the interaction between people. They are the mediators who have to help the individual to understand himself from this hidden. Because there is something hidden going on we are in other words also cultivating a need of professional ”interpreters” who can pass on and interpret that which we not ourselves can look through, but which plays an essential role in how our lifes work out.

Just like people in premodern time believed in an outside power, God, and therefore as something obvious adapted themselves a priesthood, still more people today believe in the inner, subconscious potential and therefore quite obvious go to see psychologists, psychotherapists and coaches in their attempt of understanding and explaining themselves.

Another way of saying it is that the classical, religious longing after God has become a new longing: the longing after a self; a different self, a more genuine self; or perhaps just a self. Something which is standing firm in a world where everything else all the time risk to fall. This longing becomes dictated by the new world-images and kept alive through therapy as their fundamental ritual. Therapy here has to be understood very broadly. It can both be the concrete therapeutic conversation between a psycho-expert and a client, or it can be therapeutic exercises the individual practises at home alone after having read self-help books.

So in accordance with the new world-images it is not sin and lack of God, which are the fundamental problems of Man – it is rather traumas and lack of authenticity. To work with personal development is therefore about trying to heal traumas and come in contact with yourself. In a time where religion increasingly becomes replaced with psychology people no longer want to be sinners. They want to be themselves, and preferable all the time in another and better version.

Regardless of whether you choose to see the new world-images and their rituals – psychotherapy and coaching – as a religious system, or not, it is evident, that they to a high degree sell their services on the same market as religion in classical sense. When people today have to find out who they are, and how they want to live, they in far higher degree go to the psychologist or the therapist than to the priest. The church is lying far away and good out on the hill and becomes used to solemnities: baptism, confirmation, wedding, funeral service and Christmas. The everyday life and the life-
perspective of the individual are no longer neither the area of the church or of Christianity (or other religions). Under any circumstance you can say that modern people with the new world-images and therapeutic rituals today has discovered alternative, or at any rate supplementary, ways of explaining and cultivating themselves, and that psychology and psychotherapy in practice are in progress of taking over that market of meaning, which before in special degree belonged to religion and philosophy.

The psychotherapeutic practice has today got a line of the functions which before in marked degree belonged to the church: confession has today been turned into psychotherapy, church service has become replaced by psychotherapeutic rituals and the church´s traditional administration of a superior system of explanation of both the single person´s daily life and of life altogether has today got competition from psycho-experts, who also work with both explanation and meaning. Alone the number of therapists measured against the number of priests, speak for itself. In Denmark there approximately are 2000 vicars, while there after Krogsdal´s estimation are at least 15.000 NLP-practitioners with a minimum of a basic education in NLP. Add to this a far larger number of people, who are shortly educated in NLP, for example in connection with after- and in-service training, as well as an unknown number of NLP-coaches.

If you spread the perspective out and only see NLP as a small subdivision of the general psychologizing and therapization of the late modern life, you can include the tens of thousands of therapists, coaches, sexologists, psychotherapists and psychologists (and in yet farther sense: educators, teachers, social workers, etc., etc., etc.), who today become consulted by individual persons, families and larger groups, from variants of authenticity-mythological basic stories.

The market of meaning and explanation are therewith, Krogsdal thinks, today to a high degree handed over from, for example, Christianity and the church as institution, to a multifold and numerous series of practitioners, of which NLP-therapists, NLP-coaches and NLP-consultants only constitute a lesser but eminently expansionary part. They are both participating in formulating many peoples´ quest for identity (Who am I? Who do I preferable want to be? Where shall I go?) and to give the answer to the same questions; questions which before were answered by religion and philosophy. The answers are now usually: you are more than you believe, you'll preferable be a more genuine version of yourself, and: you have to go the way, which is true to you (In my book Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader I have given a line of answers to a line of similar fundamental philosophical questions, but from a philosophical perspective, and not a psychological; or said differently: from a non-reductionistic point of view).
Since we at the same time today as society increasingly praise the freedom of the individual, two questions become quite decisive for the individual person: How do I gain power over my life? And how much can I actually myself control and plan?

In accordance with the new psychologizing world-images the answers are: You take power over your life by developing yourself constantly – and you can control your existence much more than you know, in fact, you can create your life as it suit you, alone through the power of the thought.

The new world-images and their accompanying rituals therewith noticeably effortlessly connect with the old, liberal virtues and with the increasingly neo-liberalization of views of human nature and views of life in a late modern growth-society: a human being’s life is first of all his own responsibility, and the others’ lifes are first of all of the others´ responsibility. Everybody have in the starting point the potential to live and unfold self-responsible, and they ought to make optimal use of this potential. The ideal human life is the life where a person makes his own life-decisions, sets his own agenda, takes largest possible responsibility for himself, steps in character and in all ways strives after acting as an independently and masterful person.

But at the same time as the new world-images accordingly go hand in hand with an individualistic and liberalistic view of human nature, they are paradoxically enough also instrumental in cultivating a market for therapeutic treatment. On this market many people increasingly learn to see themselves as vulnerable and disposed, and at the same time they therewith learn, that they are in need of therapy or of working therapeutical with themselves, if they want to have an optimal and – especially – authentic life. It is this paradox, which in accordance with Krogsdal, is clinging to the therapization of life: that the more the ideal about the independent and authentic person becomes outspread, the more treatment and practitioners are needed.

In the premodern society, where a transcendent God still existed, and where people to a high degree understood themselves from this God, it was not a pronounced life-task to go beyond themselves. Towards God you remain small. Today, where God so to speak has moved into the human subconscious, or where the path to God at any rate goes through this subconscious, things have become more complicated. People can no longer understand themselves as tiny and ”finished” towards a larger, outside power – or they can´t, as in traditional spirituality, understand authenticity as just being what you are, no matter how insignificant or negative it might seem in relation to your own or others´ ideals. They rather understand themselves as including something great and unknown, which all the time have to be explored and unfolded – shortly said: ”treated”. They are not finished in advance, they are all the time on the way; on the
way of finding, becoming and out-living themselves in a changeable world, where nothing anymore is standing eternally firm. There exists no outside centre of rotation of the human life, no outside firm point which you can see the world from. But instead there exists the conception about the authentic self as the place the world can be seen from. And this has to be continuous seeked and developed through therapeutic treatment, where authenticity is understood as that to become another.

Nor is it therefore longer, as the most obvious, the church, you return to when life has to be interpreted into a larger meaning – it is rather therapy. It is in therapy you find yourself, feel yourself, exceed yourself and create connection and meaning. Where the self no longer becomes defined through religion and cosmology it looks like that it precisely is about to become the assignment of therapy continuously to connect people with their actions – assist them in creating correspondence between what they fundamentally are (humanistic psychology) or choose to be (constructivism) – and what they deal with and make in the world.

Therapy has in other words become the place, or the refuge, the world in a psychologized age can be seen and understood from. Therapy becomes a new "order”, a new stabilizing factor in a changeable human life. It is in a very large degree therapy which unravels and collects the threads of life for the individual person. Therefore Krogsdal also thinks that you can see therapy – in broadest sense – as more than only a means of personal development. Therapy is a personality developing process which has to be repeated and repeated, and it therewith also itself becomes a goal. To go in therapy increasingly in itself becomes a fixed point, yes perhaps even the red thread in a flowing and changeable world.

Self-help, psychotherapy and coaching are today an example of how people constantly are reduced to having to find, develop and explain themselves from psychologized ideas about the human life. God as explanation is no longer seriously current in an off-traditionalized and secularized world. We have therewith been set free from the large, traditional religious communities and of religion’s superior education of believers to think and live in quite certain ways – but on the other hand our existence has in the same breath been psychologized and we have therewith been made available for new, individualized forms of therapeutic intervention.

But as Krogsdal points out: when the self-help industry tells people, that they through personal development and self-cultivation, can become themselves, it opens the doors for its own built-in paradox. It promises people liberation and praises the responsible and self-leading human being – but creates at the same time people, who are dependent of continued therapeutic intervention. The more people are told, that they
can treat themselves, the more they are in the risk of being made into uncritical objects for therapeutic treatment.

The widespread psychologized, emotionalized and therapized belief in the hidden aspects of humans (the unconscious) has not only given humans a new way of self-creation, but also a new outer definition of new authorities (self-help consultants, practitioners, identity-experts, therapists, coaches, spin doctors), who are characterized by, that they neither want to be authorities or to be looked at as authorities. People in the mythology of authenticity will no longer suppress others or be suppressed from the outside, they want to express others and themselves be expressed from within. But the expression doesn’t come by itself; it has to be established in a self-help process, which builds on the idea that people have a chronic authenticity-problem and therefore are in need of treatment.

The self-help industry, and its belonging therapeutic techniques, thereby exposes the paradox, that the more resource-filled a human being is conceived to be, the more it has to be supported therapeutic. The more self-actualizing a human being becomes, the more it is in need of help to actualize itself. And the more responsibility a human being is said to have for its own life, the more this same human being, basically, is considered as a victim, as non-authentic, and therefore as powerless.

As mentioned in the beginning: The one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture, the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement).

Fortunately some other critics have also discovered this paradox, for example the investigative reporter Steve Salerno in his book *SHAM – How the Self-Help Movement Made America Helpless*, and the American lawyer and writer Wendy Kaminer in her book *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional: The Recovery Movement and Other Self-Help Fashions*

Self-help: To millions of Americans it seems like a godsend. To many others it seems like a joke. But as Steve Salerno reveals in his groundbreaking book, it’s neither—in fact it’s much worse than a joke. Going deep inside the Self-Help and Actualization Movement (fittingly, the words form the acronym SHAM), Salerno offers the first serious exposé of this multibillion-dollar industry and the real damage it is doing—not just to its paying customers, but to all of American society.

Based on the author’s extensive reporting—and the inside look at the industry he got while working at a leading “lifestyle” publisher—SHAM shows how thinly credentialed “experts” now dispense advice on everything from mental health to
relationships to diet to personal finance to business strategy. Americans spend upward of $8 billion every year on self-help programs and products. And those staggering financial costs are actually the least of our worries.

SHAM demonstrates how the self-help movement’s core philosophies have infected virtually every aspect of American life—the home, the workplace, the schools, and more.

Salerno shows the paradox by claiming that SHAM has two polar camps: One camp is Victimization. The other camp is Empowerment. And Salerno exposes the downside of being uplifted, showing how the “empowering” message that dominates self-help today proves just as damaging as the blame-shifting rhetoric of self-help’s “Recovery” movement, which are connected with the Victimization culture.

SHAM also reveals:

- How self-help gurus conduct extensive market research to reach the same customers over and over—without ever helping them.

- The inside story on the most notorious gurus—from Dr. Phil to Dr. Laura, from Tony Robbins to John Gray.

- How your company might be wasting money on motivational speakers, “executive coaches,” and other quick fixes that often hurt quality, productivity, and morale.

- How the Recovery movement has eradicated notions of personal responsibility by labeling just about anything—from drug abuse to “sex addiction” to shoplifting—a dysfunction or disease.

- How Americans blindly accept that twelve-step programs offer the only hope of treating addiction, when in fact these programs can do more harm than good.

- How the self-help movement inspired the disastrous emphasis on self-esteem in our schools.

- How self-help rhetoric has pushed people away from proven medical treatments by persuading them that they can cure themselves through sheer application of will.
As Salerno shows, to describe self-help as a waste of time and money vastly understates its collateral damage. And with SHAM, the self-help industry has finally been called to account for the damage it has done.

Wendy Kaminer’s book *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional: The Recovery Movement and Other Self-Help Fashions* is a non-fiction book about the self-help industry.

The book is a strong critique of the self-help movement, and focuses criticism on other books on the subject matter, including topics of codependency and twelve-step programs.

The author addresses the social implications of a society engaged in these types of solutions to their problems, and argues that they foster passivity, social isolation, and attitudes contrary to democracy.

Of the self-help movement, Kaminer writes: "At its worst, the recovery movement's cult of victimization mocks the notion of social justice by denying that there are degrees of injustice."

Kaminer also criticizes the lack of a free-forum for debate and reasoning within these groups, noting that those who disagree with the tenets of the organization are immediately branded "in denial", similar to the way a fundamentalist might characterize a free-thinker as a heretic.

Kaminer gives a deconstruction of the history and methodology of some of these groups, which are depicted in the book as simplistic and narcissistic. She blames New Age thinking for encouraging "psychologies of victimization."

She explains a two-step process used to write a popular self-help book: First, "Promote the prevailing preoccupation of the time," (either health or wealth) and then "Package platitudes about positive thinking, prayer or affirmation therapy as sure-fire, scientific techniques."

Kaminer maintains that self-help has negative effects on both politics and personal development.

Kaminer acknowledges that there are those who have real problems and receive benefit from groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, but she also "picks apart the tenets of the recovery religion – for she sees striking parallels with religious fundamentalism."
In addition to Alcoholics Anonymous and the codependency movement, other books and self-help movements critiqued in the book include Norman Vincent Peale's 1952 book *The Power of Positive Thinking* and Werner Erhard's *Erhard Seminars Training* "est" organization.

The writings of Mary Baker Eddy, and Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* are also analyzed and critiqued.

Though Kaminer "ridiculed the excesses of self-help psychology and theology," she approved of the motivational work done by Rabbi Harold Kushner.

Kaminer criticized the effect that talk shows have on American society, and recounted how a producer for *The Oprah Winfrey Show* coached participants to "jump in" and interrupt each other on the show.

Kaminer writes that it is not the content that appears on talk shows that is the problem, but rather that "they claim to do so much more than entertain; they claim to inform and explain. They dominate the mass marketplace and make it one that is inimical to ideas."

At the time of the book's publication, Kaminer cited a statistic from industry sources asserting that ninety-six percent of the population in the United States were victims of codependency and warped family upbringing.

Note: In connection with the postmodern intellectualism (subjectivism and relativism) I claim that both the Empowerment culture and the Victimization culture are closely related to the power of reductionism in our culture. When you today ask: what is a human being? Then most people answer, that Man "is a product of heredity and environment". This has become a whole ideology in the Western world, and a fundamental part of the Illuminati aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy. It is actually a kind of sociobiology, or social Darwinism.

If Man only is a product of heredity and environment, then he has no longer any responsibility for his actions. Even the murderer, who is standing accused in court, is able to defend himself with, that he basically can’t help, that he has committed a murder. Firstly he was born with some unfortunate genes, which made, that he wasn’t all too clever. Therefore he was bullied in the school, and thereby he was developed to become aggressive and hot tempered. All this caused, that he in a certain situation committed a murder, but this he could not help. Heredity and environment led him precisely to this situation. Guilty? No, many people would say today, he is no more
guilty, than a person is to blame, that he came to cough in a place filled with smoke. No, on the whole it is society and environment, which are to blame for the murder.

When you are advocating a reductionism and are claiming, that Man is nothing else than for example a product of heredity and environment, then concepts such as responsibility, guilt and duty loose all meaning. And it becomes meaningless to talk about human ideals. Why admire people, who have achieved something great? They have only good genes and a beneficially environment. Why condemn people, who spoil and break down society? They can’t help it (read more about this in my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

6) The ideology of the authenticity-mythology

The paradox of the Janus face of Empowerment and Victimization is rising because of the self-help industry’s goal-oriented ideology, where the supreme good is lying out in the future, and where the end therefore justifies the means. The goal is an idea, a point out in the future, projected by the mind, where salvation is coming in some form; a form which is based on the ideals created by the New Thought movement: success, prosperity, personal power, health, beauty, material glory.

Philosophical education has its basic objectives, first, the disposition to seek truth, and, second, the capacity to conduct rational inquiry. Training scientists, for example, requires the inculcation both of an ethic of inquiry – do not fabricate or distort results, take care to prevent your hypotheses (or desires) from affecting your observations – and the techniques of inquiry appropriate to the discipline (my book A dictionary of thought distortions is a manual in rational inquiry, or critical thinking).

There are of course many different forms of philosophical education, corresponding to the numerous ways in which truth may be pursued (my own method is philosophy seen as an art of life – see my articles What is philosophy? and Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy). Nevertheless, these forms of education share two key features. First, they are not decisively shaped by the specific social or political/religious circumstances in which they are conducted, or, to put it the other way around, they are perverted when such circumstances come to have a substantive effect. There is no valid distinction between “Jewish” and “Aryan” physics, or between “bourgeois” and “socialist” biology; truth is one and universal.

Secondly, and relatedly, philosophical education can have corrosive consequences for political (and/or religious) communities in which it is allowed to take place. The pursuit of truth – scientific, historical, moral, or whatever – can undermine structures of unexamined but socially central belief.
Ideological education - (today through the mythology of authenticity, and in broader sense: The Matrix Conspiracy) - differs from philosophical education in all these respects. Its purpose is not the pursuit and acquisition of truth, but rather the formation of individuals, who can effectively conduct their lives within, and support, their political (and/or religious) community. It is unlikely, to say the least, that the truth will be fully consistent with this purpose. Nor is ideological education homogeneous and universal. It is by definition education within, and on behalf of, a particular political (and/or religious) order. Nor, finally, does ideological education stand in opposition to its political (and/or religious) community. On the contrary, it fails – fundamentally – if it does not support and strengthen that community.

Ideology altogether is a psychic disease. You are not in doubt about, that ideology is a psychic disease if you look at its collective manifestations. It appears for example in the form of ideologies such as Communism, Liberalism, Conservatism, National Socialism and any other nationalism, or in the form of rigid religious systems of faith, which function with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lay out in the future, and that the end therefore justifies the means. The goal is an idea, a point out in a future, projected by the mind, where salvation is coming in some kind – happiness, satisfaction, equality, liberation, etc. It is not unusual, that the means to come to this is to make people into slaves, torture them and murder them here and now.

That a thought-system has developed into an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people. Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by analysing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself (an ideology always thinks black and white, and therefore always has an anti-ideology, an enemy image, which it attribute on to everyone, who don´t agree).

An ideology is therefore characterized by, that it is not able to contain, or direct refuses, rationality and critical thinking. We all know how dissidents have been killed, jailed and tortured under totalitarian ideologies.

Ideologies are using propaganda in order to get their “truths” forced through. In that connection they use thought distortions. Thought distortions are “techniques”, that, unconsciuos or conscious, are used from an interest in finding ways of getting on in the world, rather than an interest in finding ways of discovering the truth. Thought distortions are the background for poor reasoning, diversionary ploys, seductive reasoning errors, techniques of persuasion and avoidance, psychological factors,
which can be obstacles to clear thought (again: see my book *A Dictionary of thought distortions*).

Critical thinking, or philosophy, is in opposition to thought distortions. Critical thinking is about spotting thought distortions, and examining them by presenting reasons and evidence in support of conclusions.

In philosophy you focus on, what cooperation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don´t lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don´t manipulate), don´t make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person´s autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not as a mean, but as a goal.

7) The four philosophical hindrances and openings

Philosophy and spirituality are in opposition to all kinds of ideology. In philosophy of existence (and in true spirituality) the concept of being are covering the concepts of being yourself, of authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. It is also covering the concept of happiness: the existential and life-philosophical concepts of reality, co-operation, movement, safety and meaning. Being yourself is therefore the same as being yourself present in the now, no matter what you are, no matter how much you are suffering, how poor you are, or how incompetent other people are conceiving you to be (see my article *Suffering as an entrance to the Source*). Being yourself present in the now (passive listening presence, silence, or meditation) will by itself awaken a spirit of greatness.

In the self-help industry all this is turned upside down because of the ideological aspects. The second aspect of the above-mentioned paradox is therefore, that instead of focusing on being (where the self-help industry has the word authenticity from), it presses people to focus on becoming. In philosophy of existence (and in true spirituality) the concept of becoming is covering the concepts of trying to become something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. In short: non-authenticity. It is also covering the concepts of suffering: the existential and life-philosophical concepts of unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness.

It is this aspect of the self-help industry that has made me puzzled over that this industry actually is supporting what you in traditional philosophy and spirituality
consider as the four philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the Source. But not enough with that, it directly hates the corresponding four philosophical openings.

The self-help industry is today often calling its method positive psychology. It has especially three sources of inspiration:

1) The American New Thought movement, which is the subjectivistic belief, that your thoughts are creating reality, and that by focusing on what you find positive, and avoiding what you find negative, you can create your life in accordance with your wishes, feelings and needs (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction). The “positive” is identified as success, money, sex, personal power, material glory, etc.

2) Humanistic psychology is the belief, that if you focus on your emotional experiences, needs, will and wishes, you will find your authentic self, which is claimed to be more or less divine. Religion has in that way been reduced to psychology. Humanistic psychology is a central inspiration for management theory (see my articles Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology, The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice and Management theory and the self-help industry).

3) The postmodern intellectualism (constructivism) which supports the subjectivistic and relativistic idea, that there doesn’t exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourselves, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith it also says, that we live in a Matrix, a dream/fantasy, a kind of virtual reality, we have created ourselves, and that there is no chance of getting out of this. Therefore the best is to be interested in finding ways of getting on in this world, rather being interested in finding ways of discovering the truth (see my articles Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry and The Matrix Conspiracy).

This conspiracy is characterized by the mythology of authenticity. As mentioned: it has two world-images, which are closely connected: humanistic psychology and constructivism. And the two methods used by these world-images are psychotherapy (humanistic psychology) and coaching (constructivism). It is a mythology because it isn’t something real, it is the dream about becoming another, a life in a constant state of in-authenticity; in contrast to true spirituality, which you could call the reality of authenticity, because it here is about being precisely what you are, no matter how insignificant, or negative, it might seem in relation to your own or others’ ideals.
The five main programming technologies of this conspiracy are Management theory, New Age, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), The law of attraction.

It is on the background of these sources of inspiration, that the self-help industry is turning the philosophical hindrances and openings upside down, so that the hindrances are considered as positive, and the openings are considered as negative. I call this the 666 aspect of the Matrix conspiracy. In the following I will present the philosophical hindrances and openings, and explain the 666 turn further:

The philosophical hindrances are (the mythology of authenticity is written in italic):

1) A rational where you take your assumptions, conceptions and values for absolute truths (hereunder the subjectivistic and relativistic point of view that the power of thought can create reality as it fits you) and hereby end up in a contradiction between your thoughts and lived live.

2) A life-philosophical, where you are circling around your own past and future (the idea that you should get in contact with your hidden resources to either becoming yourself as you once were: humanistic psychology and the idea about your inner core, and its method: psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past – or to become the other, you want to become: the constructivistic idea about your potentials, and its method: coaching and the hope for a richer future) and hereby are creating a closed attitude, inattation, absent-mindedness and ennui.

3) An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are (the dream about that you in reality are another (humanistic psychology) – or that you always can become another (constructivism)), where you imitate others, are a slave of other´s ideas and ideals (life is about becoming something fantastic and/or becoming a success; you ought to model fantastic and/or successful people; the conception of Man as chronical in-authentic, a victim who constantly has to heal (humanistic psychology and psychotherapy) or form (constructivism and coaching) himself in the therapeutic practice; psychotherapists and coaches as the new authorities), and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.

4) A spiritual where you are identified with your lifesituation, are dependent on political or religious ideologies (the supreme good is lying out in the future, and therefore the end justifies the means; you ought to find ways of getting on in the world rather than finding ways of discovering the truth; it is alright to use thought
distortions in this quest) and where you hereby exist on a future salvation. And this evaluating fragmentation is the separation of the observer and the observed.

According to the traditional wisdom traditions these four hindrances constitute a malfunction in the human mind. And it is this malfunction, which is the cause of the ignorance of the source of life. Ignorance is again the cause of suffering. In this way spiritual practice becomes a practice, which seeks to correct this malfunction. And therefore the two main concepts in spiritual practice are ignorance and suffering. In that way you get the four philosophical openings in towards the source:

1) A rational, where you examine the validity of your assumptions, conceptions and values, and search for coherency between your thoughts and your lived life.

2) A life-philosophical where you are present in the Now, and hereby achieve that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom.

3) An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion and identity formation are yourself in the sense of being precisely what you are here and now (no matter how insignificant, or negative, it might seem in relation to your own or others’ ideals), live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

4) A spiritual, where you aren’t identified with your lifesituation, and where you, independent of religious or political ideologies, live from something deeper: The source itself; the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Said in another way: where essence (the form of consciousness, meditation, the divine source) is one and the same with existence (being precisely what you are, existential presence in the now, life itself, the otherness). And this realized oneness is the wholeness of the observer and the observed.

I am well aware that the self-help industry is using the concepts of the openings as positive concepts (especially the existence-philosophical opening with its concept of authenticity; that it is good to work with yourself, and realize your illusions, etc.), and therefore would disagree with my claim that they see them as negative. The use of the concepts of the openings is also the reason why it can be hard to discover the paradoxes. But the problem arises because they see them as future-oriented goals or ideals. And in order to reach these ideals you need therapy or coaching. And it is in this "practice" they end in the hindrances. That should be easy to see, when looking at the concepts of the hindrances. What they misunderstand is that the openings precisely are a practice in themselves: the true spiritual practice.
Such a spiritual practice can again be said to contain three aspects:

1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions, created by dualistic unbalance, both in yourself and in others – see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*)

2) Investigating the shadow (ignorance, the unconscious, the painbody, the cause of suffering, your own dark side, the ego – see my articles *The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it*, and *Suffering as an entrance to the Source*)

3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images – see my article *Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with the spiritual practice*)

The reason why the self-help industry considers these three aspects, and therefore the four philosophical openings, as negative, is as follows:

1) There is no objective scale of truth that can decide whether something is positive or negative; it is entirely your own subjective feelings, that decide what is positive or negative. Therefore thought distortions can be seen as positive means of getting on in the world.

2) The positive psychology of the self-help industry is avoiding and ignoring all negative; that is: your shadow, your ignorance, your painbody, your suffering, your dark side.

3) It is not possible to go beyond your ideas and images. The only thing you can do is to change them into what you find positive.

In my article *Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology*, I explain how the self-help industry, unknowingly, is supporting a kind of black magic, or satanism, which show the essence in the 666 conspiracy, namely that the ego has become an object for “spiritual” worship. This will end in spiritual crises, especially the “positive” aspect of the spiritual crisis called ego-inflation (see my articles *Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena* and *The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment*).

The above-mentioned problems lead to the third aspect of the paradox, namely the thought distortion I have called The Hermeneutic of Suspicion (see my article *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing*). The self-help industry ends up in a prejudiced worldview, where it condemns being; that is: it not only condemns what people are (we saw that it basically considers people as non-authentic and powerless if they have not
accepted their ideology and therapeutic techniques), it also condemns people who actually are themselves present in the now, people who live in accordance with their own essence, and who have achieved that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom: critical thinkers, (think for yourself), the true philosophers and spiritual masters.

Why? Because the teaching of such people will be in direct opposition to the teaching of the self-help industry: they will focus on being and not becoming. Often they are apostles of loafing, because they are favouring a person who would react freely and incalculably to external circumstances, pitting their individual liberty against the process of society: the little man eluding the clutches of the traffic warden.

Like Lin Yutang I actually see the art of loafing as democratic in its nature. But, as Walt Whitman is pointing out in his Democratic Vistas – it is the ideal of free men and women in the Now, not the ideal of the democratic progress or improvement (today Consumer Capitalism, self-help and growth fanaticism) - just look at Laurence Sterne on his “sensitive journey”, or at Wordsworth and Coleridge, wandering on foot through Europe, with a great sence of beauty in their hearts, but with a very few money.

The philosophical refined pleasure in the art of loafing is something, which costs much less than the lust of luxury. The only thing the pleasure of loafing requires is a creative emptiness, a life enjoyed as it is lived. Play without reason; travel to see nothing; a perfectly useless afternoon spent in a perfectly useless manner – these are the kind of activities that redeem the art of living from the business of living, which also Henry David Thoreau has shown in his Walden, where he describes his life in the woods, retired from the world´s ups and downs.

8) Becoming versus being: false spirituality versus true spirituality

In my article Humanistic psychology, self-help and the danger of reducing religion to psychology, I have mentioned the danger of cutting off the otherness (the communicative aspect of man) in existence. Heidegger and Sartre both think from Kirkegaard´ s philosophy of existence, but without his Christianity and humanism, and therefore they end in subjectivism and irrationalism. They both show, in different ways, what the danger is in subjectivism and its belonging irrationalism. Irrationalism led Heidegger to Nazism, though only for a shorter period, and Sartre had difficulties explaining why you not as well could choose an anti-humanistic project of life such as Leninism or Nazism.
In true spirituality the relationship is the mirror, in which you can discover yourself (that is: not through introspection). Without the relationship you are nothing. To be is to be in relationship, which is the actual life. You only live in relationship, otherwise you don’t live, life is then without meaning. So it is not because you - as Descartes says: "I think, therefore I am!” - that you live.

In my article The Dream hypothesis and the Brain-in-jar hypothesis I show how Descartes is the man behind the so-called Dream hypothesis, and therefore for the later version: The Brain-in-jar hypothesis, which is a central inspiration for the movie Matrix, and therefore for my own concept of the Matrix conspiracy. Descartes supports the radical subjectivism, that you can’t know whether you are dreaming or not. Everything is our own thought-construction. The self-help industry continues this idea in sentences such as: I think I am a success, therefore I am a success. I think I am beautiful, therefore I am beautiful. I think I am a failure, therefore I am a failure, etc., etc.

But it is not because of such sentences that you live. Nor do you live because you produce yourself, as Nietzsche, Sartre, Rorty and Foucault say. You live because you are in the relationship, and it is the lack of ability to understand this, which causes conflict.

The reason why there isn’t any understanding of the relationship is that we use the relationship to achieve something, become something, to be remoulded. We use the instrumental reason on human relationships, where it only should be used on technical relationships. It is the thinking’s dangerous course, the course of the will to power. The communicative reason has vanished.

But the relationship is the means to expose yourself, because the relationship is to be. It is the actual life. Without the relationship you don’t live. In order to be able to understand yourself you must understand the relationship. The relationship is therefore a philosophical sparring partner, a mirror in which you can see yourself. To understand this is to use the communicative reason, which in the context of art of life is a meditative-existential reason.

The mirror of the relationship can either distort or expose the truth about yourself. Most of us see in the relationship, in the mirror, that, we preferably want to see, but we don’t see that which is real. We will preferably idealize or escape, and rather live in the future than seeing the relationship in which we are in the moment.

In section 168 in Pascal’s Pensées, Pascal makes account for, how the present only is used by the past as a passage to the future, and therefore the relationship – which is
something, which is in the moment, and not in past and future – becomes meaningless, wherefore there arises conflict. Conflict arises because we use the present as a passage to the future or the past.

The mind is a result of the past, which is based on time and its images. Without the past there is no thought. But the thought, which is a result of the past, can't understand the present, since it only uses the present as a passage to the future. The future is in this way always a becoming. As Pascal claims, then the present is therefore never seized, though the understanding exclusively is lying herein.

As long as there is becoming there is conflict, and becoming is always the past, which uses the present to achieve something, to control, remould, and acquire; that is: the will to power. Becoming is purely and simply the thoughtprocess, which goes in a wrong course. Time and the thoughtprocess are therefore also, as Pascal proposes, one and the same.

This becoming is the absent. You can either be absent in the bygone or the coming time. The past or the future sucks life out of the present. Memories, plans or projects are transformed into reality, while reality becomes emptiness. The thought makes itself independent in relation to your reality, and it becomes the whole of reality: it is the separation of the observer and the observed. The unreality in this consists in, that you then only really exists in the hope about a richer future (coaching), or in the dream about a lost past (psychotherapy).

Time will in other words not be able to solve our problems. On the contrary time creates problems. What you are is the Now. In the Now there is no problems. A problem arises because the thought removes itself from the Now. You compare with earlier, or you hope and desire something else. The thought slides off from the Now´s facts, the existential condition. And the Now´s facts, seen from the thinking´s past or future, can become a problem. And consequently you make what you are into a problem.

Thinking never belongs in the Now. To think is to remove the mind from the Now, the present, what you are. The thinking is therefore the absent. Only meditative-existential you can be in the Now. You can say, that meditation is a quality of the Now, and therefore a quality of what you are. In meditation - the passive listening presence - there therefore doesn´t exist any problems, only facts. You only understand in the Now – not tomorrow and not yesterday – always in the Now. In this way understanding is timeless. You can't understand the next life and next year. To think is to remove the mind from the Now.
If you choose to be in the thoughts you either are ahead in the future or behind in the past. You either think about the past in memories, sorrows, traumatic bindings, bad conscience, associations etc., or you think about the future in plans, hopes, longings, wishes, conjectures, worries. Totally seen: the thinking’s past and future produces the images in time, a perspective on yourself and the world, the source of unreality and absence.

But the essence in being outside time is eternal present and is not able to be thought. As Kierkegaard says:

"When that to exist not is able to be thought, and the existing person yet is thinking, what does this mean then? It means, that he thinks momentarily, he thinks ahead and he thinks behind. The absolute continuity can his thinking not achieve". (Finishing Unscientifical Postscript)

Only meditative-existential you can be in the Now, and therefore realize what you are. 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-forgetful 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, of what you are. 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 the existence; and this realized oneness is precisely meditation, or the wholeness of the observer and the observed.

So: essence (the form of consciousness, meditation, the divine source) is one and the same with existence (being precisely what you are, existential presence in the now, life itself, the otherness). And this realized oneness is the wholeness of the observer and the observed.

Becoming and being is accordingly two altogether different conditions. Becoming is continuous, and that which is continuous is always binding, clutching, stagnating. Interrelations are binding if they are continuous and habitual. If a relationship only is satisfaction, then it only is a habitual relationship. In the moment it ceases being a habitual relationship, then there is a new quality in such a relationship, and if you enter deeper into it, you will see, that where there is continuance, habit or stagnation, there is a thought-process, which is moving from continuance to continuance, and in this process there is always friction and pain. If you as a Life Artist doesn’t understand this continuance, which is becoming, the absent, then there is no being. Being can only be understood when becoming ceases.
Self-assertion in any form (vanity, ambition, arrogance, joy of power) – whether it is for the sake of the group, the individual salvation, or the spiritual realization – is the same as delayed action. The desire, or the will to power, is always aimed at the future. The desire after becoming something else than what you are, is absence in the Now. Becoming is the absent.

But the present, the Now, is of greater meaning than tomorrow. In the Now all time is present, and to understand the Now is to be free from time. Time and sorrow is continued in becoming something. There is no being in becoming something. To be is always now, and to be is the highest form of transformation. Becoming is nothing else than modified continuation of the past, it is the eternal recurrence of the old, and this recurrence is the absent.

A radical transformation only takes place in the present, in that to be in the Now. But there is no being if there is a struggle for becoming something. The struggle for becoming something, the will to power, is the absent, and herein there is resistance and denial, desire and resignation.

Becoming is the thought process, and both Nietzsche, Foucault and Rorty (and therefore the self-help industry) are seeing this in the image of art, as a creative process, but they don´t come out of the intellect, and confuse the thinking, the intellectual training, with the whole of the human unfolding and life itself. They see the whole of the human unfolding as a creative process, which by will can be controlled; that is: controlled by the power of the thought. Life is seen as a work of art, which Man, by will, can model as he wants to. Therefore many self-helpers talk about art of life as if it was the same as in the true spiritual traditions.

But when you as a true spiritual Life Artist understand the question about the creative activity, you will perhaps be able to understand what people mean by striving after something. Is the creative action a result of an effort, and are we aware of the moments where we create? Or is the creative action a feeling of complete self-forgetfulness, a feeling, which arises when nothing intervenes disruptive, when you not at all feel the movement of the thought, when there only is an altogether rich and complete being? Is the creative condition a result of drudgery, of struggle, of conflict, of an effort? We have all noticed that when we do something with great ease and quickly, then it costs no effort, then there not at all is talk about any struggle; but because our existence in the main consists of a line of conflicts and struggles, we can´t imagine a condition, a being, where all conflict have ended.
In order to, that you as Life Artist, can understand this being - where there isn´t any conflict, this condition of creative existence – it is absolutely necessary to understand the whole problem of your own effort. By effort I understand a human being's striving after becoming something; that is: the will to power, the philosophical will to control and form truth, reality and happiness.

So action as we know it, is in reality a reaction, it is an incessantly effort with the purpose of becoming something; that is to say: a denial of, an effort of avoiding what you are. When you try to avoid what you are, then this is because you confuse the Now´s fact with that problem, which the thinking´s past and future thinks the fact is. This is an unreal condition, a feeling of loss and emptiness, of insufficiency. And that is precisely what you are, the lived despair. But when you are the emptiness present without choosing, without condemning or justifying, then the understanding of what you are will imply action, and this action is the creative being.

To stop becoming something is to stop accumulating in philosophical sense. Not to accumulate, but to die every day, minutely, is timeless being. The mystics call it a kind of death. The Stoics trained themselves in being present in the Now by philosophizing over the meaning of death in their lifes. To philosophize became in that way, in the Stoics, a way of learning how to die. An example of this is the Stoic Horace, the man behind the expression ”Carpe diem!” (Seize the day!).

We have no more right to interpret this as an obsession with death, or morbid complacency, than when, in the movie Dead Poets Society, Robin Williams makes his students study a picture of the school´s old boys. Williams´ character is trying to make his charges understand the meaning of carpe diem, the irreplacable value of each instant of life, and it is with this goal in mind that he emphazices that all the faces in the class photography, so young and alive, are now long dead. In that way he is a kind of art of life-teacher, a teaching, which unfortunately the school´s ideological instrumental reason later succeeded in getting spoiled.

As long as there is a desire after achieving something, and the conflicts, which are a result of this, there will always be anxiety of death.

To be the facts, the existential condition in the Now, present in passive listening, is precisely to be, and this is reality. The passive listening presence is meditation, and in meditation there flows life and energy back from past and future, back to the Now. The energy, the life, which was invested in sorrows and bindings, plans and problems, flows into, and fills the Now, increases the intensity and the consciousness in the Now.
In the happy reality being and reality coincide with each other, essence and existence is an oneness. In reality Man is himself in his being. His being embraces and carries him, and he embraces and fills his being. Reality is an existence, which lives itself. This being is wisdom, what will say the Now, and therefore the fact: what you are. It is a being that has a naturalness in itself. It is a being, which opens itself in and for itself. It is the existential openness as being, the openness for the relationship; that is to say: for own being, and therewith also for the being of everything else.

Reality can't come to that, which is becoming, the absent which strives; it can only come to that, which is being, to that, which understands what you are, the present. As Kierkegaard says, then the present is the timeless, or the eternal, and also the fullness.

This open presence is like space. It is therefore not something shut inside the psyche.

Read more about the communicative aspect of Man in my book A Portrait of Lifeartist

Quantum mysticism and its web of lies

Quantum mysticism is a pseudoscientific version of quantum mechanics. The pseudoscience shows in two ways:

1) That Einstein´s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, prove that relativism and subjectivism are valid points of views.

2) That Quantum mechanics and Einstein´s theories of relativity prove that classical physics (the age of enlightenment, rationalism) is not valid anymore.

1) That Einstein´s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, prove, that relativism and subjectivism are valid points of views.

Subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn’t exist any objective truth, or reality. Truth, or reality, is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. All truths are therefore equally true and equally valid, and if one person’s truth, or one culture’s truth, try to intervene in the truths of other individuals or cultures, then this is considered as an aggression.
There both exists an individual version of relativism, and a collective version. The individual version is called subjectivism. This version is often connected with a right-wing liberalism. The other version is a collective relativism, cultural relativism, which often is connected to a left-wing socialism. However both are common in distorting both science and human rights. Both are demanding “alternative” views of science, and for example also human rights. And both are introducing intellectual apartheid in different ways.

In the pseudoscience of reductionism you see both versions in the so-called heredity and environment arguments, where the right-wing version typical supports the heredity side, and the left-wing version supports the environment side (read more in my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

In New Age pseudoscience it is not (yet) so much a political agenda that distorts science, but occult and religious point of views (read my article The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism). In the works of Fritjof Capra, though, you see the beginning of the combination. Fritjof Capra (born February 1, 1939) is an Austrian-born American physicist. He is a founding director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California, and is on the faculty of Schumacher College.

Capra is the author of several books, including The Tao of Physics (1975), and The Turning Point (1982). Quantum mysticism seems to have originated with Capra in his book The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism. The book’s first two parts are excellent expositions on ancient religions and modern physics. The third part, which tries to connect the two is an abysmal failure. Nevertheless, it has been this third part, which has influenced numerous New Age advocates to claim that quantum mechanics proves the reality of everything from chi, prana, ESP, etc., etc., – to time travel.

His other book, The Turning Point, shows the ideology in it, where he combines quantum mysticism with reductionism, especially reductionisms such as historism and sociologism (though he is very aware of the reductionism of the “old” mechanical worldview).

The use of relativism and subjectivism in management theory (“it is not facts, but the best story, that wins!”), can be seen in a new trend within New Age: storytelling. This can be seen in New Age movies such as The Secret, What the Bleep Do We Know?, and The Living Matrix.

In my article The New Thought movement and the law of Attraction I have examined The Secret.
What the Bleep do We Know combines documentary-style interviews, computer-animated graphics, and a narrative that describes the spiritual connection between quantum physics and consciousness. The plot follows the story of a deaf photographer; as she encounters emotional and existential obstacles in her life, she comes to consider the idea that individual and group consciousness can influence the material world. Her experiences are offered by the filmmakers to illustrate the movie’s thesis about quantum physics and consciousness (you can read more about What the Bleep do We Know? in my article Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry).

The Living Matrix claims to bring breakthrough information that will transform your understanding of how to get well and stay well. Dynamic graphic-animation is woven with interviews with leading researchers and health practitioners as they share their discoveries on the miracle cures traditional medicine can’t explain. These experts reveal how energy and information fields – not genetics – drive human physiology and biochemistry, and illustrate the benefits of integrating conventional and alternative health care. What is introduced is the new paradigm in biology: Quantum biology.

The producers of the above-mentioned films probably believe in their ideas, but, as mentioned, there is an even newer trend within New Age, where you fully conscious are creating a hoax. This is seen in the so-called WingMakers’ Project, which is a website, that has created a modern mythology; a synthesis of science fiction, ufology, parapsychology, quantum biology, theosophy and conspiration theory. It is created like if you were writing a science-fiction novel, or producing a science-fiction movie. The hoax consists in, that it claims to be a true story (see my article Time travel and the fascism of The WingMakers Project).

Quantum biological theories (another version of quantum mysticism) are very popular for the time being within New Age, and are often (if not always) combined with fascistic ideas (besides the WingMakers Project, see my articles The Fascism of Theosophy, A critique of the Human Design System and The new feminism and the philosophy of women´s magazines).

Critique

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

In the same way the theories of relativity, epistemological seen, give no background for any relativism about, that ”everything is relative”. The seen does not depend of the eyes that watch when it comes to physical phenomenons, neither in quantum mechanics, nor in relativistic physics.

But it is actually possible to use quantum mechanics to support both philosophical and spiritual point of views. The creator of quantum mechanics, Niels Bohr, is in his philosophy very inspired by Taoism. His coat of arms is showing the yin and yang symbol. The paradox is, that his philosophy/spirituality, which of course is grounded in quantum mechanics, directly pulls the carpet away under quantum mysticism. Quantum mechanics shows namely, that it is the order of nature that decides how we shall use our thoughts and language, it is not us that can create in reality as it fits us (see my article Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr).

This confusion in quantum mysticism (and in the New Age environment as such) arises because it is neither quantum mechanics, nor spirituality, that are the background for the theories, but the postmodern intellectualism, today especially represented by social constructivism (see my articles Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry and The Sokal Hoax).

2) That Quantum Mechanics and Einsteins theories of relativity prove, that classical physics (the age of enlightenment, rationalism) is not valid anymore

This misunderstanding is especially based on an misunderstanding of Thomas Kuhn´s work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, where he shows the development of physics – implemented in the concepts: normal science, anomalies, crisis, revolution and the creation of a new paradigm.

I will explain Thomas Kuhn in relation with how he is abused in Neuro-linguistic Programming (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)).

NLP is founded by Richard Bandler and John Grinder.
John Grinder denies, that his and Bandler’s work is an eclectic hodgepodge of philosophy and psychology, or that it even builds from the work of others. He believes that what he and Bandler did was “create a paradigm shift.”

The following claim by Grinder provides some sense of what he thinks NLP is:

My memories about what we thought at the time of discovery (with respect to the classic code we developed – that is, the years 1973 through 1978) are that we were quite explicit that we were out to overthrow a paradigm and that, for example, I, for one, found it very useful to plan this campaign using in part as a guide the excellent work of Thomas Kuhn (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions) in which he detailed some of the conditions in the midst of paradigm shifts. For example, I believe it was very useful that neither one of us were qualified in the field we first went after – psychology and in particular, its therapeutic application; this being one of the conditions which Kuhn identified in his historical study of paradigm shifts. Who knows what Bandler was thinking?

As a comment to this the critical thinker Robert T. Carroll says: “One can only hope that Bandler wasn´t thinking the same things that Grinder was thinking, at least with respect to Kuhn’s classic text.”

Kuhn did not promote the notion that not being particularly qualified in a scientific field is a significant condition for contributing to the development of a new paradigm in science. Furthermore, Kuhn did not provide a model or blueprint for creating paradigm shifts! His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occured in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy and he certainly did not imply that anything NLP did, or is doing, constitutes a paradigm shift.

But the use of the concept of paradigm shifts is very popular in the postmodern intellectualism and its more common spiritual movement New Age, where a lot of different “spiritual” systems (new-thinking), often contradictory, are claiming, that it from now on is impossible to think in “old” ways anymore, without accepting their systems. The failure is due to their constructivistic ways of thinking; that is: subjectivism and relativism.

The phrases old-thinking and new-thinking are also very popular within the so-called postmodern intellectualism, which is the background for what I consider as a wrong spiritual turn within the more popular, common movement of New Age. In this movement I for example have heard people refer to themselves as New Thought
Ministers (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality and The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

The phrases old-thinking and new-thinking are often used as a weapon against critique, and I see them as a signal of the rising of a dangerous ideology. In lack of better - in our postmodern world - I have called this ideology The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

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 was 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 used concepts such as old-thinking and new-thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, everytime they use concepts within old-thinking.

Today, after having passed 1984, we live in a so-called postmodernistic dystopia, where eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away – and where we have been invaded by the ideology of relativism, which rulers, in creeping ways, use the same phrases as the rulers in Orwell´s novel, as if they had used it as inspiration (the nearest to an attempt of actually creating a new language, which implies some rules about what is considered as “negative” and “positive”, is probably the creating of the so-called Giraffe-language – see my article Nonviolent Communication is an instrument of psychic terror).

This new language accepts the use of thought distortions (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions) – as for example rhetoric, ad hominem move, sophistry.

Often you hear postmodern intellectuals use the following bullying of critics:

“that they are hewing to the ‘objective’ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

They typically assert that this “dogma” has already been thoroughly undermined by the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics and that physical reality has been shown to be “at bottom a social and linguistic construct.”

This is used to term critics as old-thinkers, for example that their critique is part of a “patriarchal, racist, colonistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion discourse”

Relativists typically deride critics and scientists for continuing to cling to the “dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, that there exists an external world whose properties are independent of
human beings, and that human beings can obtain reliable, if imperfect and tentative knowledge of these properties by hewing to the `objective´ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

And: “How can a self-perpetuating secular priesthood of credentialed `scientists´ purport to maintain a monopoly on the production of scientific knowledge?”

Therefore they demand alternative sciences (and alternative views of human rights), what I call the Illuminati-aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy, because science can’t be mixed with spiritual or political concepts. If this happens, then it is not science anymore. The same thing with relativistic and subjectivistic views of human rights; then it is not human rights anymore.

Postmodern intellectualists are through this use of language often trying to get a political agenda forced through. If you change the political terms with spiritual terms, though, the same language is used in New Age circles. As an example is the famous American New Age guru Deepak Chopra, who has invented the concept of quantum healing, which again is based on the misunderstanding of quantum mechanics, that the mind can control everything. Chopra is without hesitation going into discussions with experts, and is precisely using the above-mentioned language.

On ABC's Nightline Deepak Chopra entered a week-long debate against arch atheist Dr. Michael Shermer. The debate was organized as a part of Nightline's "Face Off" event series, and was incited by a public challenge issued by Chopra.

Joined by religious scholar Dr. Jean Houston and neuroscientist Sam Harris, the group gathered at the California Institute of Technology to settle a long-time argument regarding the ultimate question: Does God have a future?

The debate was heated from the get-go, with Chopra issuing a rousing appeal to his audience of scientists and students: "One of the things we have to do is stop being the Jihadists and Vatican of conservative, orthodox science, which is not relevant anymore."

Shermer snapped back by claiming that Chopra's opening remarks were "the very embodiment of woo woo," a term Shermer uses to describe what he considers dangerous pseudoscience.

Initially, the debate centered around accusations of misrepresenting contemporary theories of quantum physics to serve either religious or atheistic ends. Harris criticized Deepak's identification of God/Nature as "infinite potentiality," calling his
interpretation "unprincipled." Chopra made the claim that Harris’ conception of science was dogmatic and closed off to alternative interpretations.

In the final days, the debate gravitated around whether spiritual experiences should be explained in material or immaterial terms. Eventually, the debaters could not agree on the issue of whether such experiences originate within the body or outside of it.

Watch the debate on the playlist of my YouTube channel

Critique

The emergence of quantum mechanics has not made classical physics invalid; it is still valid, but Planck’s constant (the quantum postulate) has given it a limited scope of application.

According to Niels Bohr quantum mechanics is a generalization of classical physics, and the complementarity principle is a generalization of the classical causality principle. In the same way the theory of relativity is a generalization in another direction of the classical physics.

According to Bohr you can’t replace classical physics with quantum physics, because the validity of classical physics is a necessary precondition for, that you can describe the quantum mechanical phenomena, and set out for the macroscopical (“classical”) experimental arrangement.

This means, that both materialism and idealism (subjectivism and relativism) are invalid point of views. On the one side quantum mechanics breaks with the principle of causation and determinism, so that neither the human brain/thought, or nature and evolution, can said to be fully cause-determined systems, as materialism claims. On the other side you can’t say neither, that the principle of causation and determinism are invalid, as idealism (subjectivism and relativism) claims. They are still valid, but with a limited scope of application. Instead you must use the complementarity-principle.

An interesting thing is, that almost all New Age versions of quantum mysticism, which totally deny the validity of the principle of causation and determinism (law of attraction, quantum healing, time travel, etc., etc.) actually are based on extreme cause-determined theories, for example the law of attraction, which claims, that if you think in a certain way, then the universe will reward you in a certain way. But that is what quantum mechanics breaks with.
If you want a deeper going examination of quantum mechanics, read my article *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr*.

**The Sokal Hoax**

The Sokal Hoax, also known as the Sokal Affair, was a publishing hoax perpetrated by Alan Sokal, a physics professor at New York University. The hoax was a so-called hoax of exposure. Hoaxes of exposure are semi-comical or private sting operations. They usually encourage people to act foolishly or credulously by falling for patent nonsense that the hoaxter deliberately presents as reality.

The Sokal Hoax was a pseudoscientific experiment to test the standards of scholarship and intellectual responsibility within the postmodern intellectualism.

Before I go deeper into the hoax I will describe the postmodern intellectualism in a more broad sense. My intention is also to show where the pseudoscience within New Age is coming from, especially the abuse of quantum mechanics.

**The postmodern intellectualism**

The Postmodern Intellectualism is characterized by relativism. You can talk about a collective relativism (cultural relativism), and an individual relativism (subjectivism). These two kinds of relativism are often in opposition to each other, due to different political views, as for example socialism contra liberalism. But I see them both as part of the same Postmodern Intellectualism.

Relativism shows in an ingenious way, which no ideology have shown before – and therefore we don’t recognize it. Through schools, folk high schools, universities (especially in the Humanities and the social Sciences), continuing education and business communities – relativism has brainwashed most people to consider conceptions such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, as something we have created ourselves, and which therefore don’t exist objective seen. Therefore they are rejected as premodern superstition, as an expression of old-thinking. Because if truth is something we have created ourselves, then there isn’t any objective criterium to decide what is true. All ideas are therefore equal true, and therefore anything goes.
Relativism shows itself in different forms: subjectivism, social constructivism, pragmatism, nihilism, postmodernism. It is a mishmash of trendy ideas – deconstructive literary theory, New Age fantasies, so-called feminist epistemology, extreme social constructivist philosophy of science, even Lacanian psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology, experiential psychotherapy, coaching and management theory. And the books and articles written by these people, are also a mishmash of thought distortions, obscure jargon, political ideology, religious preaching and pseudoscientific blather.

Through this we have reached the highest level of postmodern development for better or for worse. The same fully individualized core of personality, which makes us able to step out of the past’s fixed and subconscious attachment, has itself become our main interest, center for our identity in a degree, that almost all our awareness are directed inwards in a global seen exceptional narcissism.

How is that? Isn’t narcissism what for example social constructivists try to avoid? Yes, but with the opposite result – they haven’t examined the inner thinker’s (the Ego’s) ingenious ways to use thought distortions in order to defend itself (see my book A Dictionary of Thought distortions). Individually we have namely created a large scale self-image, which in a quite high degree is based on assumptions/ideas. This self-image we almost continuously defend, by filtrating the impressions we receive from the world. We want to be in peace with our self-images, and quite convenient we therefore have created a cultural pluralism (=culture relativism), which forbid actual value judgment. I have my truth, and you have yours. Respect! Self-accept! I am Okay, you’re Okay! It all run together in a fear of hierarchies, where it is political incorrect to claim that something is higher than something else. “You judge”, is the same as “you condemn.”

Relativism has in this way succeeded in creating an illusion of, that it is a kind of sacrilege (intolerance/thought-crime/old-thinking) wanting to utter yourself about, what is good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, at the same time as the relativists does this themselves in all possible quibbling ways, under cover of concepts such as tolerance or new-thinking.

That relativism is an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people – (though these people can disagree in between whether they are subjectivists (individual oriented relativists) or social constructivists (social oriented relativists), or if they are working in universities, or as coaches within the New Age environment, etc, etc).

Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by
analyzing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself (an ideology always thinks black and white, and therefore always has an anti-ideology, an enemy image, which it attribute on to everyone, who don´t agree).

Relativism has in this way also succeeded in getting philosophy psychologized/spoiled.

I have many times myself been surprised over, in what degree I have been attacked for my relativism-critique – attacks which apparently only directs itself against this, that I, with starting point in the wisdomtraditions, express the necessity of remembering the philosophical aspects of the spiritual work (the realization-work and the ethical practice). This is an absolutely necessity today, because the consequences of relativism will be the counter balancing of the Ego-unfolding.

Now if you use philosophy, you will see, how truth escapes relativism – (because truth does exist objective seen; that is: not in the mind of Man, whether as an idea, an assumption, or a conception) – and returns to relativism as a kind of hubris-nemesis.

Two crucial philosophical arguments can namely be put forward against relativism:

1) The argument of self-refutation. Relativism is logically fallacious, because it of course considers itself as being true. But it can precisely, in accordance with its own built-in relativism, not itself be regarded as more true than for example absolutism. For that reason it is followed by a long line of self-contradictions.

   All ideas, theories, assumptions and conceptions are of course relative. But relativism is itself a theory. The self-contradiction is that relativism makes an exception of its own position: the very assertion of relativism is itself nonrelativistic. It relates absolute to the relative, where the relative here is its own assertion of relativism.

   The art is of course to relativize oneself, and relate relative to the relative. And to do this you must also be able to relate absolute to the absolute, and acknowledge, that the absolute is an Otherness that transcends us, and therefore all our ideas, assumptions, theories etc., and which is the instance that carry us. The Otherness is the instance in reality, which makes it possible that we at all can investigate whether there is contradiction or coherence between our thoughts and our lived lifes. It is the instance that makes it possible to discriminate between awareness and inawareness; being yourself or trying to be something else. It is the order of nature, which puts us in order. It is not us who puts the nature in order.
2) The reductio ad absurdum argument. If you preach relativism and believe, that everything is relative and for that reason equal true, you have thereby accepted, that nazism, fascism, dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence, are as equally great blessings for mankind as democracy, negotiation and dialogue (it is a fact that many totalitarian ideologies, paradoxically enough, today have begun to use relativism as justification for their business). Then you have no basis in order to criticize, because you haven’t got any rational frame to start from. You can’t criticize anyone for argumentation bungling, or to replace arguments with machine guns, because this presupposes, that there is a rational foundation in your arguments.

How far out in the absurd will a relativist in other words defend his so-called “tolerance”? What about the child, which has been raped and murdered? Will the relativist go in and defend the murderer against the critique, and say, that it might well be, that we are opposed to the murderer, but basically we can’t know, whether it is us who are mistaken, and him who is right?

This there actually are examples on. There are moreover examples on, that relativists have defended religious mass suicide, female circumcision, wife burning etc., etc. So you can yourself figure out, what the ideology can be used to justify.

The relativists´ idea of themselves as being mediators are in other words absurd and self-contradictory – go to an Islamic and Jewish fundamentalist – and create peace by telling them, that their faith after all only is something relatively? It is offensive, to hear this forbearing accent: “It is fine, that you have your viewpoints, but basically there is nothing which is true, so therefore make peace!” (Besides an extremely metaphysical statement, which claims itself to have practically divine insight in truth).

If you observe the built-in energylaws of life, then the collective Ego-unfolding is an expression of energy, which has swung out in its one extremity. With necessity the energy will swing over in the opposite extreme. And this won’t happen in a quiet way, when you consider the enormous momentum that is in the actual extreme, and it will happen quite simply: through pollution of the environment, through diseases (aids, cancer and else) through warfare, terror, crises, inner mass psychotic collapses, and through natural disasters.

This is what we very probably will have to face, because the rejection of the realization-work and the ethical practice is exactly what is needed for an ideology to keep its citizens in ignorance, and through ignorance to use them as means for reaching its goals; that is: using them in ways that don’t have to take ethics into consideration.
These things were what George Orwell mirrored in his novel 1984, and what he therefore warns us against.

But the defenders of relativism refuse the above-mentioned classical arguments against them, because they see it as old thinking. However the Sokal Hoax has exposed relativism in a nearly comical way.

The phrases old-thinking and new-thinking are very popular within the so-called postmodern intellectualism, which is the background for what I consider as a wrong spiritual turn within the more popular, common movement of New Age. In this movement I for example have heard people refer to themselves as New Thought Ministers (see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality and The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

Though the postmodern intellectualism and New Age would disagree in between, they are both a sign of what I call the Illuminati-aspect the Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy). My concept of Illuminati is based on the rise of pseudoscience. There are especially two kinds of pseudoscience: 1) the pseudoscience of New Age, which demands that science has to be integrated with “alternative” sciences with spiritual content. 2) The pseudoscience of reductionism, which demands that science has to be integrated with (or is the same as) certain atheistic/political/postmodernistic views (see my article The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism).

Both are a part of The Matrix Conspiracy because they both support subjectivism and relativism, which are a fundamental philosophy of this ideology.

The phrases old-thinking and new-thinking are often used as a weapon against critique. You see them used both by postmodern intellectuals and New Age devotees. The phrases have three sources:


2) Quantum mechanics

3) Thomas Kuhn’s work The structure of Scientific Revolutions

1) George Orwell’s novel 1984

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 was 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 used concepts such
as old-thinking and new-thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, everytime they use concepts within old-thinking.

Today, after having passed 1984, we live in a so-called postmodernistic dystopia, where eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away – and where we have been invaded by the ideology of relativism, which rulers, in creeping ways, use the same phrases as the rulers in Orwell´s novel, as if they had used it as inspiration (the nearest to an attempt of actually creating a new language, which implies some rules about what is considered as “negative” and “positive”, is probably the creating of the so-called Giraffe-language – see my article Nonviolent Communication as an instrument of psychic terror).

2) Quantum mechanics

There are especially two kinds of abuse of science within New Age:

1) The claim, that Einstein´s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, prove that relativism and subjectivism are valid points of views.

2) The claim, that Quantum mechanics, and Einstein´s theories of relativity, prove that classical physics (the age of enlightenment, rationality, objectivity) is not valid anymore.

Often you hear postmodern intellectuals use the following bullying of critics:

“That they are hewing to the ´objective´ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

They typically assert that this “dogma” has already been thoroughly undermined by the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics and that physical reality has been shown to be “at bottom a social and linguistic construct.”

This is used to term critics as old-thinkers, for example that their critique is part of a “patriarchal, racist, colonistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion discourse”

Relativists typically deride critics and scientists for continuing to cling to the “dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, that there exists an external world whose properties are independent of human beings, and that human beings can obtain reliable, if imperfect and tentative knowledge of these properties by hewing to the ‘objective’ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”
And: “How can a self-perpetuating secular priesthood of credentialed ‘scientists’ purport to maintain a monopoly on the production of scientific knowledge?”

Therefore they demand alternative sciences (and alternative views of human rights), what I call the Illuminati-aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy, because science can’t be mixed with spiritual or political concepts. If this happens, then it is not science anymore. The same thing with relativistic and subjectivistic views of human rights; then it is not human rights anymore.

And, in short: relativistic theories are actually themselves using classical physics to explain their own theories (for example by the help of the causality-principle), and that is precisely what quantum mechanics breaks with (read more about this in my article Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr).

3) Thomas Kuhn’s work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions

I will explain Thomas Kuhn in relation with how he is abused in Neuro-linguistic Programming (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)).

NLP is founded by Richard Bandler and John Grinder.

John Grinder denies, that his and Bandler´s work is an eclectic hodgepodge of philosophy and psychology, or that it even builds from the work of others. He believes that what he and Bandler did was “create a paradigm shift.”

The following claim by Grinder provides some sense of what he thinks NLP is:

My memories about what we thought at the time of discovery (with respect to the classic code we developed – that is, the years 1973 through 1978) are that we were quite explicit that we were out to overthrow a paradigm and that, for example, I, for one, found it very useful to plan this campaign using in part as a guide the excellent work of Thomas Kuhn (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions) in which he detailed some of the conditions in the midst of paradigm shifts. For example, I believe it was very useful that neither one of us were qualified in the field we first went after – psychology and in particular, its therapeutic application; this being one of the conditions which Kuhn identified in his historical study of paradigm shifts. Who knows what Bandler was thinking?

As a comment to this the critical thinker Robert T. Carroll says: “One can only hope that Bandler wasn’t thinking the same things that Grinder was thinking, at least with respect to Kuhn’s classic text.”
Kuhn did not promote the notion that not being particularly qualified in a scientific field is a significant condition for contributing to the development of a new paradigm in science. Furthermore, Kuhn did not provide a model or blueprint for creating paradigm shifts! His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occured in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy and he certainly did not imply that anything NLP did, or is doing, constitutes a paradigm shift.

But the use of the concept of paradigm shifts is very popular in the postmodern intellectualism and its more common spiritual movement New Age, where a lot of different “spiritual” systems (new-thinking), often contradictory, are claiming, that it from now on is impossible to think in “old” ways anymore, without accepting their systems. The failure is due to their constructivistic ways of thinking; that is: relativism.

Also of interest are the grand claims about themselves, which make you ask: what is it in these peoples´ thoughts and theories that make them so great? Nothing. It is the Emperor´s New Clothes: the thought, that if you just tell the story, then it probably will become true through some kind of magic.

The Sokal Hoax

In the autumn of 1994 Alan Sokal submitted an essay to Social Text, the leading journal in the field of cultural studies. Entitled “Trangressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity,” it purported to be a scholarly article about the “postmodern” philosophical and political implications of twentieth-century physical theories. After review by five members of Social Text’s board, Sokal’s parody was accepted for publication as a serious piece of scholarship. It appeared in April 1996 in a special double “Science Wars” issue of the journal devoted to rebutting the charge that cultural studies critiques of science tend to be riddled with incompetence. At that time, the journal did not practice academic peer review and did not submit the article for outside review by a physicist.

On its date of publication (May 1996), Sokal revealed in the journal Lingua Franca that the article was a hoax, identifying it as “a pastiche of Left-wing cant, fawning references, grandiose quotations, and outright nonsense...structured around the silliest quotations (by postmodern academics) he could find about mathematics and physics”.

The article was stiched together so as to look good and to flatter the ideological preconceptions of the editors.
Sokal’s hoax is today acquiring the status of a classic *succès de scandale*, with extensive press coverage in the United States and, to a growing extent, in Europe and Latin America.

The Sokal Hoax shows three important things. First, that dubiously coherent relativistic views about the concepts of truth and evidence really have gained wide acceptance in the contemporary academy, just as it often seemed. Second, that this onset of relativism has had precisely the sorts of pernicious consequence for standards of scholarship and intellectual responsibility that one would expect it to have. Finally, that neither of the preceding two claims need reflect a particular political point of view, least of all a conservative one.

In an interview on the NPR program *All Things Considered*, Sokal said he was inspired to submit the hoax article after reading *Higher Superstition: The Left and Its Quarrels With Science* (1994), by Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt. In their book, Gross and Levitt reported an anti-intellectual trend in university liberal arts departments (especially English departments) which had caused them to become dominated by a “trendy” branch of post-modernist deconstructionism.

*Higher Superstition* argued that in the 1990s, a group of academics whom the authors referred to collectively as “the Academic Left” was dominated by professors who concentrated on racism, sexism, and other perceived prejudices, and that science was eventually included among their targets – later provoking the “Science Wars”, which questioned the validity of scientific objectivity. Academic journals in the humanities were publishing articles by writers who, scientists argued, demonstrated little or no knowledge of science. Per the introduction: “A curious fact about the recent left-critique of science is the degree to which its instigators have overcome their former timidity, of indifference towards the subject, not by studying it in detail, but rather by creating a repertoire of rationalizations for avoiding such study.”

After analyzing essays from “the academic left”, scientists argued that some of these critical writers were ignorant of the original scientific documents they were criticizing and, therefore, were making a series of nonsensical statements about the nature and intent of science. Gross and Levitt found it especially troubling that academic journals were not judging the intellectual integrity of the scholarship through peer review but were merely judging papers according to their political tilt.

*Higher Superstition* argued that for an article to be published in some academic journals, especially those associated with the humanities, it needed only to display “the proper leftist thought” and to be written by – or to quote – well-known leftist authors.
Thus, *Higher Superstition* was an attempt to challenge purportedly uncritical subjectivist thought, the validity of which otherwise went largely uncriticized. Moreover, the book served as an argument from scientists that the Science Wars were primarily fought by non-scientists who were pushing contentious claims about the dubiousness of scientific objectivity.

Sokal reasoned that, if the presumption of editorial laziness were correct, the nonsensical content of his article would be irrelevant to whether the editors would publish it. What would matter would be ideological obsequiousness, fawning references to deconstructionist writers, and sufficient quantities of feminist and socialist terminology (see my article *The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines*).

**The content of the article**

It is impossible to do justice to the egregiousness of Sokal’s essay without making account of some common themes that you find in almost all publications of relativism, no matter of the disagreements they might have in between; that is: what makes relativism into an ideology shared by the enormous group of people that call themselves relativists.

1) As mentioned: Relativists typically deride scientists for continuing to cling to the “dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, “that there exists an external world whose properties are independent of human beings, and that human beings can obtain reliable, if imperfect and tentative knowledge of these properties “by hewing to the “objective” procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

2) They typically assert that this “dogma” has already been thoroughly undermined by the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics and that physical reality has been shown to be “at bottom a social and linguistic construct.” In support of this, they adduce nothing more than a couple of pronouncements from physicists as for example Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, pronouncements that have been shown to be naive by discussions in the philosophy of science over the past 50 years (see my articles *Quantum mysticism and its web of lies*, and *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr*).

3) They then typically pick up steam, moving (jumping) to one of their central theses.

According to where they belong within the wildgrowing theories of relativism, they have many different central theses (within New Age one of the more popular is New Thought and the law of attraction). But let us take one of the theses from The
Postmodern Intellectualism, for example where they move to the thesis, that recent developments in quantum gravity – an emerging and still-speculative physical theory – go much further, substantiating not only postmodern denials of the objectivity of truth but also the beginnings of a kind of physics that would be genuinely “liberatory”, of real service to progressive (and also right-wing depending on where they belong) political causes. And here the “reasoning” becomes truly venturesome, as they contrive to generate political and cultural conclusions from the physics of the very, very small (in New Age it is typical “spiritual” conclusions).

4) Their inferences are typically mediated by nothing more than a hazy patchwork of puns (especially on the words linear and discontinuous), strained analogies, bald assertions, and what can be described only as non sequiturs of numbing grossness (to use a phrase that Peter Strawson applied to the far less culpable Immanuel Kant). For example, they move immediately from Bohr’s observation that in quantum mechanics “a complete elucidation of one and the same object may require diverse points of view” to imply, that in such a situation, how can a self-perpetuating secular priesthood of credentialed “scientists” purport to maintain a monopoly on the production of scientific knowledge!

The content and methodology of postmodern “science” thus provide powerful intellectual support for the progressive (or Capitalistic, if they belong there) political project, understood in its broadest sense: the transgressing of boundaries, the breaking down of barriers, the radical democratization of all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life.

5) They pepper their works with as many smaller bits of transparent nonsense, as could be made to fit on any given page. Some of these are of purely mathematical or scientific nature, or quotes from spiritual traditions. Others have to do with the alleged philosophical or political/spiritual implications of basic science – for example that quantum fields theory confirms Lacan’s psychoanalytic speculations about the nature of the neurotic subject, or that it confirms the New Thought and the law of Attraction, and therefore coaching and management theories about the blessings of unlimited ego-unfolding (political Liberalism/consumer-capitalism). Also that fuzzy logic is better suited to leftist political causes than classical logic is; and that Bell’s theorem, a technical result in the foundations of quantum mechanics, supports a claimed linkage between quantum theory and “industrial discipline in the early bourgeois epoch.”

So the works of these people are often breathtaking in their combination of self-confidence and absurdity.
And this was precisely what Sokal´s Hoax was a parody on. Sokal´s article proposed that quantum gravity has progressive political implications, and that the “morphogenetic field” (a New Age concept by Rupert Sheldrake) could be a cutting-edge theory of quantum gravity. He concluded that, since “physical reality” is, at bottom, a social and linguistic construct, a “liberatory science” and an “emancipatory mathematics”, spurning “the elite caste canon of ´high science´”, must be established for a “postmodern science that provides powerful intellectual support for the progressive political project.” Moreover, the articles footnotes contain obvious (to mathematicians) jokes, such as:

“Just as liberal feminists are frequently content with a minimal agenda of legal and social equality for women and ´pro-choice´, so liberal (and even socialist) mathematicians are often content to work within the hegemonic Zermelo-Fraenkel framework (which, reflecting its nineteenth-century liberal origins, already incorporates the axiom of equality) supplemented only by the axiom of choice.”

Sokal´s article proves that the editors of Social Text were derelict in their intellectual duty, by publishing an article on quantum physics that they admit they could not understand, without bothering to get an opinion from anyone knowledgeable in quantum mechanics, solely because it came from a “conveniently credentialed ally” (as social Text coeditor Bruce Robbins later candidly admitted), flattered the editors´ ideological preconceptions, and attacked their “enemies.”

What Robbins and Co. Should have said, is that Social Text is a political magazine in a deeper and more radical sense: under appropriate circumstance, it is prepared to let agreement with its ideological orientation trump every other criterion for publication, including something as basic as sheer intelligibility. The prospect of being able to display in their pages a natural scientist – a physicist, no less-throwing the full weight of his authority behind their cause was compelling enough for them to overlook the fact that they didn´t have much of a clue to exactly what sort of support they were being offered (if you change the word political with the word spiritual, then you see, that the precise same is happening in New Age circles and in New Age magazines).

And this is what is at heart of the issue raised by Sokal´s Hoax: not the mere incompetence in the academy, but rather that specific form of it that arises from allowing ideological criteria to displace standards of scholarship so completely that not even considerations of intelligibility are seen as relevant to an argument´s acceptability. How, given the recent and sorry story of ideologically motivated conceptions of knowledge – Lysenkoism in Stalin´s Soviet Union, for example, or Nazi critiques of “Jewish science” – could it again have become acceptable to behave in this way?
But it is not only in *Social Text* you see this. You see it practically everywhere in schools, folk high schools, universities, continuing education and business communities. You are therefore forced to accept it, in order to be able to work and live in our society of today.

The most grotesque form though, is within the theory of New Thought (see my article *The New Thought movement and the law of attraction*). Here you see coaches/gurus in silk suits earn millions of money on repeatedly abusing scientific ideas totally out of context, without giving the slightest justification – or throwing around scientific jargon in front of their non-scientist audiences and readers without any regard for its relevance or even its meaning – and mixing it with spiritual concepts (also totally out of context, and therefore abusing) in order to give their work some kind of “holy” meaning (see my article *The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism*).

The Sokal Hoax can serve as a flash point for a necessary gathering storm of protest against the collapse in standards of scholarship and intellectual responsibility that vast sectors of the humanities and social sciences are currently afflicted with, and which therefore also is spreading without the universities.

As mentioned, I have myself been attacked by these people in very, very insulting ways, when I have shown my critical view on all this. I have especially been surprised over the reactions coming from people in the New Age environment (especially from advocates of New Thought), who, in other contexts, almost is shouting about how big their love is (read more in my article *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing*).

And, it is always the same way these people react on critique, like if you turned a tape-recorder on. They always use the thought distortion *Ad hominem move*, no doubt because of the psychologizing aspects of their teachings (see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

Also Alan Sokal was attacked in these ways. After having revealed his Hoax he wrote a book *Intellectual Impostures*, together with Jean Brichmont, where he examined the canon of French postmodernists – Lacan, Kristeva, Baudrillard, Irigaray, Latour, Virilio, Deleuze and Guattari – and systematically (with the use of objective argumentation) exposed their abuse of science. In the book he also writes about the reactions of the relativists.

As I have mentioned, then George Orwell´s novel 1984 seems to be a possible inspiration for these people. Alan Sokal mentions Schopenhauer´s *The Art of Always*
**Being Right:** namely, enlarge your opponent’s target so as to make him look ridiculous. The relativists support the use of rhetoric, manipulation and even lies in order to force their message through, because, according to them, it is not facts, but the best story, which wins (they have actually written books about this). Relativism justifies it. Anything goes (there is a tendency to that objective dialogue more and more is being replaced by a subjective, coarse debate culture).

Sokal describes the reactions in the following way, which I will repeat below, because the insults are very similar to the insults I have experienced.

Sokal categorizes the reactions in two kinds of Ad Hominem move:

1) **Name-calling.**

2) **Attacking his alleged motivations.**

1) **Name-calling.** Some of Sokal’s opponents seem to think that clever epithets can replace the detailed refutation of his arguments. And the insults are legion: “little school-teacher”, “cowboy and pharmacist”, “censor”, Francophile”, and “purveyor of disinformation”, “gendarme”, and even “a dwarf who resemble teenagers Game Boy all day long.” Still more extraordinary, Philippe Sollers asserts, in an interview paradoxically entitled “Answer to imbeciles”, that Alan Sokal’s private life “merit investigation”: “What is Alan Sokal like? What paintings do he have on his walls? What is his wife like? How is his beautiful abstract statements translated in their daily and sexual lives?” So the insults are going on the same themes: that Sokal is an arrogant, mediocre, sexually frustrated scientist, ignorant in postmodernist science, and enslaved by a scientistic ideology (neoconservative or hard-line Marxist, take your pick). But Alan Sokal keeps his philosophical integration intact and is calmly answering: “Please tell me what this implies concerning the validity or invalidity of my arguments?”

2) **Attacking his alleged motivations.** Some commentators, instead of examining Sokal’s reasoning, attack the motivations, that they attribute to him. For example, Julia Kristeva claims that his book forms part of an American economic and diplomatic campaign against France. Isabelle Stengers sees it as a pure “commercial operation.” Vincent Fleury and Yun Sun Limet accuse him of seeking to redistribute research funds from the social sciences to the natural sciences. But Sokal answers: “Again this form of defence is curious: for even if my motivations were as alleged (and they most certainly are not), how could that affect the validity or invalidity of my arguments?”
Yes, we have passed 1984, and now we see, how frightening close to reality George Orwell´s novel is. The Sokal Hoax clearly shows the symptoms of The Matrix Conspiracy.

**The new feminism and the philosophy of women´s magazines**

In an article from Skeptical Inquirer, March/April 1995, the American female philosopher Noretta Koertge, writes about her worries for the development of feminism.

She writes that a Rip Van Winkle of feminism, who might have fallen asleep in the 1970s, would have been astounded over the opposite attitude, which is dominant among academical feminists today. The thick-skinned and strongly armed Rosie Riveters (reform feminism) have become replaced by moralizing Sensitive Susans (radical feminism), who individually are trying to find new ideological splits in the so-called “patriarchal, racist, colonistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion discourse”.

They are in progress with a systematic undermining of the intellectual values of the free education. Young women are being made alien towards science in many ways. One of the strategies consists in redefining, what counts as science. Instead of for example telling about great female researchers such as Emmy Noether, Marie and Irene Curie and Kathleen Lonsdale and their struggles – and triumphs, the radical feminists, in their account of the history of science, now accentuate the contributions to it from midwifes and from the claimed arts of healing, which herbal cultivators and witches mastered. Instead of motivating young women to prepare themselves to a line of technical subjects by studying science, logic and mathematics, they now teach the students in womens studies, that logic is a tool, which men use to dominate with.

These women refuse rationality and critical thinking, and claim that this is inconsistent with ”womens way of knowing”. These feminists characterize themselves as ”subjective knowers”, who are characterized by ”a passionate rejection of science and male scientists”. These ”subjectivistic” women regard the methods, which you use in logic, as ”alien territory, that belongs to men” and consider ”value-intuition as a more safe and productive path to truth.”

I claim, that all this is a part of a much more superior totalitarian ideology, which is about to become introduced in all educations on EU plane. I call it The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy). In my article – The Sokal
Hoax - I describe the tragic consequences of the feminist postmodern intellectualism on the universities. About the postmodern intellectualism as such: read my article Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry.

And it is a tragedy to see the devastating effects, which you see in all the young women (and a great deal of men also), who follow radical feminists´ attack on rationality and science.

Just to give an example: traditional feminists (reform feminists) often talked about the misogynistic elements in Freud´s theorizing, and pointed out weaknesses in his methods – the case Dora was a typical example on, how Freud was bullying his clients in his attempts on discovering the repressed memories, which he ”knew” where there.

There is a painful irony in the fact, that our days feminists so uncritical have affiliated the methods, which hypnotherapists and psychological counselors pretend can uncover repressed memories from childhood about sexual abuse and more bizarre things such as satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, alien abduction, past lifes etc. (see my articles Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception, The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy, Regression Psychotherapies and Cathartic psychotherapies).

I know no better demonstration of, how dangerous the naive faith in subjective attitudes and rejection of scientific methods and content can prove to be for all, who are involved in these things.

You can mention a vast number of other crazy New Age therapies, which are taken at their face value (see my article Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality). Or just try to follow an Oprah Winfrey show. These people are often breathtaking in their combination of self-confidence and absurdity, where they with no hesitation are bullying highly educated experts and scientists if they are critical. Subjectivism and relativism namely opens them for the danger of magical thinking and Ego-inflation (see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

The worst is, that the symptom is seen within the whole of the so-called personal development movement (the self-help industry), including the whole of the mix of New Thought, American Humanistic Psychology, Management theory, Nonviolent Communication, New Age, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), The Law of Attraction; all that, which I under one concept call The Matrix Conspiracy.
A long line of these theories and methods are approved on EU's list of education, lifelong learning, and pedagogic altogether. Personally I know, that there on the Danish social and health-educations (which traditional is an area of women) directly is taught and examined in Nonviolent Communication and NLP, and it is on the whole impossible today to be trained, and have a permanent work, without being more or less forced to work with all this. It is a philosophy, which especially many women more or less are advocating, because it also is the main philosophy of women's magazines.

Subjectivism and relativism create an attitude, which says: “What people think, and the reasons they produce, may not be the real reasons at work!” Then it is easy to become suspicious on the motives of everyone as being individuals with psychological problems to solve. The removal of genuine rationality from the stage leaves open the possibility of accusations of rationalizations for ulterior motives. This form of analysis (leading to think of groups or individuals as “what is in it for them?”), is not only corrosive of trust in society. It is bound eventually to undermine itself. Why are such views themselves being propagated? What are those spreading them going to gain? – read more in my article The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing.

Daphne Patai is a feminist scholar and author. She is a leading critic of the politicization of education, in particular of the decline of free speech on college campuses as programs conform to pressures from feminists and other identity groups.

After spending ten years with a joint appointment in women's studies and in Portuguese, Patai became highly critical of what she saw as the imposition of a political agenda on educational program (The Matrix Conspiracy). Together with the above-mentioned philosophy of science professor Noretta Koertge she wrote the book Professing Feminism (1994). The book analyzes practices within women's studies that the authors felt were incompatible with serious education and scholarship – above all, the explicit subservience of education to political aims.

Patai's thesis is that a failure to defend the integrity of education, and a habit of dismissing knowledge and research on political grounds, not only seriously hurts our students but also leaves feminists helpless in trying to defend education against other ideological incursions.

Prominent among Patai's concerns are what she sees as draconian sexual harassment regulations as implemented in the academical world. She argues that contemporary feminism is poisoned by a strong element of "heterophobia": a pronounced hostility to sexual interaction between men and women and an effort to suppress it through
micromanagement of everyday relations. This thesis is developed at length in her 1998 book *Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment and the future of feminism*.

Daphe Patai is the inspiration to my thesis about the development of a new Puritanism, where traditional religious confession-techniques have been transformed into psychotherapy. This new Puritanism has from Christianity inherited and taken over a very characteristic religious worldimage. Sex is sin. Sex is in the highest a necessary evil. Therefore the destructive, the subversive, again is becoming overlooked. But because it is such evident a fact, the radical feminists have to do something about it. Like in Christianity they have therefore suitable handed the destructive over to the Devil. And in this worldimage they have got the Devil, the evil, the destructive, and the sexual weaved together (read more about this my article *The philosophy of Karen Blixen*).

As mentioned there are namely a painful irony in the fact, that our days feminists so uncritical have affiliated the methods, which hypnotherapists and psychological counselors pretend can uncover repressed memories from childhood about sexual abuse and more bizarre things such as satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, alien abduction, past lifes etc. In this way they paradoxically come to remind about earlier times’ Christian inquisitions.

There is another aspect of this, which might seem like an opposition to the New Puritanism of radical feminism, but which is a part of the same Matrix Conspiracy: because those of the New Age worshippers who today call themselves witches or sorcerers are often anti-Christian, pagan, and woman-centered, or satanic. New Age often exalt whatever the Church condemned (such as egoism and healthy sexuality in adults whether homosexual or not) and condemn whatever the Church exalted (such as self-denial and the subservient role of women).

The problem is, that the reductionist aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy does, that no one will take the responsibility for their part of the sexuality, and therefore for their part of the destructive (see my article *The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind*).

So the Ego, the desire, the violence and the power, are combined in the dark collective primordial images and fantasies: incest, sado-masochism, homosexuality, group sex, cannibalism, sacrifice, death-images – all these archetypes lie underneath the common sexuality, and constitute the dark astral underground in the collective time. Often illustrated in the Gothic tale, first by Edgar Allan Poe in his *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1839), later by for example Henry James in his *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), which dealed with the corset tight Victorianism. I will also whisper my own favorite: Karen Blixen (again: see my article *The philosophy of
Karen Blixen). Today we perhaps see the works of Tim Burton as a respond to our time’s Puritanism.

When you bind yourself in the one pole of an opposition, yes, then you create a resistance, and therefore a force to, and a dependence of the opposite pole, which causes, that the mind, the sexuality, is becoming anchored in, and determined by these basic mechanisms. And finally the energy will swing over in its opposition, the evil, the wrong, in order to balance an imbalance. Compensatory karma.

An effect of this is that we perhaps now see a direct suppression of boys in the school system. So believes the editor-in-chief for the Danish newspaper Weekendavisen, Anne Knudsen. She directly speaks about the outragerous condition of boys in a school system, which appreciates, promotes, praises, expects and rewards a behaviour, which corresponds fine with the special identity markers of girls, and in return with hard hand fights behaviour, which marks the typical boy.

This systematical discrimination has grown in the later years without any actual opposition. In 1993 it was only every third boy, who continued in the school after the public school. And already in 1996, 70 percent of the new students in the gymnasiuums (senior high schools) were girls. Now 14 years later the girls have educations and jobs, while the boys are fighting with unemployment.

And the tendency becomes worse and worse, without any changes.

As Anne Knudsen says, then it is obvious that the boys escape from a system where they shall pretend they don’t compete, while competition in reality just happens after rules, which not are formulated; where they shall lay bare their feelings on the slightest occasion, and where they in the name of equality shall tolerate collective bullying under the head line ”typical boys!”

The school system is arranged, so that it is a handicap to be a boy, and this handicap is even understood as a self-inflicted, moral defect; therefore the system don’t need to take this social problem into consideration.

What they have introduced in the pedagogy is namely the so-called Nonviolent Communication, which follows The Matrix pedagogy about, that cognition and moral not only have to become psychologized and subjectified, but also emotionalized, since it is the individual’s feelings, which determines the moral quality of something. Moreover that the moral has to be therapized, so that it can be considered to be a personal defect, and not a social problem, if you don’t do precisely as the pedagogy says (see my article Nonviolent Communication is an instrument of psychic terror).
This pedagogy claims about itself to be a “loving, tolerant, nonjudgmental, therapeutic permission to be different.” Peculiarly, since boys precisely not are allowed to be different. The problem is that ”the theory” (which in reality is hard bitten ideology – in lack of better I call it The Matrix Conspiracy) in extreme black and white way directly has made lists about what is good and bad behaviour, and in the schools they arrange so-called giraffe-language groups, where the children get hats on, either as giraffes or wolves. And guess who is sitting with the wolves-hats?

In this way stupidity goes its triumphal progress in the schools of today, and no one dares to protest in fear of collective bullying.

The German philosopher Jurgen Habermas claims, that an instrumental reason (technical reason) today has conquered territory from a communicative reason (a philosophical/spiritual reason). An aspect of this consists in, that we in connection with human problems treat each other as means or as items, which have come on the wrong course (the treatment society).

It is interesting, that New Age, which actually should be a spiritual alternative to this, and be an advocate for a communicative reason, on the contrary is one of the most aggressive advocates for the instrumental reason. This is due to their psychologizing of philosophy. They are possessed with all kind of self-invented forms of treatment, and with pseudoscientific attempts to justify them as science. Often they manipulative use instrumental/scientific inspired terms about their methods, but which are without any scientifical meaning at all. It is just a rhetorical trick to persuade people to pay the fee.

It is also interesting to compare the characteristic traits of New Age with Aldous Huxley’s novel Brave New World. This novel foresees the end of democracy in a pseudoscientific, technological fixated meritocracy. The novel is about a totalitarian state, which keeps psychological and genetic control with everybody, so that they surrender to the claimed “blessings” of the progress of the instrumental or technical reason; that is: through the reductionisms of psychologism and biologism.

Everything, also humans, and human problems, are treated instrumental or technical. Psychology and genetics are controlling people down to the smallest details, children are being born and “growed” on bottles, brains are being trimmed, characters are being converted after the needs of the dominant state. (Notice the similarities with the New Age product called NLP - see my article Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)), which are about programming your brain so that you can become a success in society; that is: so that you work in favour of Consumer Capitalism.
The people in this meritocracy are considered as being happy. If they experience some kind of negativity, they are in large quantities supplied with the drug Soma, which makes them “happy” again. All religion, philosophy, literature and art have been removed. Science is strictly political controlled. The entertainment is so-called sensitivity-entertainment. You can go to sensitivity-parties, or you can watch sensitivity-movies, etc. Everywhere the people are meeting sensitivity-influences.

Somewhere in the novel there is a discussion between the main character Johannes and the President about the lack of truth and beauty in this society. The President argues that it might very well be that there isn´t any truth and beauty, but the people are happy. Johannes objects, and says that the whole society is completely meaningless. The President continues: “Yes, but the people are happy!”

When I read this novel I remember the quote from a nonviolent communication coach, whom I had a discussion with: “Would you rather be right, than happy?”

The politicians in Denmark – which is one of the most secularized, management-oriented and coaching-controlled countries in the world – have had scientists to make an investigation, that shows that the Danes are the most happy people in the world. A bit of a paradox, because other investigations also show, that they are the largest consumers of Prozac in the world. Prozac is in Danish called “lykkepiller”, which directly translated to English means Happiness-pills.

The fact is that every society always is runned by some kind of ideology. An ideology is a malfunction in the human mind, which function with the implied instrumental assumption, that the end justifies the means (Machiavelli´s notorious assumption), and where the means to get there is to make people into slaves for this goal. Today people undoubtedly are being made into empty consumer machines. There are no doubt either, that we are being supplied with some kind of virtual reality through psychological theories, that seems to justify Machiavelli´s famous and notorious assumption – for instance through elimination of critical thinking.

It is a fact, that we today see an ideology behind the democracy, where true spirituality, philosophy and science systematical are seeked destroyed; that is: the destruction of the best tools Man has in his love for wisdom, and quest for truth.

The main theory of this ideology is relativism. There both exists an individual version of relativism, and a collective version. The individual version is called subjectivism. This version is often connected with a right-wing liberalism. The other version is a collective relativism, cultural relativism, which often is connected to a left-wing socialism. However both are common in distorting both science and human rights. Both are demanding “alternative” views of science, and for example also human
rights. And both are introducing intellectual apartheid in different ways, by seeking to eliminate critical thinking.

Both subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn’t exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith they also say, that we live in a Matrix, a dream, a kind of virtual reality, we have created ourselves, and that there is no chance of getting out of this. Therefore the best is to be interested in finding ways of getting on in this world, rather than being interested in finding ways of discovering the truth.

To teach people this, is the main job of what I call the Sophists of the Matrix Conspiracy: Management theorists, New Age coaches, Nonviolent Communicators, Neuro-linguistic Programmers, Law of Attraction gurus.

In the following I will examine some consequences of the two versions of relativism separately, and end the article by showing how a combination of them is beginning to develop into a new kind of global accepted fascism.

**The individual version of relativism: subjectivism**

Human rights are ethical tools. In ethics you focus on, what co-operation and conversation require of you in order to, that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don’t lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don’t manipulate), don’t make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for instance that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the individual person’s autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not as a means, but as a goal.

The society-ideology of today doesn’t live up to this, because it increasingly makes people into means for the constant production of consumption in the future. And this despite, that it believes, that it is an advocate for freedom, peace and human rights, yes, that it even can use war under those slogans. So the communicative (philosophical) aspect of human rights (treat the other not as a means, but as a goal), has been turned into an instrumental (ideological) way of treating humans as means for own goals (Machiavelli’s notorious words: “The end justifies the means”).

Today we especially see this in the use of the freedom of speech as a justification for insulting other people, and as a way of promoting own (un-intelligent) viewpoints, or (un-talented) goals as a person or an artist. We have seen it in the controversy with The Jyllands Posten Muhammed Cartoons. And it has become so “natural”, that
talented artists, and other, more intelligent, people, or institutions, who do not want to use their freedom of speech precisely in this way, are being collective bullied, even from highest political levels. They are for instance called cowards.

The reason is that human rights today have been turned upside down by The Matrix ideology and pedagogy. They have not only become psychologized and subjectified, but also emotionalized, since it is the individual’s feelings, which determines the moral quality of something. Moreover has this moral been therapized, so that you think you can become whatever you desire.

Human rights have also been submitted the reductionist aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy, so that no one can be said to have responsibility for anything they do (neither Muhammed cartoon publishers or terrorists). All this causes, that you can use human rights as a weapon in any ideology. And ideologies always think black and white. They are a psychic disease.

The cultural editor on Jyllands Posten, Flemming Rose, has recently published a book about the controversy with The Jyllands Posten Muhammed Cartoons, The Tyranny of Silence (Tavshedens Tyranni). Here he once again has published the cartoons, and thereby he has intensified the risk of terror on you and me.

Flemming Rose says, that he can´t understand why people are so focused on the Cartoons, since they only form a small part of the book. Well, maybe because the book was published precisely on the fifth anniversary day of the first publishing of the cartoons? But that is maybe only a coincidence?

Flemming Rose won´t take any responsibility for his actions (as no one will in the reductionist ideology). On the contrary he is seeing himself, and one of the cartoon drawers, Kurt Westergaard, as great fighters for freedom, and all critics as silenced victims of anxiety. He compares himself and Kurt Westergaard with the great Danish cultural critic Poul Henningsen, and with the death-sentenced author Salman Rushdie. But the art of these people is precisely not ideological controlled – and that is a quite central difference. Contrary to Flemming Rose they are critics of ideology as such; that is: their art is not controlled by any ideology, religious or political, Christian or Islamistic, left or right wing.

We can discuss the difference in intelligence and talent, but why is the militant priest Terry Jones - who recently was about to perform an “Art Happening”, by burning 200 Korans on the ninth anniversary of the terror attacks on USA 11-9 - being suppressed by everyone, who obviously are silenced victims of anxiety? Why should he not be honoured with a Freedom prize (as Kurt Westergaard recently has been)? Why should he not be admired as a new Salman Rushdie?
Who is to judge, when you have removed philosophy from the stage of debate, and replaced it with political and religious ideologies?

Flemming Rose says: “In a society where the fundamentalism of offence has been put on the agenda can any expression in principle be criminalized, if just those in power state that it is an offender. It is therefore, that it in a democracy is so important to insist on the right to offend.”

Besides that Flemming Rose’s statement, in his fight for the freedom of speech, is self-contradictory, because it also implies the right to offend the freedom of speech, then it is also wrong. Among those in power is namely Flemming Rose himself. It is, among other like-minded, Flemming Rose, who puts on the agenda.

In the Mass Media they have closed down the professional editorial offices, where there were people with knowledge about their areas. In the Mass Media the level of entertainment is higher valued than objectivity, so that all points of views are seen as equally good, and the contempt for professionalism goes from top to bottom.

In his New Years speech the then Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (current Secretary General of Nato) thus said, that you shall not believe in experts, and today the public debate is characterized by coarseness and vulgarity from people without education, knowledge or experiences, who nonetheless uncontrolled express themselves about everything from quantum mechanics to medicine.

The result is that any professional, who dares to express himself in public shall be prepared for collective bullying. We don’t see any dialogue anymore. Any attempt on reply are looked at through the eyes of the hermeneutics of suspicion (for example Flemming Rose), where the thoughts you think, and the reasons you produce, can’t be taken seriously, because there must be some other real reasons at work, reasons which the Matrix Conspiracy itself have produced. Knowledge is stamped as snotty. Prejudice is confused with liberalism.

There is a need for a dialogue from where there can be talked with authority. Such a dialogue has been removed. The platform, from where the public debate is being lead, is controlled by the Matrix Conspiracy.

As already mentioned: In a true dialogue you focus on, what cooperation and conversation require of you in order to that you at all can exist: that you speak true (don’t lie), that you are prepared to reach mutual understanding and agreement (don’t manipulate), don’t make an exception of yourself (but treat others as equals). From this rises the eternal moral values (as for example that it is wrong to lie), and generally our ideas of right and justice: the so-called human rights, the idea about the
individual person´s autonomy and dignity: you shall treat the other not only as a mean, but also as a goal.

In such a dialogue you use objective argumentation. Objective argumentation is an ethical way to convince others about your views, because it in reel sense shows what is appropriate or inappropriate about a case. Objective argumentation contains some of the following elements: summary or abstract, informations, description, reason, concrete choice of words, nuanced objective statement. You use critical thinking in order to explore, re-structure and change thought distortions.

But this dialogue has been replaced by a culture of debate (débat, from débattre, struggle, quarrel). The culture of debate is the common used form of communication in the whole of society today. Just try to follow the American Fox News, the new feminist Sarah Palin and the Tea Party movement.

In debate people all the time work against each other and are seeking to show each other's flaws. They often only listen to each other in order to find flaws and defend their arguments. They more and more harden their own perspectives, because they are so busy judging the positions of others. They defend their own positions as the best solutions and eliminate others´ solutions. They fundamentally seen have a closed attitude, which is due to a fixed decision to be right. They wholehearted invest in their own conceptions, and they therefore calculate others´ positions, without being aware of feelings or relations, yes, they even often happen to play down and offend the other person.

This debating attitude is unethical, and leads to violence and war. Why? Because it is based on subjectice argumentation. Subjective argumentation is an unethical way to convince others about your views, because it doesn't show, what in reel sense is appropriate or inappropriate about a case, but manipulates with it.

Subjective argumentation contains some of the following elements: innuendoes, distortions, generalizations, over-/understatements, sarcasm, satire, irony, postulates, emotional affections, coloured choice of words, choices and exclusions, subjective style.

People who use subjective argumentation don´t hesitate using thought distortions in order to manipulate, for example using adhominem moves, hermeneutic of suspicion, Giraffe language, setting up a strawman, etc., etc. (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions). Personally I have stopped having face to face discussions with this kind of people, and I am withdrawing as soon as I sense this kind of communication. In my article The Sokal Hoax, you can read about the kinds of abuses I personally have faced. I also really feel sorry for the husbands/boyfriends of
the numerous number of women, who have adopted the whole of this philosophy of women´s magazines/the Matrix Conspiracy (read more about the philosophy of women´s magazines in my article Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity).

The collective version of relativism: Cultural relativism

It have to be repeated, that I don´t discriminate between individual oriented subjectivists, or cultural oriented relativists, or between biologism and sociologism (right-wing or left-wing). I think the heredity and environment ideology as a whole is our main problem today, because it removes philosophy (rationality) from the culture of debate, and justifies any ideology (again: see my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

In the following I will therefore show how left-wing radical feminists, and other cultural oriented relativists, for example support extreme Islamists, and therefore can be seen as a part of the threat against freedom of speech, and the rise of terror.

These relativists are fighting against Western science and human rights, which they consider as an expression of a patriarchal, racist, colonialistic, Eurocentric, cultural dominion-discourse. Why? Because subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn´t exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. All truths are therefore equally true and equally valid, and if one person´s truth, or one culture´s truth, try to intervene in the truths of other individuals or cultures, then this is considered as an aggression.

This ideology is penetrating everything. Today, after the celebration of the 100 year of womens´ day it is interesting to see how this ideology also has penetrated Western feminism, which must be considered as playing a leading role in the Matrix Conspiracy.

Political freedom (the right to vote, to run as candidate for election, and to express yourself freely), economical freedom (the right to education and paid work) and sexual freedom (womens´ right to conduct the privacy they want) are the conquests, which traditional feminism achieved for the women of the Western worlds. This kind of feminism could, as mentioned, be called reform feminism. The conquests were achieved rather quickly in the previous century.

But the progress, which the large majority of women in the West enjoy, is standing in glaring contrast to the different reality, which women without the West live in. In the Arabic-Muslim world most women are refused access to an education. The figures for womens´ reading ability are depressing low. Their sexuality is controlled by a
patriarchal system, and they have only limited possibilities for achieving economical independence.

Many places in Asia the prejudices against girl children still flourish, and the result is that embryos of girls are miscarried, or that small new-born girls are put out. Moreover Asian girls and women in disproportionate degree are suffering under the discusting sex traffic with women – the modern kind of slavery.

Poverty and civil wars affect girls and women in Africa in ways, which men are spared from, because mass rapes lead to unwanted pregnancies and infections with hiv and aids. Moreover a shocking large number of girls die under births, because their bodies not yet are mature enough to give birth, or because disfiguration of their genitals causes, that they die of a birth fistula, one of the most painful ways to die in, that you can imagine.

Here there seems to be a giant task for Western feminists. Unfortunately there is completely silence, because the Matrix Conspiracy (both through education and the propaganda of women´s magazines) has programmed them what to think. They have now, as mentioned, become what you could call radical feminists. Reform feminists have become replaced by moralizing Sensitive Susans, who individually are fighting against Western science and human rights, which they, as mentioned, consider as an expression of a patriarchal, racist, colonialistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion-discourse.

The radical feminists (for instance Sandra Harding – but also New Age worshippers of all kinds) see themselves as liberal givers of charity to their non-western sisters/non-initiates. They see their charity towards their sisters/non-initiates as a loving, tolerant, nonjudgmental, therapeutic “permission to be different”. They try to “decolonize” the minds of their sisters by trying to make them repudiate Western science and human rights. But their invitation to be different is in reality an expression of intellectual apartheid, and a justification of intellectual apartheid. They dehumanize their sisters by denying them their ability to critical thinking, and this has, as expected, already contributed to a rather uncritical adoration of the nation and its traditions in many parts of the Third World.

Scenario 1, India: Frederique Apffel Marglin has recently declared that the eradiction of smallpox from India using the modern cowpox-based vaccine is an affront to the local custom of variolation, which includes inoculation with human smallpox accompanied by prayers to the goddess of smallpox, Sitala Devi.

Ashis Nandy has branded those who protested a recent incidence of widow immolation (sati), as modernized Westernized elites who denigrate authentic folk
practices. Not surprisingly this has found a sympathetic audience among right-wing Hindu fundamentalist parties.

Scenario 2, Pakistan: Though the Matrix Conspiracy systematical is trying to eliminate critical thinking and science, then it, in its manipulation, is extremely scientifical, technological and instrumental fixated. As it says, then modern science must be replaced with so-called “alternative” sciences. This has caused a boom in all kinds of pseudoscientifical theories; what I call the “Illuminati” aspect of the Matrix Conspiracy. One of these “sciences” is for instance the “investigations” of the biology of Western Men; investigations, which sounds like Fascism (read more below). And so-called “investigations” have concluded, that womens pain under birth is a social construction created by Western Men, and that it thereby is necessary to eliminate this construction.

In Pakistan and other Islamic countries, notably Egypt and Saudi Arabia, we now see the state-sponsored movement of “Islamic Science” (for instance around Ziauddin Sardar, a Pakistani émigré living in Britain, and Munavar Ahmad Anees, a US-based biologist and Islamist).

This movement tries to “Islamicize” science, and create a new universal science in which the facts of nature would be different, derived solely from the conceptual and ethical categories of Islam. They find attempts by modern science to bring modern science to bear on specific values and problems of Muslims as misguided, if not actually a crime against Islam. Explicitly they are citing the work of Western radical feminists.

In turn, Sandra Harding cites Sardar and associates among the “progressive” postcolonial critics of science.

Recently, demands for specifically Islamic (and also Hindu, Confucian, and African) conceptions of human rights have also been put forth.

Scenario 3: China: The protesters at Tiananmen Square demanded democracy, human rights and science together. Tragical for the dissidents, the Chinese government saw it differently and sent in the tanks. The Deng regime, though anxious to cultivate modern science and technology for economical development, treated any attempt to relate scientific ethos to antiauthoritarian politics as a sign of the “spiritual pollution” of China´s socialist values – using the same phrases as the Matrix Conspiracy.

Especially China is gradually adopting this rhetoric (which could be taken out of George Orwell´s novel 1984), and are demanding special Chinese interpretations of science and human rights, where scientists and advocates of human rights must be
civil obedient; that is: state sponsored. For instance we already see some special state sponsored versions of NGOs. And when China discover how the “spiritual” education-instruments of the Matrix Conspiracy are supporting their ideas, we will probably also see a state-sponsored kind of “New Age-spirituality”, which will cause a boom in followers. But all kinds of civil disobedience will still be eliminated.

Add to this, that China now has adopted Consumer Capitalism into its own ideology (Communism), whereby it has created a curious hybrid, you could call The Matrix Hybrid. In the Matrix Hybrid the two ideologies have economical interests in common, and therefore we might gradually see how the West more and more is allowing China to violate human rights.

The future scenario is that Consumer Capitalism and Communism are melting together. The West might gradually be more and more fascinated by China’s growing consumer culture (right now especially seen in Shanghai), and might adopt it more and more. And then we have the Illuminati scenario: a “New World Order” where all countries are led by a global government, which will try to create a world with no class barriers and religions.

With this Matrix Hybrid we have something, which could develop into Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World.

**The fascism of the Matrix Conspiracy**

My concept of Illuminati is, as mentioned, based on the rise of pseudoscience. As suggested, there are especially two kinds of pseudoscience: 1) the pseudoscience of New Age, which demands “alternative” sciences with spiritual content. 2) The pseudoscience of reductionism, which connect their “sciences” with certain atheistic and/or political views (see my article [The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism](#)).

It is unfortunate that the reductionisms are so accepted, because it is them that have created distinctions such as “Jewish” and “Aryan” physics; “bourgeois” and “socialist” biology; IQ tests; Personality typing systems; etc., and a lot of other political inferences from science that have had catastrophic consequences.

Where New Age pseudoscience typically is based on occult and religious viewpoints, then the pseudoscience of reductionism typically is based on atheistic and/or political viewpoints.

Both are a part of The Matrix Conspiracy because they both support subjectivism and relativism, which are a fundamental philosophy of this ideology.
What can be a serious problem in the future, is that a new kind of pseudoscience is trying to unite New Age pseudosciences with some of the pseudosciences of reductionism.

When you today ask: what is a human being? Then most people answer, that Man "is a product of heredity and environment". This has become a whole ideology in the Western world, and a fundamental part of the Illuminati aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy. It is actually a kind of sociobiology, or social Darwinism.

Social biology became notorious in 1975, when the American biologist Edward O. Wilson published a major treatise on the subject: *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. Accusations of sexism and racism were leveled because Wilson suggested that Western social systems are biologically innate, and that in some respects males are stronger, more aggressive, more naturally promiscuous than females. Critics argued that all social biology is in fact a manifestation of Social Darwinism, a nineteenth-century philosophy owing more to the English philosopher Herbert Spencer, than to Charles Darwin, supposedly legitimating extreme laissez-faire economics and an unbridled societal struggle for existence.

But the search for a synthesis of the heredity and environment split, a holism, is common in the pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism.

The main problem with all the above theories, are that they, in different ways, reduce consciousness to heredity and environment.

If Man only is a product of heredity and environment, then he has no longer any responsibility for his actions. Even the murderer, who is standing accused in court, is able to defend himself with, that he basically can´t help, that he has committed a murder. Firstly he was born with some unfortunate genes, which made, that he wasn´t all too clever. Therefore he was bullied in the school, and thereby he was developed to become aggressive and hot tempered. All this caused, that he in a certain situation committed a murder, but this he could not help. Heredity and environment led him precisely to this situation. Guilty? No, many people would say today, he is no more guilty, than a person is to blame, that he came to cough in a place filled with smoke. No, on the whole it is society and environment, which are to blame for the murder.

When you are advocating a reductionism and are claiming, that Man is nothing else than for example a product of heredity and environment, then concepts such as responsibility, guilt and duty loose all meaning. And it becomes meaningless to talk about human ideals. Why admire people, who have achieved something great? They have only good genes and a beneficially environment. Why condemn people, who spoil and break down society? They can´t help it.
Typical enough (foolish enough), then heredity and environment also are being used as a political tool. Often with followers on the respective sides of the extremities. In the dispute between heredity and environment it is for example considered political progressively ("left wing") to think, that the environment is more or less the sole decisive factor. The environment (upbringing, social conditions) is people themselves in the principle able to control and change through political actions. This is also background for, that Lamarckism in the form of Lysenkoism – which almost completely refuses the biological genetic meaning – got monopoly on engaging themselves with heredity in Soviet.

About how these thoughts today are continued in the left-wing feminist/postmodern intellectualism, see my article The Sokal Hoax.

Similar it is regarded as political reactionary ("right wing"), if you believe, that the hereditament (genes) of the individual is the most important factor, which determines its actual development. Ideological this is connected with, that in that case a social reformatory policy is not for a lot of benefit: the biological inheritance has so far been a destiny, which you have to tolerate. Right wing politicians have for example claimed, that aggression or competition is inborn in the biological nature of man. Therewith the assertion can be used to justify, that specific social conditions, for example warfare or the capitalistic, economical system, is ”natural”. Evolutionism ”proves” that the unlimited competition is as natural, as the survival of the best fitted. Moreover we know Nazism´s use of biological theories.

In Hitler´s Germany in the 1930s there were developed a so-called Aryan physics, represented by, among others, Philip Lenard and Johannes Stark, which was set up as an opposition to Jewish physics, which main representative was Einstein. Einstein’s theories were consequently condemned and taken out of the physics curriculum on the universities. The deeper reason was, that the genes of the Aryans (the true Germans) and of the Jews were different, and that the thinking and perception in the two ”races” therefore also had to be different, but that the Aryan race was the true. The radical feminists of today claim something, which fundamentally seen is the same. Since women have two x-chromosomes, where men have one x- and one y-chromosome, then the female perception, thinking and picture of the world et cetera, are different from, and truer, than the masculine. A pure example of feminist fascism.

As mentioned, the combination of the two extremeties – the heredity and environment ideology – looks like a kind of social Darwinism. Before we go further it is important to mention, that evolutionism – also in its most modern Neodarwinistic version – is a natural historical report, and not a natural scientifical theory. Neodarwinism can – as all other historical sciences – only retrospective explain the development up to now in a rational way. This appears clearly from the fact, that it
can’t give any scientific well-founded prediction of the future development. It is *not possible* with any reasonable precision to predict the future biological development on the background of the theoretical foundation of evolutionism.

Until today Man has not been able to do anything in order to change his genes. This has been changed with the modern genetic engineering, which already in principle has made it possible to change the genes of our gametes. In the future the problem about conscious changing peoples’ genes in order to improve certain characteristics is not any technical difficulty. It is in turn a serious *ethical* and political problem about setting limits and about, where these limits have to be set.

As mentioned in my article *The fascism of theosophy*, then the reductionism of Theosophy is due to the attempt of synthesizing spirituality and science. Theosophy is especially inspired by Darwinism, and its theories about human evolution. And the idea continues today in New Age and Ufology, where spirituality, apart from Darwinism, furthermore is sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy, natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics. The whole thing is presented as an ideology with a lot of attempts to predict the future evolution of Man, often connected with eugenics: the applied “science” or the bio-social movement (social Darwinism) which advocates the use of practises aimed at improving the genetic composition of people, usually referring to human populations.

Although Fascism is considered to have first emerged in France in the 1880s, its influences have been considered to go back as far as Julius Caesar. Thomas Hobbes, Niccoló Machiavelli, and Hegel have also been considered as influential, as well as contemporary ideas such as the syndicalism of Georges Soral, the futurism of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the nationalist and authoritarian philosophy of Oswald Spengler and the conservatism and Social Darwinism of Enrico Corradini.

The synthesizing of authority, hierarchy, race, eugenics, purity, unity, spirit, within these influences, is shared by Theosophy, where reductionisms such as biologism, psychologism, sociologism and historism go hand in hand. And the tendency continues in New Age and Ufology, heavily influenced by the works of Fritjof Capra and Ken Wilber. The newest example of clear fascism within the UFO religions, is the so-called WingMakers story.

Fascism is often mischaracterized as “extreme right”, although writers have found placing Fascism on a conventional left-right political spectrum difficult. There is a scholarly consensus that Fascism was influenced by both left and right. Some fascists have themselves promoted their ideology as a “third way” between Capitalism and Communism.
And here we precisely have the heredity and environment ideology, which includes reductionisms, that support respectively right-wing and left-wing political point of views. And combined with New Age, and especially the UFO religions, we have a new kind of Fascism.

As mentioned: the danger of the Matrix Conspiracy is the scene, where Western Consumer Capitalism, and Chinese Communism, might melt together in a new totalitarian ideology, which will be the end of democracy and human rights; something that reminds about Aldous Huxley’s novel Brave New World. The whole thing will be supported by this new fascism of the Matrix Conspiracy, which gradually will be more and more integrated and accepted.

**Latest news!**

Strasbourg, April 7, 2011. The 47 Member States of the Council of Europe are close to finalizing a new convention that defines “gender” as Social Construct.

So, a quite certain trend within a quite certain single branch of science (Sociology), shall from now on define what a human being is. This trend is called social constructivism (or social constructionism), and is the latest craze in reductionism; that is: a pseudoscientific point of view with a political agenda. It belongs on the left-wing environment side of the heredity and environment ideology (read more about this reductionism in my articles *Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry* and *The Sokal Hoax*).

So, we see, that my theory about the Matrix Conspiracy is very well alive and in progress.

**A critique of the Indian Oneness movement and its use of Western success coaching**

The Oneness movement, or Deeksha-movement, was founded by the husband and wife “avatars” Sri Bhagavan and Sri Amma. The movement is centered in the Oneness University near Chennai (Madras), India. The central concept in the movement is the alleged capacity for Shaktipat, bestowal of Divine power, and Deeksha, initiation or blessing, “the transfer of Divine energy.” The idea is that divinity or enlightenment can be transferred or transmitted via the touch, sight, or mental intention of a guru, mystic or saint. The phenomenon is known in all spiritual
traditions, though the concepts of shaktipat and deeksha is limited to Indian
philosophy. So, a Deeksha-giver is a person who is able to transmit enlightenment via
divine grace by, for example, laying on hands over other people’s heads and “letting
the energy flow.”

One of the main reasons why former high-ranking devotee Christian Opitz
ended his involvement in the Oneness Movement is the changes of the term Deeksha to
Oneness Blessing, and the change of the message towards prosperity and success.
The devotees were told that there were problems with the term Deeksha in the
Western World, that many people thought it was a cult because of this term. Christian
Opitz has never found this to be true. Countless people believe the Oneness
Movement is a cult because of the prices they charge. If that were changed, the
movement would really do something for its reputation.

Christian Opitz says, that the real reason for both these changes, the change of the
message to success, and the term Deeksha to Oneness Blessing — has a completely
different reason that the movement apparently does not want to tell people openly.
The reason is, that the famous American self-help guru Tony Robbins demanded
these changes of the Oneness Movement and agreed to bring all his famous friends
and clients into the movement if they follow his directive. Some of the teachers
(Dasas) in the Oneness Movement were obviously coached by Tony Robbins, and at
a course in Golden City (today called Oneness University), they sounded like
Western-style success coaches. Great idea, Opitz says, take a bunch of monks who
took vows of renunciation as teenagers and let them deliver a message of success in
the world...but Opitz is regressing.

The oneness movement is obviously willing to simply change what they tell people,
because a famous person promises them more famous people to join. This sound like
a politician campaigning, not like a spiritual movement (typical within New Age and
coaching, where the management inspired slogan is “It is not facts, but the best story,
which wins!”). At least they should have the honesty to tell people, “hey, we thought
it was a great idea for Tony Robbins to decide our message.” But no, they decided to
give some reasons they simply made up, pretending to address real problems with
these changes.

Tony Robbins has often been connected with NLP, and LGAT. He is probably the
most successful “graduate” of NLP (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming
(NLP), and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)). He started his own empire
after transforming from a self-described “fat slob” to a firewalker to (in his own
words) “the nation’s foremost authority on the psychology of peak performance and
personal, professional and organizational turnaround.”
Robbins says: “I built my fortune by modeling the success of others...Now you can copy my mindset and make your millions!” Tony Robbins is himself apparently a designated Oneness blessing giver, and oneness blessing is apparently a regular part of his seminars today. Besides this his seminars and teachings build on management theory and self-help ideas (see my article Management theory and the self-help industry). Robbins´ books include Unlimited Power; The New Science of Personal Achievement and Awaken the Giant Within.

In Robbins´ book, Awaken the Giant Within, he recounts meetings with Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Bill Clinton, Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterrand, and Princess Diana. In the audio programs Personal Power and Get the Edge, Robbins says that celebrities who appeared in his infomercials did so without compensation. These include Fran Tarkenton, Pamela Anderson, Quincy Jones, Erin Brockovich and Anthony Hopkins.

According to a 1994 article in the New York Times President Bill Clinton invited Robbins, Marianne Williamson and Dr. Steven R. Covey to a meeting at Camp David. However, all parties “refuse to divulge the substance of their meeting with the Clintons.”

Sounds True (www.soundstrue.com) has made a list called Awakening into Oneness about “Who’s received the Oneness blessing?” It says:

More than 10,000 people from four continents have traveled to Oneness University in India to become designated “givers” of the Oneness Blessing, and millions more have participated as Oneness Blessing recipients. Here is the list:

Religious leaders

- Vaticant representatives, including the Pope’s chief archivist and personal secretary
- Ron Roth, US, former Catholic priest and founder of Spirit of Peace Monastic Community (Oneness Blessing giver)
- Osman Ishik, Turkey (Islam) (Oneness Blessing giver)
- Philipe de Vos, France (Sufi) (Oneness Blessing giver)
- Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Indonesia (Islam) (Oneness Blessing giver)
- Buddhist teachers, Hindus, Christian ministers, Rabbis, and indigenous elders from all over the world.

Celebrities
• Lindsay Wagner (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Olivia Hussey (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Catherine Oxenberg (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Casper Van Dien (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Laura Henning, former Miss America (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Jim Carey
• Melanie Griffith
• Antonio Banderas
• Anthony Hopkins
• Dennis Quaid
• Alan Ladd

Political leaders

• Vicente Fox, President of Mexico
• Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka
• Susil Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia
• Alvaro Garcia, Vice President of Bolivia (Oneness Blessing giver)

Teachers and writers

• Tony Robbins (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Ram Dass
• Jack Canfield
• Marci Schimoff (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Harold Bloomfield
• Steve Ross
• Wayne Dyer
• Margot Anand (Oneness Blessing giver)
• Carl Calleman (Oneness Blessing giver)

On the website of the Oneness University Oneness Blessing is described as a direct transfer, through grace, of intelligent sacred energy which causes the heart to open, heals relationships, quiets the chatter of the mind, opens the doors to higher states of awareness and initiates a process of Awakening into Oneness where there is no longer a sense of separateness. All that remains is the awareness of reality as it is – the joy of being fully present in the moment.
The central understanding of Oneness, the website continues, is that inner transformation and awakening into higher states of consciousness is not an outcome of a mere intellectual understanding but a neurobiological process in the brain, whereby one’s experience of life is redefined at its core. Oneness in many regards, the website claims, has a highly scientific approach, quite evident in the teachings of Sri Amma Bhagavan, and this actually comes as a relief to the many Oneness followers ranging from the younger generation in the intellectual/elite classes, who abhor blienad belief and unscientific philosophy at all levels.

This kind of a vastly liberal and truly secular approach, the website claims, cause that whatever path of spiritual awakening you are on will be supported. It is recognised as by far the easiest and most effective approach to enriching human consciousness. It can be fully achieved through the 21-day Process.

This gift, the website says, is for all of us, no matter our belief systems. We begin with ourselves and through Oneness Blessings the ripple effect goes out to all of mankind. As consciousness is raised we can create together love and compassion for all, allowing the effects of the Oneness Blessing to flow out to all life on the planet and beyond.

Well? Any doubt? I will start my critique by showing the simple self-contradiction in the above-mentioned words that it is for everyone. Well, anyone with $5500 that is! That’s the fee for the trademarked 21-day “Process”.

No matter what so-called Oneness Blessing givers may say, then the central message in true spirituality is, that a Deeksha-giver has to be a fully enlightened master and the receiver should be very close to enlightenment; that is: on a very high level of spiritual development, either from birth, or through many years of spiritual practice. Therefore it is only a very few people who are ready for it.

The Oneness movement is therefore fully a part of the management oriented idea about that spirituality on one side has to be made into a business, and on the other side has to be made user-friendly, so that anyone can buy it. This is seen in the enormous New Age market, where you in a few weekends can get yourself an education as clairvoyant, channeler, shaman, spiritual teacher. You don’t need any intellectual knowledge or spiritual experience. It’s available for anybody, or for anybody who can pay the price!

My message with this article is to show, that no one in the Oneness movement is enlightened, neither the Oneness blessing givers, hereunder Sri Bhagavan and Sri
Amma, nor the receivers. Something else is going on, and that is a huge mix of manipulation and self-deception.

The article consists of five parts:

1) Illusion of control

2) The Kumaré movie: the true story of a false guru

3) The hidden story behind the Oneness movement

4) Kundalini, spiritual crises, and ego-inflation as the cause of peak experiences

5) Cycles of life, compensatory karma and black magic

1) Illusion of control

I will begin this article with a description of the thought distortion *Illusion of control*. The article will mention a lot of other thought distortions involved in the Oneness movement, and you can read more about them in my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*.

Control makes us feel powerful, which is a good feeling. And feeling that there is a right order in the universe, that some being, God or guru, are in control of everything that happens is comforting to many people.

Is there any harm in this? What’s the harm in obliterating truth and reality in favor of what you want to be true? A great deal of harm can come from deluding yourself that you can control your health, spiritual development and your wealth, or somebody else’s health, spiritual development and wealth, by your thoughts and prayers or other superstitious actions.

In my article *The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can’t heal it*. I explain how the painbody, through the inner evaluating ego, is connected with the more dangerous depths of the astral plane’s collective history; you might call it original sin or negative karma. This you can’t control.

In my article *The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice* I describe that only an intervention from the source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to be able to receive this help you must do your part of the work: the spiritual
practice. Many years. And this means that you need to re-structure the ego´s ownership to things, food, personal power, sexuality and emotions. Spiritual practice is in all simplicity about separating and dismantling the consciousness´ automatical identification with all this, in order to turn the consciousness in towards its source. First thereafter the mystical process can begin.

The magnet of attraction, which the ego is controlled by – (the ego´s identity with the material world: instincts, sexuality, emotions, desire, collective ideals, ownership, personal power) – will in a true spiritual practice loose its attraction. Investments in the material world´s ups and downs, its demands, temptations and dramas, become undramatized, uninteresting, even meaningless, in relation to the consciousness´ opening direction in towards its spiritual essence: the now, the wholeness, life itself, and finally: the eternal otherness, from where the good, the true and the beautiful are streaming as grace and forgiveness.

In this movement in towards the source you begin to ask philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way: Who am I? Where do the thoughts come from? What is consciousness and where does it come from? Is there a meaning of life? How does man preserve peace of mind and balance in all the relationships of life? How do we learn to appreciate the true goods and flout all transient and vain goals? Is the destiny of Man part of a larger plan? In this way the grab, which the material world has in your mind, is automatically reduced (I have explained this in my book Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader).

Very few people will be willing to do this work. On the contrary many people have today done an illusory work of trying to re-define this ancient wisdom, so that the magnet of attraction directly is becoming the object of worship. That´s what the law of attraction movement is about (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

Another aspect of the true spiritual practice is that you break the automatic process of compensatory karma, which is closely related to the material world, laws of nature, cycles of life, yes actually pure causal regularity of mechanical kind. It would be an illusion to connect such things with a superior intentional divine order (see the thought disortion Intentionality bias).

Furthermore you have your free will either to continue to be identified with the area of compensatory karma, or break with it, and move in towards the source, which is the area of progressive karma (where the mystical process begins) – about karma see my articles What is karma?, and A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork.
2) The Kumaré movie: the true story of a false guru

Filmmaker Vikram Gandhi is a young East Coast American from an Indian family. He is astonished by the success of Eastern-style gurus in the wealthiest parts of the world. As an experiment, Gandhi learns the trick of the yoga trade, dresses himself as a guru, lets his beard grow, adopts a thick accent, and sets off under the name Kumaré to the desert city of Phoenix, Arizona. There, he quickly gathers a group of followers around him, whom he teaches to meditate to catchphrases such as “Be all that you can be.” The tone of Kumaré remains lighthearted throughout. Despite taking his disciples for a ride, much in the style of Sacha Baron Cohen’s character Borat, he always treats them with kindness and sympathy.

Gandhi/Kumaré stitches the narrative together with a matter-of-fact commentary recorded after the event, never disclosing to what extent he became wrapped up in his role as wise spiritual Indian leader. In a world Kumaré conceives as pure illusion and a product of our inner eye, the filmmaker raises the question of whether the part he plays means he has become illusion incarnate. And this triggers the question in the viewer’s mind of whether what is apparently a fake documentary actually hides a deeper truth.

Kumaré also refers to himself as “The Mirror.” His method is the so-called Mirror Yoga (The Kumaré Method). What is interesting in connection with this article is that he also performs Shaktipat, and his followers report having precisely the same experiences as the Oneness Blessing followers. Clairvoyants and channelers claim to see his pure aura and chakras, and how an archangel is standing behind him, etc.

Kumaré uses some common New Age phrases such as references to vibrations and energy, advices to avoid the negative, stop doubting, follow your intuitions and premonitions, flow with coincidences, believe in the purposiveness of everything, join thousands of others on the quest, turn into your feelings and evolve to a higher plane. Follow your intuitions and dreams as you go through your spiritual evolution. Fact or fiction, it doesn’t matter. Truth is what you make it. Life’s too short and too complicated to deal with reality. Make your own reality.

This New Age subjectivism and relativism encourage people to believe that reality is whatever you want it to be. The line between fact and fiction gets blurry and obscured. And therewith people are directed into the area of magical thinking, where you don’t discriminate between image and reality, illusion and truth. And therewith you also have the elimination of critical thinking, which precisely is about discriminating between image and reality, illusion and truth.
Critical thinking is not only crucial in science and philosophy, but also in spirituality. The Dominican mystics call this steps discriminatio, the ability to discriminate between how the energy is used temporal or religious. And despite that magical thinking actually can create something magical, then in true spirituality it is still something temporal, or relatively (black magic/occultism), which will create negative karma if practised. The Orientals call it viveka, discrimination, the ability to use your will on that part of the energy, you can steer yourself, and steer it towards exercises, prayer, mantras, meditation, instead of towards career, worldliness, self-unfolding, as for example New Thought does (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction). The central teaching in both science, philosophy and spirituality is: discriminate between image and reality!

So, where does New Age have this idea about subjectivism and relativism from? It doesn’t come from spirituality, but from the postmodern intellectualism on Western Universities. The scary thing about it, is how widely spread it is, creating hostility towards critical thinking. Management theory and self-help is accepted as a central part of EU´s project on lifelong learning and education. There exists no secularism when it comes to this psycho-religiousness – a global spreading totalitarian ideology which I under one has called The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

But if truth is what you want it to be, then you must accept, that everything from Nazism, Fascism, Dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence is as equally true as democracy, negotiation and dialogue. Subjectivism shuts down people´s critical faculties, making them suggestible for any ideology. It involves making people quit thinking critically in order to open them up to thinking magical about that subjective validation and communal reinforcement lead to bliss. In New Age hypnosis is directly used as a means for inducing in people certain worldviews (see my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception).

Watch the trailer, and a longer movie clip, on my YouTube playlist

3) The hidden story behind the Oneness movement

I have already presented you for the thought distortion called Illusion of control. Before I tell the hidden story behind the Oneness movement I will present you for another thought distortion called Cognitive dissonance, because it also is one of the central thought distortions the movement is characterized by.
Cognitive dissonance is a discomfort caused by holding conflicting ideas simultaneously. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance. They do this by changing their attitudes, beliefs and actions. Dissonance is also reduced by justifying, blaming and denying.

So, dissonance is aroused when people are confronted with information that is inconsistent with their beliefs. If the dissonance is not reduced by changing one’s belief, the dissonance can result in misperception or rejection of the information.

An overarching principle of cognitive dissonance is that it involves the formation of an idea or emotion in conflict with a fundamental element of the self-concept, such as “I am a successful/functional person”, “I am a good person”, or “I have made the right decision.” The anxiety that comes with the possibility of having made a bad decision can lead to the thought distortion called Rationalization, the tendency to create additional reasons or justifications to support one’s choices.

One situation that may create dissonance is when someone does a favor for a person that they dislike. Here, the dissonance is between those negative feelings for the other person, and the awareness of having expended effort to help them. Cognitive dissonance predicts that people will try to resolve this dissonance by adopting a more positive attitude towards the other person.

A counterpart to this effect is when someone’s actions hurt another person, whom they regard positively or neutrally. In this case, one way to resolve the dissonance is to think more negatively about that person, so that they seem to deserve what happened to them.

Smoking is another example of cognitive dissonance, because it is widely accepted that cigarettes can cause lung cancer. Smokers could rationalize their behavior by concluding that only a few smokers become ill, that it only happens to very heavy smokers, or that if smoking does not kill them, something else will.

The phrase cognitive dissonance was coined by Leon Festinger in his 1956 book When Prophecy Fails, which chronicled the followers of a UFO cult as reality clashed with their fervent beliefs. The book gave an inside account of the increasing belief which sometimes follows the failure of a cult’s prophecy. The believers met at a pre-determined place and time, believing they alone would survive the Earth’s destruction. The appointed time came and passed without incident. They faced acute cognitive dissonance: had they been the victims of a hoax? Had they donated their worldly possessions in vain? Most members chose to believe something less dissonant: the aliens had given earth a second chance, and the group was now
empowered to spread the word: earthspoiling must stop. The group dramatically increased their proselytism despite the failed prophecy.

In the following I will tell the hidden story of the Oneness movement, which you can go deeper into by reading Timothy Conway’s brilliant webpage on the case:

http://www.enlightened-spirituality.org/deeksha_oneness.html

I will reproduce reports from one who knew Bhagavan before he became a guru, Mr Sivam, and three former Oneness devotees: Freddy Nielsen, Christian Opitz and Tobi.

Mr Sivam

Mr. R.P. Sivam is a person who well knew Sri Bhagavan before he became a guru. He reports that the name his parents gave him was Vijaykumar Naidu (b. 1949). I shall hereafter refer to him as VK. VK did not hail from an intellectual, spiritual or noble ancestry, therefore his natural cultural inclination was to find security in a secure government or public sector job.

After finishing his basic education, the clever and creative VK joined Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) as an office clerk. When he had reached marriageable age he was quickly married off to Padmavathy, a woman from his own caste and clan. Though Padmavathy did not attend college, she could read and write but could not speak English. Mr Sivam says that Padmavathy not is what they in India call a sophisticated or a cultivated lady. She had a great female instinct and could sense her husband’s appetite for other women. She often quarrelled with him when he showed excessive interest in other women. There was even a time when a friend of Mr Sivam intervened to calm the quarreling couple. Padmavathy is a very straight-talking, no-nonsense woman who often unhesitatingly confronted VK in public. Her language, while shouting at VK, was rough and somewhat disrespectful.

Padmavathy is the one person capable of embarrassing or frightening him into submission. Mr Sivam is not at all surprised by the strategy adopted by VK in including her in the launching of Kalki Bhagavan and Amma Spiritual Company Private Limited. This would ensure that the public know of his marital status and keep Padmavathy comfortable. Her title as Amma has also given her a sense of supreme authority in the organizational hierarchy.

As a young man VK got introduced to the teachings of the true enlightened master J. Krishnamurti (hereafter JK) through a friend, Dr. R. Shankar, who brought VK into a
JK school in India, the Rishi Valley School (about JK, see my article The philosophy of Krishnamurti). He became a mid-level administrator. Here he also began to report about having spiritual experiences. He also began to have ambitions to become a leading guru-figure himself. JK criticized VK’s spiritual experiences and pretensions.

Mr Sivam often heard VK saying that we need people to do things and help our cause, and after they have served their purpose they can just go on with their lives. In short he meant he would use people and discard them when they have outlived their usefulness.

People who know VK well, know he can be very opinionated and even rude when speaking about others. But when actually speaking with the person, he would always be very charming and friendly. After this person leaves, VK generally, among his “trusted” friends (for example Mr Sivam), had no problems saying anything derogative about the person.

Without asking permission VK read letters JK had written to Dr. Shankar, which JK had specifically asked Dr. Shankar to keep private. Here he discovered JK’s critique of him. Reading the letter deeply hurt VK’s pride and he never forgave JK. From then on his desire to become a guru in his own right got fully strengthened. He began visiting U.G. Krishnamurti (1918-2007). U.G. is one of the many claimed “enlightened” gurus. He used to bad-mouth JK, Buddha, and Ramana Maharshi and says vile things about them. While UG was visiting Bangalore, Mr Sivam once accompanied VK to meet UG. In the early 1980s he met UG and learnt the art of dealing with followers. He gradually started showing his dislike for JK and even went to the extent of always addressing JK as “Avan”, a very disrespectful and derogatory Tamil term.

Dr Shankar and others wanted to propagate JK’s teachings. Many people responded to their advertisement in “India Today,” a mainstream national magazine, and wanted to join this movement. JK was appalled as he was against this way of going public with propaganda. He wanted them all to tow the line or leave the organization. This led to the exit of Dr Shankar and all who had been brought in by him, hereunder VK.

Two former teachers from JK’s Rishi Valley School offered Shankar and VK land. This was how Rajupeta land, near Kuppam (Chittoor district) was acquired. A school modelled to imitate Rishi Valley School was launched, and it was here VK’s story from rags to riches began.
Vijaykumar changed his name several times, but the name he has right now, Bhagavan, means the lord God incarnate. After this he is giving his wife the name Amma, which means some kind of divine mother. They began claiming that they are the first 100% Avatars throughout history, and that they have created the entire Universe.

But in India people tend to ignore thousands of budding Gurus; this makes opportunistic pseudo-gurus walk around scouting for credible people (successful people, politicians, actors, artists, scholars) to endorse them. When Westerners gather and show devotion to a budding guru, his Indian following increases manifold, because the average Indian thinks highly of the white skinned affluent truth seeker. Therefore VK had to bring in Westerners. The following is based on former primary missionary Freddy Nielsen´s revelations (hereafter FN).

**Freddy Nielsen**

FN reports that Bhagavan changed his name at least nine times the first few years he was in the movement. He also changed teaching and approach regularly, which of course only caused confusion. And also the name of his movement was changed many times.

In 1993 the devotees talked about the new wave of mass enlightenment that Bhagavan had initiated a few month ago; how very, very soon the entire world was going to become enlightened. As far as FN remembers, they said that this wave would result in mankind´s total enlightenment by the year 2000.

FN goes on to report the inconsistencies and contradictions in Bhagavan and Anandagiri (a disciple) each confirming Anandagiri’s “full enlightenment,” which was not so “full” after all, since several times it needed renewal or updating. This is an example of cognitive dissonance, which also characterizes how that truths, teachings, approaches, names, history etc. constantly being changed by Bhagavan.

At age 13-14, Anandagiri described his state to be similar to what people often understand as enlightenment. 2 or 3 years later, in 1993, Bhagavan declared Anandagiri irreversible enlightened. Soon Anandagiri and hundreds other “enlightened” devotees discovered that what Bhagavan said was permanent was in fact impermanent. A few years later, around 1997 or 1998, Anandagiri was again being projected as an enlightened teacher. FN says, that Bhagavan often has declared people permanently and supremely enlightened. When the “enlightened” person gets depressed again, Bhagavan tries to avoid speaking about it.
What Bhagavan calls permanent enlightenment is, as I will explain later, in fact a kind of ego-inflation as the cause of different levels of peak experiences. It is also this that causes that people can say, that their ego has dissapeared. What in reality happens is that the ego has gone into an altered inflated state.

As mentioned Bhagavan started to give mass enlightenment to mankind after New Year 1993. In October 1992, an entire school in Chennai (called Balalok) started to go through the programs. The school was owned and run by a married couple, Mr Bhat and Mrs Vanitha Bhat, who also happened to be its principal and head master. They inspired or asked all students to attend the courses. Some 200-400 students came to the courses in smaller groups. Some came before New Year 1993, others after. Soon Bhagavan declared almost all the students enlightened. The students were pretty young, between 12 and 15 years old. After a few month though, most participants and students of Balalok school started to complain about suffering and various problems (explanation follows). It was obvious that they were not at all enlightened, and whatever state they had got in January 1993 was only temporary.

FN says that giving enlightenment has always ended in failure, and each time Bhagavan comes up with “explanations.” And this continued after the so-called 21 days process had been created. FN reports that many/most of the persons he knew got into depression after having been declared enlightened. Rather often these depressions were deep; people lost interest in life, nothing could make them happy anymore. Many of them also doubted that life had a deeper meaning and that there was a God.

But there are also reports that several people who have received deeksha have gone to the mental hospital. On the web page, they mention “the dark night of the soul,” but it is rather psychosis and deep depressions (note that the dark night of the soul is an expression of that something has gone totally wrong, as I will explain later). A former deeksha giver reports that she saw with her own eyes people who participated in the process in India in serious psychosis. They should have been sent away from there to get treatment, but instead the assistants made them believe that it was “just a part of the process.” – Note that this is precisely the same you hear from Stanislav Grof and his Holotropic Breathwork consultants, as well as other Carthartic and Regression oriented psychotherapists (see my articles A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork, Cathartic psychotherapies, and Regression psychotherapies).

Westerners have no access to get a private meeting or even a one minute private darshan (lit. To see or meet a saint or a god) with Bhagavan. The only way for Westerners is to be famous or rich. Indians have to pay a huge amount of money to
meet Bhagavan in person. It is about $2000-3000 US dollars for a meeting of 20-30 minutes.

FN was given strict guidelines regarding what kind of people who were welcome (and who were not) to come for the “VIP process” – a 21 days process, free of charge, in luxurious surroundings. FN also got guidelines as to who among the VIPs additionally could get a private meeting with Bhagavan. Only VVIPs (lit. Very, very important person) were invited to meet Bhagavan: rich or famous people, famous spiritual teachers who could make Bhagavan (world) famous or a possible big sponsor.

FN reports about how he had been sitting next to Bhagavan innumerable times when he has been meeting people, both private and group meetings. Bhagavan often discussed or commented with him (and trusted disciples) after they had left. He usually told which people he did not like, made malicious jokes about their, in his opinion, odd ways or shallow questions. FN says he is not used to such discussions where humiliating things are spoken behind people’s backs; sometimes Bhagavan was rather sarcastic, and that this condescending attitude of Bhagavan was one of the major tests for FN’s faith in him as mankind’s savior and God Almighty. FN reports that Bhagavan was especially scathing about the insensitivity and spiritual stupidity of Americans.

Bhagavan said that he was the first full incarnation of God in more than 20,000 years, and if mankind will not cooperate with him, it cannot get enlightened and will therefore die as species. It was in this connection rare that he spoke nice or approving words about other gurus or masters. He regularly ridiculed them – sometimes even in a rude way; or at least emphasizing that he is infinitely more powerful than they are. He for example said that Ramana Maharshi did not give enlightenment to anyone, what he gave was not full enlightenment. In Bhagavan’s opinion, most spiritual teachers were not actually enlightened..., or had an inferior kind of enlightenment that should not be called enlightenment at all. The dasas (the teachers in the Oneness University) have much, much higher states than Buddha, Ramana, etc., he maintains.

Bhagavan told FN, that FN’s process of enlightenment, was going to give him a permanent state that was 100 times higher than what Ramana Maharshi had.

Paramacharya (Dr Shankar) said in 1992 or 1993 that more miracles (incl. healing) has occurred around Bhagavan in 3-4 years than in the entire history of mankind, with all its religions and spiritual masters. Bhagavan said, that if he cannot heal a disease, that means that God also cannot.
There are innumerable examples of when Bhagavan promised sick or even dying people that he was going to heal them. The healing results were pretty much like that of an average healer (including the placebo effect – see the thought distortion Classical conditioning and placebo effects). It was a shock for these people when they realized that Bhagavan had not kept his promise. Some people even died of cancer shortly after Bhagavan had given them his word that he could cure them and prevent them from dying (from the cancer).

To FN Bhagavan´s wife Amma was just Bhagavan´s wife. She was not the one who talked to the people from the courses, she did not meet Western devotees etc., though she gave darshans to Indians. She was just the head of the kitchen in the school, and she also happened to be Bhagavan´s wife. She looked angry or dissatisfied most of the time. FN hardly ever saw her smile. He did not trust her and disliked her rough and dominant nature.

FN felt terrible shame before the participants who did not get enlightened after Bhagavan had promised them, and today he regret bringing them to India. He is immensely sad that he has been the cause to so much unnecessary suffering and problems and he can´t apologize enough to all of them. He was lead on a wrong track and inspired many to follow him. He was a blind man leading others.

FN has more or less witnessed the birth of the Oneness movement (he joined it in 1990), and he has seen that Bhagavan on purpose seem to use lies to manipulate people and situations.

Christian Opitz

I have already mentioned another former high ranking Oneness devotee, Christian Opitz (hereafter OP), who was the “chief neuroscientist” in the movement. He says that the most problematic issue with the Oneness movement is that it continues to foster illusions in people, rather than serving to liberate their followers from illusion. In 2004, the big promise was personal enlightenment for everybody involved and enlightenment for the whole world by 2012. When the first huge wave of disappointment crashed on the shores of OM, there were some apologies and it was simply stated that enlightenment takes a little longer. World awakening by 2012 was still promised with full force, the elimination of all political conflict by 2008 and other fantasy promises were openly stated.

OP says, that the fundamental illusion that the OM has fed to people again and again is, that with deeksha you operate in a different league. Whether it was about getting enlightened with no effort, having all your desires fulfilled as was promised with the
phala deeksha in 2005 or the recent claim that deeksha givers are now endowed with siddhis (powers) to perform miracles, the idea that through deeksha a life that would otherwise remain utopia becomes real has always been encouraged. It just isn’t so, OP says. He reports that deeksha givers struggle with life like everybody else. Deeksha givers grow spiritually to the degree they can let go of illusion, be truly aware of what is, like any other spiritual seeker. They have success and failures according to their talent, work ethic or lack thereof. Deeksha givers are as much subject to the waves of life, karma or whatever, like everybody else.

In 2004, so many Western deeksha givers reported the enormous peak experiences that were common then in the Golden city (today Oneness University). In early 2005 when OP did the 21 day course, these experiences no longer occurred. People were told that Bhagavan had decided to no longer “give” them, because they were distracting from true enlightenment. Sounded very reasonable. All of this fostered the myth that Bhagavan has the ability to simply switch on and off such effects of deeksha, that he could influence a person’s consciousness to a degree that seemed unheard of.

From all OP know now, it seems clear that in 2004, there was a psychedelic substance used in a herbal preparation that was given to participants in the courses, which really caused many if not most of the peak experiences. It was given without the participants’ consent and presumable without their will if they were to know what he was doing to them. Before this preparation called leyham was introduced, no peak experiences occurred in early 2004 in a course where participants were promised enlightenment in five days. Wanting to appease the disappointed folks, Bhagavan invited everybody for another free course. This time leyham was given for the first time and people had incredible experiences of cosmic oneness, blood-boiling love etc. These usually occurred after taking leyham. Whatever this stuff was, it also caused severe nausea and vomiting.

The type of peak experiences described by a number of people following deeksha in Kiara Windrider’s book Deeksha – the fire from Heaven were almost certainly the result of this drug.

Some people could not handle the leyham and had psychotic episodes, even after leaving Golden city they had screaming fits at the airport, which almost caused problems for the OM with the police. OP knows this from first hand reports from several people who were there. In 2005, when Bhagavan did no longer “give” peak experiences, people were told that some people had gone into such high samadhis (trance states), they had been dysfunctional at the airport. Simply not true, OP reports. The people who had psychotic episodes were accompanied to the airport to...
get them on the plane without causing trouble. After that, they received no help, no support from the OM and their stories were changed into another PR pitch that helped to foster the myth of Bhagavan’s ability to just give people incredible high states of consciousness.

Tobi

Tobi, a former prominent Deeksha giver in Sweden, reports about how one gets sucked into the cult. First you attend a deeksha evening somewhere and you are given this energy from a deeksha giver who did already this process in India and who paid about $6,000 to become a deeksha giver.

As this energy is given to you you may feel sometimes energy flowing to you or nothing at all. This is not worrisome as it is collective energy– or lifeprocesses, which are being invoked by the group (I will explain this later). So the bigger the group is the bigger energy flow. The problem starts when the people who receive deeksha believe they are in an inferior spiritual position compared to the deeksha givers. When this happens you feel like getting or asking for more and more deekshas. Then you go to more deeksha evenings spending your money until you yourself fall in the conclusion that you definitely want to get at least so enlightened like the deeksha giver and you start to copy his process. (If the whole thing is mixed with success coaching, NLP and Large Group Awareness Training, you might now remember Tony Robbins words: “I built my fortune by modeling the success of others...Now you can copy my mindset and make your millions!”).

The deeksha giver will then advice you to go to India to complete a 21 days process where you will become a deeksha giver, a helper of vishny enlightenment in the world. From this moment forward you better get your wallet prepared! The deeksha giver will ask then from you for the so-called coordination money which covers translations, telephone calls, and the comission process.

Then one week before the trip to India you are asked to pay to an account in Singapore, not in India (so they in India don’t have to pay taxes). You will pay another $5,000 for the proper course in India. They will tell you that in any five stars hotel in the world you will pay this amount and plus you get the state of oneness and you see the full incarnation of the avatar of enlightenment, Kalki Bhagavan and his wife.

Tobi now speaks in NLP terminology. He says that before the trip to India the deeksha givers will organise a pre-programming course to make sure you don’t need nor want to get those experiences you paid for, but just out of blind devotion you just
want to see the avatars and join a process with no finish date and no guaranty of success of any kind...Many people are at this stage thinking they are so special that they don´t need any proof nor guarantee...They will make you feel that you are one of the most special people in the world and therefore you have being given the opportunity to spend a total of $ 7,000 for the enlightenment of the world.

During the 21 day process in India your brain is programmed to feel the importance of being there and the importance to see the avatar. You will be introduced to the dasas who are the teachers of this movement who are allways in hurry and will not pay too much attention to what is going on within you. You pretty much feel you are a 5,000 dollar-bill walking through the ashram. You will be in a prison-like hotel where hardly ever you are taken away from (allowed to go out).

So the programming gets more fixed in your mind, you get a “big brother” complex fighting to get more enlightened than the others. Day by day you will lose your inner honesty to yourself and to your real needs. You will read books and see pictures of the master and your mind will start to fantasize.

You will see other people in the group trying to be more loyal to Bhagavan so as to get more enlightened and therefore you will feel like meditating like Lord Shiva and many other paranoias as your mind will try to justify your staying in that place. Other people will fall into depression as they honestly don´t experience anything at all.

You will get many deekshas from very high enlightened dasas where you will feel an energy that just comes and goes away without giving you any extraordinary experience. Most of the people after many days of nothing are even convinced that they have had in fact experiences, but at such a subtle level that they can not feel the senses.

You will be taken to numerous rites. In the rites such as burning homas (sacrificial offerings of substances to the sacred fire) you will see some monks making a ritual to call the divine forces; another one to get enlightenment; another to call the (good) fortune. But soon you will realize that nothing of this is happening either.

They will take you to see the avatar and his wife. You will see Amma just once and Bhagavan every Saturday. At his darshan, contrary to what is usually said or written, very few people have some significant experience. Experiences for the people who do the process will very much vary according to the lack of inner honesty and the programming.
At the end of the process you will feel a bit of the Stockholm syndrome (a loyal prisoner who now identifies with the guards’ agenda) after now 21 days in the same place and with the same “no-experience” teachings. But then they will give you permission to give deeksha in your country and charge for it if you want. Many people who want to give therapy or just want to have some spiritual business in their countries, they just tolerate the whole course just to be given this diploma.

As soon as you say bye to the dasas the relationship of disciple and teacher disappears as they have already what they wanted: your money. They hardly will answer your questions when you are back in your country. All what they say is that you will need a more advanced process of ten days where you will reach the highest state. Once you come again to India for this process you pay again $ 1,000 for ten days plus airplane ticket, so about $ 2,000 more to add to the $ 7,000 you spent already. This advanced course is nothing more but a repetition of the fist course. The dasas even bring into the classes the papers with the meditation written and again programming and more programming that will never happen. In this course they will tell you that Bhagavan is all of us (which is the only truth), but they say it in a way that does not make Bhagavan responsible for your enlightenment...Everything can happen and everything can not happen...If so, Tobi says, why do we pay for those processes?

Back in your country your coordinator, or the representative of this movement in your country will get in contact with you to collect more people to do this process and again pay at least $ 7,000. If you make such questions like: “I did pay for an enlightenment process and they didn´t give it to me; when will I have it?...then you are in trouble and they will say that you are going through a normal process of ego dissolving – the normal answer in all sects,

Of course the representatives or coordinator don’t want to cope with the total unsuccessful process in India. And they always say that enlightenment is a long process. In this way people who recently come from India will start doing deeksha evenings to attract more people and to take them to India for the process.

All this makes this movement an enormous money pyramid based on some truths from the ancient Vedas and the destruction of the world for year 2012. Even this warning has been taken from the Central American Mayas and is not really theirs (the Hindus) nor does it appear in any of the ancient Hindu books.

Predictions of doom are a great way to augment one’s business. In 2004-2005 Bhagavan predicted disaster for the city of Mumbay (aka Bombay). He predicted (in public darshans) Mumbai would slide into the sea, or crumble like a biscuit dipped in
hot tea. And to save Mumbai it was necessary that a certain number of people (several thousands) from the state of Maharashtra achieve the deeksha. And to achieve the deeksha required sending 60 people for the deeksha (costing Rs 5000 - $125 US dollars), plus of course many paid donations of far more than that sum. Only then could Mumbai be saved from crumbling into the Indian Ocean.

In his public darshans, it was also revealed that about 60% of mankind would be destroyed in a mega-tsunami that would come in 2006. Of course the only way to prevent this was those 64,000 people who had to get enlightened, for whom 64,000 times 60 had to have the deeksha. If we go by Indian costs, at a rate of Rs 41 per dollar, this comes to 470 million dollars. Add to that the donations that must be given for Amma´s darshan, Bhagavan´s darshan (Rs 100,000 then, now far more pricey, Tobi hears) and washing her dainty feet for Rs 100,000 (old rates, her feet are more expensive now) and you have a much larger sum.

4) Kundalini, spiritual crises, and ego-inflation as the cause of peak experiences

Giving Deeksha/Shaktipat (Oneness Blessing) is the same as trying to cause an awakening of the kundalini power in the receiver. Remember the names of Tony Robbins´ books: Unlimited Power and Awaken the Giant Within. Kundalini can therefore not be separated from the concept of Oneness Blessing.

According to Tantrism kundalini is a latent spiritual power, which is situated in the bottom of the spinal column, behind the sexual organs. Symbolic it is seen as a slumbering, rolled serpent. The serpent can be awakened; that is: the spiritual energy can be released, normally through a special yoga technique.

In spiralform it then moves from the foot of the spiral column up in the head, while it opens a line of psychological centers, called chakras.

By awakening the Kundalini the yogi is said to gain supernatural abilities and spiritual insight, and he can attain the final liberation.

So the awakening of Kundalini is said to be a necessary part of the spiritual practice; that is: the process of awakening. But in the West Kundalini is best known as a part of a spiritual crisis. Spiritual crises often appear as unintended consequences of yoga, one-sided meditation techniques, body oriented- and experiential psychotherapy, healing, energy transmission (for example Deeksha/Shaktipat), different types of rituals. Among other factors of release can be mentioned: births, unhappy love, celibacy, deep sorrow, high fever and intake of drugs. But a spiritual crisis can also
come suddenly without traceable cause. You can suddenly be thrown out in such a crisis (see my article *Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena*).

When it is a matter of a spiritual crisis, then your consciousness and personality have slipped fundamentally out of balance, though in most cases not so much that you can be diagnosed as having a mental disease. But your process of awakening, your spiritual development, has left the rail, and ended up blind, either in suffering – *The Dark Night of the Soul* – or in ego-inflation.

The manifestations of this form of crisis resemble the descriptions of the awakening of the serpent power, or Kundalini, found in historical Indian literature. As mentioned, then, according to the yogis, Kundalini is a creative cosmic energy that resides in latent form at the base of the human spine. It can become activated through meditation, specific exercises, the intervention of an “accomplished” spiritual teacher, or sometimes for reasons that are unknown.

The activated Kundalini rises through the channels in the “subtle body”, which is described in the yogic literature as a field of non-physical energy surrounding and infusing the physical body. As it ascends, it clears old traumatic imprints and opens the centers of psychic energy, called chakras. This process, although highly valued and considered beneficial in the yogic traditions, is not without dangers and requires expert guidance by a guru, whose Kundalini is fully awakened and stabilized (an enlightened master).

The most dramatic signs of Kundalini awakening are the physical and psychological manifestations called kriyas. One can experience intense sensations of energy and heat streaming up in the spine, associated with violent shaking, spasms, and twisting movements. Powerful waves of seemingly unmotivated emotions, such as anxiety, anger, sadness, or joy and ecstatic rapture, can surface and temporarily dominate the psyche. Visions of brilliant light or various archetypical beings and a variety of internally perceived sounds, as well as experiences of what seem to be memories from past lives, are very common. Involuntary and often uncontrollable behaviors complete the picture: talking in tongues, chanting unknown songs, assuming yogic postures and gestures, and making a variety of animal sounds and movements.

Recently, unmistakable signs of this process have been observed in thousand of westerners. California psychiatrist and eye doctor Lee Sannella, who first brought the Kundalini syndrome to the attention of Western audiences, single-handedly collected nearly one thousand such cases.
A map over the spiritual journey can very shortly be said to have three steps: sleep, dream, awake, which again can be said to correspond to a journey through the personal, collective and universal time. In the beginning the wholeness is sleeping. That is the personal time. When you begin to practise spiritual - or through drugs, one-sided meditation-techniques, experiential psychotherapy, healing or shock – then the wholeness might begin to dream. This is due to an opening to the collective time, and a very dangerous opening. The collective time is the area of fantasies, myths, dreams, supernatural experiences, supernatural temptations such as clairvoyance, astral beings such as gods and demons, and so on. Many are the gurus who have ended their journey here, either in ego-inflation or in the dark night of the soul. Ego-inflation and the dark night of the soul are both examples on so-called spiritual crises.

Spiritual crises can be categorized in the following types: 1) The awakening of kundalini, 2) Para-psychic opening (clairvoyance), 3) Spiritual crises as a Hero’s journey (experiences of a journey through good and evil forces as in The Lord of The Rings), 4) The shamanic crisis, 5) Channeling, 6) Close encounters with UFOs, 7) Breakthrough of memories from past lifes, 8) Near-death experiences, 9) Possession states, 10) Oneness Consciousness (peak experiences), 11) Alcohol and drug abuse.

True spiritual practice is about leading people around the areas/experiences of the collective time, into the universal time where the wholeness is awake. Enlightenment simply means to be awake, to have realized the nature of the wholeness. The whole thing reminds about waking up from sleep and dreams.

The reason why it is necessary to lead people around the collective time, or shorten the passage through it, is because that discarnate entities from these areas are using people or cults (collective energy processes in mass phenomenons: religious, spiritual, political, sports or other type) as psychic channels, working interdimensionally to create all sorts of “experiences” in people, experiences that seems dazzling and/or extraordinary – but with the purpose to use their energy as food. That is: a kind of vampires, or even worse.

The ”positive” aspect of a spiritual crisis is the most self-deceptive, because it usually ends up in ego-inflation and total lack of self-realization. When the ego has embezzled itself energy, which rightly belong to the collective time (which lies beyond the personal time) there arises ego-inflation. The ego blows itself up using energy, which not rightly belong to the ego. This gives gives a sense of that the “old” ego has disappeared, or has been altered, which gives a good feeling, a positive feeling, even a peak experience. The illusion, and the danger, is that your dark side, the whole complex of thought distortions, also are getting inflated.
Self-help gurus, and New Age devotees, can for example be breathtaking in their combination of self-confidence and absurdity, where they with no hesitation are bullying highly educated and/or experienced experts. They don´t care whether it is scientists, philosophers, or mystics, what they care about is whether such persons dare to be critical towards the ideology of the self-help industry (see my articles Management theory and the self-help industry and Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality).

The reason is that the subjectivism and relativism in these environments, eliminate critical thinking (discrimination), and thereby makes you vulnerable for magical thinking and ego-inflation.

There are three main forms of ego-inflation: intellectual, identifical and euphoric inflation.

1) Intellectual ego-inflation

Intellectual ego-inflation is extremely widely-spread, especially today where so much knowledge is made common, and where practically everybody goes through one or the other form of theoretical education, or at least get knowledge of it through the medias. Intellectual ego-inflation is in fact one of the fundamental hindrances of the opening in towards the Source, a malfunction in the mind, which is a crucial cause of the ignorance, conflicts and sufferings of Man (see my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings).

Intellectual ego-inflation has to do with lack of rationality. You take your assumptions, conceptions and values as absolute truths, whereby you end up in a contradiction between your thoughts and your lived life. It is actually a lack of ground connection.

In general, in intellectual circles, in cultural connections, and in the political life, they have always accepted intellectual ego-inflation – but as mentioned it is one of the most crucial causes of all the conflicts, wars and violence, which the world are characterized by. People and their opinions and –isms, political directions etc., all of it is as a rule mainly an intellect play characterized by a contradiction between thoughts and lived life. One is idealist, another realist, one is Marxist, atheist, another Christian, charitable, but if you look into these people´s existence, look into their actual life, then you quickly discover the contradictions.
Kierkegaard called it "the litany madness": people can repeat the right doctrines and principles by rote, but when it comes to reality, to their way of living, then you discover all the contradictions.

As mentioned: within the environment of New Age and the self-help industry intellectual ego-inflation is extremely widely-spread, and when the game, as here, is about the development of Man, about the depths of the mind, about archetypal powers, about the Source of life, then intellectual ego-inflation can be a hazardous play. When the intellectual knowledge begins to approach religious areas, wisdom of life, therapy, meditation, spirit, then the ego can misjudge itself by being intoxicated by its intellectual understanding of deep phenomena. It is easy to know and understand the profound in an intellectual way. Everybody can say "meditation is to become silent, without thoughts, without words, images", but try to be silent, try to be awake without thoughts.

It is a widely spread misunderstanding in the meditation-circles of New Age and self-help, that meditation consists in being completely without thinking (time after time I have been criticized for that I emphasize the significance of philosophy in the meditation process). An enlightened master has admittedly no need of thinking, of philosophy, because he is in a condition of being (though he always uses a philosophical kind of counseling – see my article Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy). But a person, who then just repeat this ("I have no need of thinking, of philosophy, because I am in a condition of being"), without being enlightened, has a seriously problem with ego-inflation.

Socrates was fully aware of the problem in this, when he consistently called himself philosopher (a lover of wisdom, one who seeks wisdom, but who has not yet found it) – and not a sage (guru/enlightened master). It namely gives ground connection. All people, who are not enlightened, are in need of thinking, of contemplation, of reflection – of philosophy.

An authentic spiritual practice can be said to contain three aspects:

1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions, created by dualistic unbalance, both in yourself and in others – see my book A dictionary of thought distortions)

2) Investigating the shadow (ignorance, the unconscious, the painbody, the cause of suffering, your own dark side, the ego – see my articles The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can´t heal it, and Suffering as an entrance to the Source)
3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images – see my article 
*Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with the spiritual practice*)

Intellectually the whole thing with development, with dream understanding, with 
therapy and chakras, is very easy to understand. And very easy to tell others about –
and get success on. There are incredibly many in the world today, who speak and talk
about energy and chakras without ever really having had experiences with chakras
and energy. This is intellectual theft, it is self-deceit, it is ego-inflation – and it will
unavoidably lead to misguiding of others. Especially when so many of the new New 
Age methods and systems are deeply characterized by flaws and delusions.

The tool to be used against intellectual ego-inflation is in other words rationality and
critical thinking, therefore philosophical training, where you investigate the validity
of your assumptions, conceptions and values, and seek after coherence between your
thoughts and your lived life.

2) Identical ego-inflation

Identical ego-inflation is of two kinds:

1) Identification with an outer power, which doesn´t belong to the ego (an institution,
a teacher, others´ techniques, meditation-centres, one´s role).

2) Identification with an inner power, which doesn´t belong to the ego neither (God,
master, healing energy, the collective time, collective images etc.)

The tool to be used against this form of ego-inflation is authentic spiritual practice;
that is to say: where you understand the difference between the content of
consciousness and the form of consciousness - that in neutrality to separate yourself
from the content of consciousness, for thereby to direct yourself towards the form of
consciousness. Discrimination, or simply: critical thinking.

3) Euphorical ego-inflation

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 person, 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.

As mentioned: 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.

The mystics (for example Meister Eckhart, Tauler, Seuse) discriminated between ”jubilatio” and ”inflammatio”, the ecstasy and the inflammation. And the euphorical inflammation is dangerous. Very dangerous.

The tools to be used against this ego-inflation is partially ground connection (Hara, earth bound work, preferably with other people, for example as social- and careworker), partially again realization work, discrimination (critical thinking), humble separation of the ego and the spirit, between the ego and the rising, bubbleling, jubilant delight.

Moreover ethical practice, training of compassion, for example through Tonglen practice (in my book Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader I have described supporting exercises such as Hara and Tonglen). One of the deep reasons why they in monasteries anywhere in the world are letting the monks work with dirt, cleaning, cooking, taking care of sick people and dying, was in order to, that they never should loose reality and the ground connection of sight. People, who are being catched by ego-inflation, begin, as a rule, to act like kings and queens, they shall not do anything practical, they shall not be adjusted, they fly.

To all three kinds of ego-inflation there are in other words some philosophical principles and supporting exercises you ought to hold on to. And generally it is good to have knowledge about the thought distortion called Truth by Authority.

There are today a vast amount of non-enlightened New Age/self-help gurus (in science of religion they actually have no numbers of this enormous market) – they might very well have strange paranormal abilities, it doesn´t matter in this question – who get authority by claiming, that their teaching, either is coming from a state of enlightenment, is being channeled from some kind of divine source, or are coming from clairvoyant abilities (see my articles Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling, and Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance).
If such teachers put their teaching forward in this way, you can be hundred procent sure, that this teacher has a problem with ego-inflation (if he is not directly a fraud - and them there are thousands of within New Age). Why? Because no real enlightened master would argue in this way. True enlightened masters, or sober spiritual teachers, speak from their own source, and are always characterized by humility. Just look at Dalai Lama, who incessantly claims, that he hasn´t reached the full Rigpa, and that he is just a beginner. True enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, are also always philosophers, who are giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions.

Truth by Authority is about taking statements to be true simply because an alleged authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities, etc.) on the matter has said/justified that they are true. A level of critical thinking is always appropriate, because the statement may be based on different kinds of thought distortions such as magical thinking, false premises, faulty reasoning, wishful thinking or vested interests.

People, who in their arguments/teachings, again and again, have to defer to some authority (experts, teachers, states of enlightenment, divine sources, paranormal abilities) in order to justify their arguments/teachings, are hundred procent on the wrong track, even if they should have some paranormal abilities. Again it is interesting to see, that true enlightened masters, as well as sober spiritual teachers, never do this. And interesting, that probably most of the many people, who have made a business on being clairvoyants/mediums/channelers etc., will fall for Truth by Authority.

5) Cycles of life, compensatory karma and black magic

In accordance with the authentic spiritual traditions the movement of time is a power, an expression of energy, which follows some laws. These laws are also called compensatory karma. They work in all cycles of life. 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. 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. It is also a central part of the teachings of the Buddhist
philosopher Nagarjuna, which you can read about in my article A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method.

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.

The problem with the positive psychology of the New Thought movement, and therefore the ideology of success coaching, is that it one-sided is focusing on that the up-cycles are positive, while the down-cycles are negative (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction). In this way it induces in people the thought distortion called False dichotomy. False dichotomy is a misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for example: ”Either you are with us, or you are against us” – ”if I´m not always a success, then I´m a fiasco”. Similarly, someone who says that you must either believe that God exists or else that God doesn´t exist is setting up a false dichotomy since there is the well-known third option of the agnostic.

A false dichotomy appears when somebody sets up a dichotomy in such a way, that it looks like, that there only are two possible conclusions, when the facts actual are, that there are many other alternatives which not are being mentioned. Many inappropriate rules of living and life-strategies are based on false dichotomy. False dichotomy is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life.

In connection with inappropriate basic assumptions such as "If I am not always a success, then I am a fiasco", the false dichotomy is closely related to the development of guilt, shame and depression.

Note, that you can´t think in extremes such as I am a success, I am perfect, I am beautiful, without the opposite extreme. That is: if you for example follow the teaching of positive psychology, which excludes all negativity, then you induce in yourself a false dichotomy, because an exclusion of the opposite extreme not is possible.

This is related to the thought distortion called Conversion to the opposite. You can for example convert your insecureness and anxiety for not being good enough to exaggerated self-confidence. Such a conversion is of course a kind of compensation, escape, self-deceit, and will lead to a false and imbalanced way of life.
Sadly enough, it seems like the movement of positive psychology directly is using Conversion to the opposite as a central part of its training. Positive psychology is marked by its attempts, through thinking, to eliminate all negativity by converting it into something positive, or simply by ignoring it, or saying it doesn’t exists. But a thought is always defined by its negation; that is: what the thought not is. This means that a thought always contains a pair of opposites. So, you can not by the force of thinking (and therefore not by force of will or choice) convert negativity to positivity. If you nonetheless try to do this you will end up in focusing on the one extreme of a pair of opposites, which is an unbalance. The energy-laws within the wholeness will therefore seek to bring the thoughts back to the balance of middle. They do this through a contra-balancing movement; that is: a swing over in the opposite extreme. That is what is meant with compensatory karma (see my article What is karma?). Existentially seen Conversion to the opposite causes a conflict between what you are and what you want to become, or between being and becoming.

Conversion to the opposite, and the above-mentioned problems, also seems to characterize Byron Katie´s method The Work, in her so-called Turnaround technique, where you always have to look at your thoughts as false (see my article A critique of Byron Katie and her therapeutic method The Work).

In a true spiritual practice the transformation happens, partly through art of life, where you are dancing between the opposites (as in the teaching of Yin and Yang), and through deep meditative-existential inquiry.

As long as your awareness is identified with thinking, you will have lost the contact with your deeper being, and only exist in the movement of time. You´ll have your identity in your lifesituation 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-cycles are positive, and the down-cycles are negative, except in the mind´s judgement.

In accordance with the universal laws of energy, it is correct, that the thoughts and mind of Man are participating in creating the world, even the physical, but not in the way the self-help industry indicates it, yes, the self-help industry actual directly commit Hubris.
This misunderstanding consists in a lack of discrimination between compensatory karma and progressive karma. Compensatory karma could also be called negative karma, while the progressive karma could be called positive karma. The negative karma is caused by the ego, or when the thoughts’ pendulum swings out in extremes, while the positive, progressive karma first will arise when the ego has been eliminated, and the thoughts are in balance between the extremes.

In connection with this, it is important to know the difference between a selfish use of energy, and an unselfish use of energy. You can also term this as a demonical use of energy, and a spiritual use of energy, or as black and white magic.

The Ego-religion and the Ego-exercises are the Ego’s incessant confirmation or denial of the Ego: “it is no use with me!”; or: “wonderful me!” Both, either the denial or confirmation of the Ego, maintain the Ego-process, the Ego-identity and the Ego-centralization. The Ego’s religion and exercises are the Ego’s needs and longings and will: I want to, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, I hope, I think, I believe, I feel, I wish, or, in its most common core: I, I, I….

The ordinary Ego-consciousness functions by being identified with the physical world, with instincts, sexuality, emotions and collective ideals. The traditional religious and philosophical exercises work through these aspects by means of, for example the core which exists in the basic monastic vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. These promises work with a restructuring of the Ego’s ownership to things, food and power, and they re-structure sexuality and emotions. First thereafter the mystical process can begin. No kind of psychotherapy can bring about this.

The Ego-religion and the ego-exercises (as encouraged in the self-help industry) are black magic, satanism, etc. The Ego is a demonical structure, and it attracts demonic powers and energies, which also have been created by the Ego phenomenon.

The astral world’s collective history manifests itself in a widely and indefinite area, for example could a broad spectrum of common human activities and organizations be called manifestations of the collective time: parties, state formations, wars, work communities, concerts, clans, tribes and sects, mass psychological phenomena, religious parishioners, fashion streams, group souls. Such incalculable common human undertakings are manifestations of collective energy– or lifeprocesses, in which there are great powers in play in the form of collective astral images.

The same energy-process and function, which realized spiritual teachers use, can therefore be used for other purposes than spiritual. When the energy-processes of the
astral plane’s collective history are used spiritual, then the Ego, in its egoistic isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside, and the energy is turned into the Now, and therefore in towards the Source and the spiritual dimension. The people, who around a spiritual teacher, constitute an energy-mandala, are in this way made transparent for a higher common human spirituality.

In a lesser realized person’s use of energy the contact with, and the ability to manipulate with such collective forms of astral energy, can be used for other purposes than spiritual. It can be creative, Ego-affirmative, political, demonical and so on.

The powers that, by realized spiritual teachers, are given to others’ disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same powers can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures, and therewith into past and future, and fragmentation (conflict). In this way there can be opened creative channels, created super Egos, created political leaders and popular seducers (in my article The philosophy of Karen Blixen I have investigated these phenomena in depth).

As a comment to Kevin Dann´s blog on Deeksha, Joshua Rosenthal is telling that he was throwing this great party in Tokyo and close to the peak of the event, this Deeksha leader asked if she could speak for a minute – she had a gift for Joshua, she said, and Joshua answered: “sure, no problem.” First in Japanese and then in English she got everyone to lie on their back and then – to cut to the chase, she did this eye touching, meaning touching everyone’s third eye and “sending them energy”. Well, Joshua writes, besides the fact that she hijacked his party, at the end of the exercise she looked glowing and full of life while everyone else, including Joshua, had lost their buzz and soon decided to go home. So Joshua thought to himself, it seemed like she was receiving energy.

This comment is interesting because none of the participants in the party had went through all the communal reinforcement in the Oneness movement, no one had identified with any teaching, etc.

These phenomena are well known from history and from literature. In the story about the temptation in the desert, we can see these possible ways of using the energy pictured in anticipated form. Here you see the possibility of using the freedom and the power, to elevation of the Ego and the consequent power and material glory. But Jesus abstains from this deification of the Ego. It is also known from the Faust myth, described by for example Goethe and Thomas Mann.
When you in a selfish way use the powers from the collective history of the astral plane, and which demonical astral beings will help you with (because the ego phenomenon is their magnet of attraction) you can create personal power and material glory. That is the essence of black magic. But you will eventually meet the compensatory karma, or Nemesis.

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

You can in short not use these energies as you want to; that is: through, for instance, “positive” thinking, or through deeksha giving.

The eternal circling around your own dreams, desires, success etc. will in other words be contra-balanced through the opposite categories. The self-help industry – and the Oneness movement - here exposes itself, and its followers, for the possibility of Nemesis.

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

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

If you are extremely occupied by your own success, the system will seek to balance your thoughts by bringing them over in the opposite extreme, namely the powerlessness and the fiasco. It is therefore evident, that these modern ideals about being a success and a winner are participating in creating a swing over in stress, anxiety, depression – or failure, fiasco. The case of the self-help guru James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy is an example of how it happens (see my article James Arthur Ray and the sweat lodge tragedy).
What is applying for the individual person, also is applying for the collective and for nature. You can therefore also watch these laws of energy in groups, societies, world-images, yes, in the whole of mankind, as well as in the Universe.

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

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

However, a true spiritual practice is to be aware, when your thoughts move too far out. In the situation you can therefore try to remember the opposite extreme and seek to bring it in. This makes the situation much more true (this is actually also a quite central aspect of critical thinking – see examples in my book A dictionary of thought distortions).

The awareness itself is in the Now, in the oneness of the opposites, and therefore in the fulcrum, which is the unmoved being in the centre of the circular movement of time. Also when something else fluctuates and dances between the swings of the extremes. Therefore the training of the awareness in itself will gradually prevent, that there is given impulse to the swings. It is the Golden Mean, which Aristotle and Buddha talked about, and which Lao Tse describes in his book Tao Te King.

The Golden Mean can generally be formulated as the art of balancing between the extremes too much and too little.

To strike the Golden Mean is an art of life, and to strike this path is a necessary suggestion for how we can prevent compensatory karma to happen, both in our own lifes, as in the world. And then our spiritual essence can begin to awake, and progressive karma will be activated.
Part 4: Three examples of large New Age systems

A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method

Since the first publication of his ideas at the age of 23, Ken Wilber has sought to bring together the world’s far-ranging spiritual teachings, philosophies, and scientific truths into one coherent and all-embracing vision. This integral map of the Kosmos (the universe that includes the physical cosmos as well as the realms of consciousness and spirit) should then offer an unprecedented guide to discovering your highest potentials.

Wilber introduces his vision by saying, that during the last 30 years we have witnessed a historical first: all of the world’s cultures are now available to us. In the past, if you were born, say, a Chinese, you likely spent your entire life in one culture, often in one province, sometimes in one house, living and loving and dying on one small plot of land. But today, not only are people geographical mobile, we can study, and have studied, virtually every known culture on the planet. In the global village, all cultures are exposed to each other.

Knowledge itself is now global, Wilber claims. This means that, also for the first time, the sum total of human knowledge is available to us – the knowledge, experience, wisdom and reflection of all major human civilizations – premodern, modern, and postmodern – are open to study by anyone.

Wilber asks: What if we took literally everything that all the various cultures have to tell us about human potential – about spiritual growth, psychological growth, social growth – and put it all on the table? What if we attempted to find the critically essential keys to human growth, based on the sum total of human knowledge now open to us? What if we attempted, based on extensive cross-cultural study, to use all of the world’s great traditions to create a composite map, a comprehensive map, an all-inclusive or integral map that included the best elements from all of them?

Wilber asks: Sound complicated, complex, daunting? In a sense, it is, he answers. But in another sense, he continues, the results turn out to be surprisingly simple and elegant. Over the last several decades, there has indeed been an extensive search for a comprehensive map of human potentials. This map uses all the known systems and models of human growth – from the ancient shamans and sages to today’s
breakthrough in cognitive science – and distills their major components into 5 simple factors, factors that are the essential elements or keys to unlocking and facilitating human evolution.

Ken Wilber calls these 5 elements **quadrants, levels, lines, states** and **types**; that is: quadrants of development, levels or stages of development, states of consciousness, and a human personality typing system, a typology. All of these elements are, right now available in your own awareness, he claims. These 5 elements are not merely theoretical concepts; they are aspects of your own experience, contours of your own consciousness.

What is the point of using this integral map or model, Wilber asks. First, whether you are working in business, medicine, psychotherapy, law, ecology, or simply everyday living and learning, the integral map helps make sure that you are “touching all the bases.” If you are flying over the Rocky Mountains, the more accurate a map you have, the less likely you will crash. An integral approach insures that you are utilizing the full range of resources for any situation, with the greater likelihood of success.

Second, if you learn to spot these 5 elements in your own awareness – and because they are there in any event – then you can more easily appreciate them, exercise them, use them...and thereby vastly accelerate your own growth and development to higher, wider, deeper ways of being. A simple familiarity with the 5 elements in the integral model will help you orient yourself more easily and fully in this exiting journey of discovery and awakening.

Ken Wilber holds a bachelor in chemistry and biology.

In the following I will present a critique of Ken Wilber´s system. The critique will unfold as

1) A critique of Wilber´s theory about spiritual growth,

2) A critique of Wilber´s theory of everything

3) A critique of Wilber´s classification-system

1) **A critique of Wilber´s theory about spiritual growth**

In Zen it is 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. Wilber is also talking about these three states as the states in spiritual growth, or spiritual evolution, as he calls it. In the following I will explain the concepts of compensatory and progressive karma, because these concepts must be closely related to Wilber´c concept about spiritual growth, or spiritual evolution.

The three states can also be described as the personal, collective and universal images of time, which form the astral structure under your thinking. The personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness. The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with awareness, or consciousness.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now´s lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. In that way Nagarjuna´s philosophy advocates a kind of dualism if we shall use our thinking and language in an unambiguous way. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego´s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners, in their extremes, finally will switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can´t say anything about the wholeness, only dualistic about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness ( ´sûnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created. Wilber doesn´t seem to have this argumentation included in his system, since it in opposition with this directly creates a lot of dogmas, theories and viewpoints.
The concept of emptiness refers to the intuitive experience of reality, that all inner and outer phenomenons are devoid of independent existence and form of being. What they can be said to be, they can only be said to be in relation to something else, a complementary thing and vice versa. In that way they are nothing by virtue of themselves, and therefore nothing by virtue of something else either, etc. They are insubstantial, or as Nagarjuna calls it: codependent originated (everything that exists does so dependently on other things) (pratityasamutpanna). In absolute sense nothing exists independently, eternally or unchangeable. All existence is impermanent; everything that exists is transitory, lasting only a moment.

But this doesn´t mean, that Nagarjuna is an advocate of the absolute non-existence of things. Non-existence means namely neither negation nor opposition to existence. Therefore also non-existence is, as everything else, correlative. Codependent origination is what Nagarjuna calls emptiness. The creation of things, images and concepts ends in the emptiness. And by trying to reveal the unreality of the relative, conventional world, you can reach the absolute reality, which is lying in this emptiness. The emptiness is in that way the inexpressible (Nirvana). Because Nirvana is lying in the revelation of the unreality (Samsara), then Nirvana and Samsara is not at all different.

Nagarjuna´s teaching is in that way a kind of Dream Yoga (see my article What is Dream Yoga?).

What Nagarjuna´s teaching also tells us is that if we should use thoughts and language in an unambiguous way, it is necessary to advocate a kind of epistemological, or gnoseological dualism. In this dualism critical thinking is essential (I will return to this).

So if we should describe a human being in an unambiguous way, then Nagarjuna´s argumentation leads to the thought, that human beings have two complementary 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also means that it in itself is without realization.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is the area of progressive karma, spiritual development, or spiritual growth; it is the area
of realization, the area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is: experiences, which are followed by realization. It is only here you can talk about spiritual growth (also see my article What is Karma?).

In Wilber´s system everything is reduced to the energy aspect, though. This reductionism is due to the attempt of synthesizing spirituality, science, yes, all kinds of theories. Wilber is here inspired by Darwinism, and its theories about human evolution. But the idea seems to come from Theosophy (though I haven´t seen Wilber mention it, it seems like he is very influenced by Theosophy - see my article The fascism of Theosophy), and it continues today in New Age and Ufology, where spirituality, apart from Darwinism, furthermore is sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy and natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics.

Wilber´s problem is the integral method itself; that is: the attempt of synthesizing science, spirituality, consciousness, evolution, etc., etc. According to Wilber all evolution is basically the evolution of consciousness. So, consciousness is reduced to evolution, or, the energy aspect of Man. And such a philosophy of consciousness ends in serious metaphysical problems, such as the free will problem, and the problem of personal identity, which are quite central, when you talk about spirituality (see my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

You can´t talk about spiritual growth in the energy aspect of Man. You can´t talk about spiritual growth in the same area as evolution. In the following I will show the problems that arise when you are doing this.

2) A critique of Wilber´s theory of everything

Before we go further it is important to mention, that evolutionism – also in its most modern Neodarwinistic version – is a natural historical report, and not a natural scientifical theory. Neodarwinism can – as all other historical science – only retrospective explain the development up to now in a rational way. This appears clearly from the fact, that it can´t give any scientific well-founded prediction of the future development. It is not possible with any reasonable precision to predict the future biological development on the background of the theoretical foundation of evolutionism.
Until today Man has not been able to do anything in order to change his genes. This has been changed with the modern genetic engineering, which already in principle has made it possible to change the genes of our gametes. In the future the problem about conscious changing peoples’ genes in order to improve certain characteristics is not any technical difficulty. It is in turn a serious ethical and political problem about setting limits and about, where these limits have to be set.

As mentioned, then the reductionism of Wilber’s system is due to the attempt of synthesizing spirituality, science, and all kinds of other theories. Wilber seems to be inspired by Darwinism, and its theories about human evolution. The idea began with Theosophy, and it continues today in New Age and Ufology, where spirituality, apart from Darwinism, furthermore is sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy, natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics (about such new theories: see my articles A critique of The Human Design System, Time Travel and the fascism of The WingMakers Project, and The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines).

The whole thing is presented as an ideology with a lot of attempts to predict the future evolution of Man, often connected with eugenics: the applied “science” or the bio-social movement (Social Darwinism) which advocates the use of practises aimed at improving the genetic composition of people, usually referring to human populations.

Using the conventionally conceptions which is lying in our culture, we say, that you must be able to make a theory of everything, as for example, besides Wilber, the New Age philosopher Fritjof Capra.

In New Age pseudoscience it is not (yet) so much a political agenda that distorts science, as occult and religious point of views. In the works of Fritjof Capra, though, you see the beginning of the combination. Fritjof Capra (born February 1, 1939) is an Austrian-born American physicist. He is a founding director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California, and is on the faculty of Schumacher College.

Capra is the author of several books, including The Tao of Physics (1975), and The Turning Point (1982). The abuse of quantum mechanics within New Age seems to have originated with Capra in his book The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism. The book’s first two parts are excellent expositions on ancient religions and modern physics. The third part, which tries to connect the two, is an abysmal failure. Nevertheless, it has been this third part, which has influenced numerous New Age advocates to claim that quantum
mechanics proves the reality of everything from Clairvoyance to Time Travel: the so-called quantum mysticism (see my article Quantum mysticism and its web of lies).

Capra’s other book, The Turning Point, shows the ideology in it, where he combines quantum mysticism with reductionism, especially reductionisms such as historism and sociologism (though he is very aware of the reductionism of the “old” mechanical worldview) – see my article The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism).

It is very popular in New Age, inspired by writers such as Fritjof Capra and Ken Wilber, to term their positions as “Holism”. But both Fritjof Capra and Ken Wilber’s systems, can be seen as substantive philosophies of history; that is: searches for overall meaning in human history; searches for theories of everything.

In the West, substantive philosophy of history is thought to begin only in the Christian era. In the City of God, Augustine wonders why Rome flourished while pagan, yet fell into disgrace after its conversion to Christianity. Divine reward and punishment should apply to whole peoples, not just to individuals. The unfolding of events in history should exhibit a plan that is intelligible rationally, morally, and (for Augustine) theologically. As a believer Augustine is convinced that there is such a plan, though it may not always be evident.

In the modern period, philosophers such as Vico and Herder also sought such intelligibility in history. They also believed in a long-term direction or purpose of history that is often opposed to and makes use of the purposes of individuals. The most elaborate and best-known example of this approach is found in Hegel, who thought that the gradual realization of human freedom could be discerned in history even if much slavery, tyranny, and suffering are necessary in the process.

Marx, too, claimed to know the laws – in his case economic – according to which history unfolds. Similar searches for overall “meaning” in human history have been undertaken in the twentieth century, notably by Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) author of the twelve-volume Study of History, and Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), author of Decline of the West.

But if we take the creator of quantum mechanics, Niels Bohr, then you will discover that he says, that you can’t make a theory of everything. Why?

It appears in quantum mechanics, and in the question about what light is (is it waves or particles?), that when you are using a certain type of experimental device, then the electron always behaves as a particle, and when you use another type of apparatus,
the electron always behaves as a wave (it is not the consciousness of the observer, which creates these phenomena). The two types of experimental devices mutually exclude each other, so that you – by choice of experimental device – can determine, whether you want, that the electron shall behave as a wave or as a particle. The same relationships exist in a number of areas within nuclear physics.

However, both types of examinations are equally necessary, if you want to understand the microphysical world. Bohr speaks about, among a lot of other things, that particle and wave experiments are complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same time necessarily must supplement each other. Generally the same relationship exists in all quantum physical examinations.

General you can formulate Bohr´s conception of complementarity in the following way: A complementary description from an area of phenomenon is a description by means of two sets of concepts, which mutually exclude each other, but where both the incompatible sets of concepts are equal necessary for a fully description of the area of phenomenon. You call the mutually excluding sets of concepts complementary.

Bohr himself had the opinion, that complementarity relations are a fundamental feature of the human cognition, which you can find analogies of in many other connections than in quantum physics. And it is exactly this, which the wisdom traditions also speak about, for example in the teaching of yin and yang, and in Nagarjuna´s above-mentioned teaching.

As an example, among countless, of an analogy, you can observe the experience of music. In a concert hall you can experience the music so strongly, that you not at all are aware that you are sitting and listening to music. You can describe this as "to become completely lost in the music".

On the other side you can also relate analyzing to the music, because you are concentrating about noticing, for instance the performance of the violin soloist, the orchestration, the tempo etc. You can switch back-and-forth between these two ways of experience, but you can´t have them both at the same time. Both ways of experience are necessary in order to understand, what music is. They mutually exclude each other, at the same time as they supplement each other, they are both necessary in a fully description of the area of phenomenon; they are in other words complementary.

In the same way with subject and object; inside-and-out perspective, and outside-and-in perspective; macrophysical phenomena and microphysical phenomena; etc., etc.
And now back to the problem of light. Could you then not imagine, that light is an entirely third phenomenon, which both consists of light and particle properties? No, Bohr claims. No matter how we try to imagine it, it is not possibly to imagine, that anything can be a wave and a particle at the same time. It is not possible.

In 1927 Bohr invented the so-called two-split experiment, and it has been discussed ever since. He says, that if you send electrons against a plate with two openings, it produces a wave phenomenon. But what happens along the way? He answers, that along the way you can´t see, what happens. But there must happen something? Yes, but you can´t make a description of it. But this you will be able to some day? No. If you intervene into it in order to see, what happens along the way, the whole of the phenomenon disappears.

The movements of the electrons are fundamentally not able to be experienced. But we can very well talk about it. Should we eventually create theories about everything, it is not in three dimensions, then it is in nine or several dimensions; this we can´t. It would end up in the thought distortion called Endless split of the thought (see my book A Dictionary of Thought distortions).

My professor in philosophy David Favrholdt followed Bohr´s lectures and talks closely from 1951 to his death in 1962. He has read all his letters from his earliest youth, has edited parts of the world edition of Niels Bohr: Collected Works. He has worked together with many of Bohr´s students, inclusive Aage Bohr, has had discussions with Werner Heisenberg and corresponded with many of the great names within nuclear physics. So, Favrholdt is one of the World´s leading experts in quantum mechanics, and is probably the only person, who in depth has investigated Bohr´s philosophy (read more in my article Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr).

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

What is Bohr´s philosophical viewpoint?

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

Bohr says: If a person moves from A to B, it takes a certain time, and the faster he moves, the less time it takes. Here we suddenly have the concepts location, distance, movement, speed, time. It is therefore not ourselves who determine, how reality looks like. It is the constitution of nature, which determines, how we shall use the concepts in order to explain reality. This is lying in direct opposition to what the constructivists claim, and by the way to a number of Western philosophers up through time, for example Ken Wilber.

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

The rise of quantum mechanics has in this way not made classical physics invalid; it is still valid, but Planck´s constant (the quantum postulate) has given it a limitary area of use.

That classical physics can be regarded as a borderline case of quantum mechanics appears from the fact, that the equations in the matrix mechanics of Heisenberg become identical with the equations in classical mechanics, when you set Planck´s constant to zero; an act which is allowed by the observation of macrophysical relationships. In accordance with Bohr quantum mechanics is a generalization of classical physics and the complementarity viewpoint is a generalization of the classical causality principle. The theory of relativity is also a generalization in another direction of classical physics.

Nor can you – in Bohr´s opinion – replace classical physics with quantum mechanics, because the validity of classical physics is a necessary precondition for, that you can describe the quantum mechanical phenomena and make account for the macroscopic (“classical”) experimental arrangement. Bohr is writing in a famous discussion contribution against Einstein, who didn't want to accept, that the causality principle has no validity in nuclear physics:
“...the account for all experiences – regardless how far the phenomena are lying outside the reach of classical physics – must be expressed in classical concepts. The reason is simply, that we by the word ”experiment“ refer to a situation, where we can tell others what we have done and what we have learned, and that the experimental device and measuring results therefore must be described in the usual language with appropriate use of the terminology of classical physics.”


Note, that Bohr here speaks about the usual language (everyday language) supplemented with the terms of classical physics. This is due to, that he regards 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 realization, and nor can everyday language be replaced by an unambiguous and formalised, logical scientific language. David Favrholdt has developed this important theme in Bohr’s epistemology further in his own philosophy. He works with, what he calls The Core in everyday language.


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”.

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 reality - the from our experiences and consciousness 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.

We can choose not to describe it and instead soak ourselves in Hinajana Buddhistic meditation (or music, as already described), but if we want to describe it, 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 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 unambiguous, actually indicates, that both materialism and idealism (subjectivism, relativism) are mistaken points of views. And Ken Wilber’s system is an idealistic system.

And the same is the case in order to think clearly. Critical thinking is about spotting thought distortions created by dualistic unbalance, both in yourself and in others (see my book *A Dictionary of Thought distortions*).

Magical thinking, for example, has a lot of thought distortions built into it, for example the thought distortion *arbitrary inference*, which means, that you make a causal linking of factors, which is accidental or misleading. The main reason for the rise of magical thinking is that you don’t discriminate between image and reality, the map and the landscape; or said in another way: between subject and object.

Central in critical thinking is the discrimination between subject and object. And discrimination is also a central virtue in true spirituality. The Dominican mystics call this steps *discriminatio*, the ability to discriminate between how the energy is used temporal or religious. And despite that magical thinking actually can create something magical, then in true spirituality it is still something temporal, or relatively (black magic/occultism), which will create negative karma if practised. The Orientals call it *viveka*, discrimination, the ability to use your will on that part of the energy, you can steer yourself, and steer it towards exercises, prayer, mantras, meditation, instead of towards career, worldliness, self-unfolding, as for example New Thought does (see my article *The New Thought movement and the law of attraction*).

So, all this is implying an opinion about, how we observe the world – and here Bohr picks inspiration from his own discoveries within the atom theory. We can’t place ourselves outside our own idea about reality, Favrholdt explains. The physicist can’t be a kind of God’s eye, who looks at the world from outside, because he is himself a part of the world. We can’t possibly think ourselves out of reality. But that is what for example Fritjof Capra and Ken Wilber are doing in a cultural relativistic way, and New Thought in a subjectivistic way; that is: in constructivistic ways (see my article *Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry*).

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

In accordance with Taoism there is nothing beyond the world, Favhroldt explains. You can´t see the world from outside. You are in the world, and you can only define something from its opposition. What is the good? This you understand, if you know what the evil is. You can´t say anything about the world as a whole, because you can´t put the whole in opposition to anything.

As mentioned, then I suggest, in accordance with Nagarjuna, that human beings have two complementary 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses.

These thoughts you find in all wisdomtraditions, in all the spiritual directions within the religions. There exists a fundamental dualism, which the spiritual practitioner must understand, in order to reach into nondualism. That is also the soul in Nagarjuna´s argumentation. You can´t say anything about the wholeness, and if you do it will be a distortion.

The problem with holistic theories such as Theosophy, Capra, Wilber, is in short that they want to reduce the mystical nondualistic (wordless) experience, to a theory. In this they misunderstand the spiritual traditions. They commit the though distortion called Nondual bias, which you see reappear again and again in almost all New Age theories and techniques.

3) A critique of Wilber´s classification-system

A part of Wilber´s system is personality typing. Today there exists several different kinds of personality typing, and there are still coming more. Each new number of a New Age magazine with respect for itself, must include at least one new “revolutionary” system of personality types, in the same way as it must present at least one new “revolutionary” spiritual “Nondual” system “proved” by quantum mechanics.

Both in New Age, and in coaching (which claims to be purely neutral and scientifical) the so-called Enneagram is for example very popular. It is a New Age mandala, a mystical gateway to personality typing, and through this to spiritual
consciousness and fuller being. The enneagram represents nine personality types. It is originally developed by Oscar Ichazo (b. 1931), who claims to have received it in a vision.

Later the enneagram has turned up in several new versions, funny enough often developed by people, who also claim to have received it in divine visions. So how the types are defined depends on whom you ask. The types seem to have been modified according to the channeler’s, or the inventor’s, own idiosyncratic beliefs (read more about personality typing in my article Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice).

The same can be said about human classification-systems as such. The whole of Wilber’s own classification-system, or his integral map, is based on his own idiosyncratic beliefs about what he thinks is “positive”. It is selective and not all-inclusive. Actually you would have to make an endless list of all the thoughts and experiences it doesn’t include. Here we have to remember both Nagarjuna’s and Niels Bohr’s arguments. And some of the theories Wilber includes are in other contexts seen as deeply problematic, even misleading. I will return to this.

The problem of personality typing can easily be seen in the devastating effects of the Indian caste system.

Another aspect of this is, that all theories included in Wilber’s system, end up as relativistic within the system. This is based on his misunderstanding of the concept of complementarity, where he talks about the theories in his system as “equally valid” because they offer complementary perspectives, but each by themselves they only offer a partial (relative) view of reality.

Relativism has nothing to do with the complementarity principle, and especially not when some of the theories involved are permeated with flaws. This is not what neither Nagarjuna talked about, nor Niels Bohr.

As already examined: The Mādhyamika philosopher Nagarjuna – whom Wilber paradoxical enough claims to be a central influence - denies that there is any position taken, maintaining that his critical arguments are simply reductions to absurdity of views his opponents hold and that he has no view of his own. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (śūnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created. Wilber doesn’t seem to have this argumentation included in his system, since the system, in opposition with Nagarjuna, directly creates/invokes a
lot of dogmas, theories and viewpoints. Wilber does the exact opposite of what Nagarjuna talked about.

Wilber´s system is relativizing all the theories within it, except his own system, as if this *system* is the wholeness, the emptiness itself. He is obviously confusing the nondual state of enlightenment with his own theory (again: read about the *Nondual bias* in my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*). This aspect can be an irritatingly thing to discuss with Wilber devotees, who can be extremely arrogant, especially when they (in their own eyes very tolerant) claim that Wilber´s system also includes philosophies, that are a rebellion against all systems (for example the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas) since Wilber´s system offers a “complementary” perspective, and the rebellious philosophies only offer partial (relative) views of reality. Wilber´s system is also claimed to include all future theories. And guess who has the complete view of reality, the integrated view, the theory of everything?

In his article *The Rise and Fall of Ken Wilber* Mark Manson reports from a Ken Wilber weekend seminar:

“At the weekend seminar, I couldn’t shake the feeling that what we were participating in was thinly-veiled self indulgence and little more. In hindsight, I think this was as much a branding problem (from a business perspective) as an organizational problem (social perspective). Integral Institute built their movement in order to influence academia, governmental policy, to get books and journals published, to infuse these ideas into the world at large. Yet, here we were, spending money to sit in a room performing various forms of meditation and yoga, having group therapy sessions, art performances, and generally going on and on about how “integral” we were and how important we were to the world without seemingly doing anything on a larger scale about it.

Following Wilber online, the conversation seemed to only become more and more insular. With an onslaught of problems in the world crying out for an integral perspective and solution — terrorism, the Iraq War, climate change, world hunger, financial crises — the silence coming from the Integral crowd was deafening. Major global and social issues were often only referred to in passing as descriptors for a certain level of consciousness development with the overarching implication being that “they” are not as highly developed as “we” are.

We’re “second-tier” thinkers. We’re going to change the world... as soon as we’re done talking about how awesome and “second-tier” we are.
Instead, most conversations involved esoteric spiritual topics, impulsive self-expressionism, and re-explaining the integral model in 4,102 different ways. For a philosophy based on including and integrating as much as possible, its followers sure expressed it by forming a nicely-sealed bubble around themselves.

Evidence of this came when Wilber’s critics popped up. Experts in many of the fields Wilber claimed to have “integrated” questioned or picked apart some of his assumptions. In Wilber’s model, he uses what he refers to as “orienting generalizations,” ways of summarizing entire fields of study in order to fit them together with other forms of knowledge. Wilber admits in his work that he’s generalizing large topics and that there is not consensus in many fields, but that he’s constructed these generalizations to reflect the basic and agreed-upon principles of each field of study.

Well, a number of experts began questioning Wilber’s choice of sources, and claimed that what he portrayed as consensus in some fields such as developmental psychology or sociology, it turned out there was still quite a bit of debate and uncertainty around some of Wilber’s “basic” conclusions. Often, what Wilber portrayed as the “consensus” of a certain field actually amounted to an obscure or minority position.

Critics also picked apart Wilber’s model itself, showing minor contradictions in it. And a number of people caught on to his shockingly meek understanding of evolutionary biology and his puzzling insinuations of intelligent design.

Wilber’s eventual response to many of these critics was nothing short of childish — a dozen-or-so page (albeit extremely well-written) verbal shit-storm that clarified nothing, justified nothing, personally attacked everyone, and straw-manned the shit out of his critics’ claims (Morten Tolboll’s note: this also shows that Wilber, who by followers are called “The World’s greatest philosopher in our time,” might not be such a great philosopher after all).

For many, that was the day the intellectual giant fell, the evolution stopped, the so-called “Einstein of consciousness” took his ball and went home.

From there, the integral movement began to sputter. Rabbi Marc Gafni, a spiritual leader whom Wilber aligned himself and even co-sponsored seminars with, was later indicted in Israel for child molestation. Despite this, Wilber and his movement refused to distance themselves or repudiate him. In fact, the whole integral scene doubled down, claiming that its critics were “first-tier thinkers,” and were coming up with lies in order to attack a greater, higher level of consciousness that it didn’t understand (Morten Tolboll’s note: again this is an example of the Nondual bias
where people are defending themselves against critique by claiming they are on a “higher nondual level of consciousness,” and the critics on a lower dual level, who therefore can’t be taken seriously. This thought distortion is an attempt used to silence critique, and it is seen in numerous New Age connections.

The seminars slowed to a crawl. Wilber’s health deteriorated greatly (he was diagnosed with a rare disease that keeps him bed-ridden). He stopped writing. Ten years on, despite developing some fans in academia (some in high places) Wilber’s work had yet to be tested or peer-reviewed in a serious journal. Much of his posting online devolved into bizarre spiritual claims (such as this one about an “enlightened teacher” who can make crops grow twice as fast by “blessing them”).

The brilliant scientist-turned-monk-turned-recluse-turned-New-Age-celebrity, whose ideas changed everything for so many people (myself included), devolved into the butt of another New Age joke. How the mighty have fallen.”

Wilber is a clear inspiration for that kind of New Age relativism, where you constantly hear devotees talk about that all theories, spiritual paths, etc., are equally valid because they are “complementary” but by themselves they only offer partial (relative) views of reality.

Again, this is a misunderstanding of the principle of complementarity. Just because two theories are in opposition, or are different, doesn’t mean that they are “complementary” to each other. Let us try to use Nagarjuna’s own argumentation on Wilber’s system. Wilber’s system is especially marked by two thought distortions (see my book A Dictionary of Thought-distortions):

1) Self-refuting arguments

2) Reductio ad absurdum

1) Self-refuting arguments are for example seen in relativism, which considers all views as relative, and therefore equally good. Relativism is logical fallacious, because it of course considers itself as being true. But it can precisely, in accordance with its own built-in relativism, not itself be regarded as more true than for example absolutism. For that reason it is followed by a long line of self-contradictions.

The self-contradiction is that relativism makes an exception of its own position: the very assertion of relativism is itself nonrelativistic. Curious enough that is also what Wilber-devotees claim, when confronted with the problem of relativism: Wilber’s system is not itself relative – or said in another way: it doesn’t support relativism!
Ok, that leads to the next point (besides that we in that case have to do with a confessed totalitarian system – note that almost all totalitarian systems use relativism to attack opponents, at the same time as they claim that they don´t support relativism):

As we have seen: a theory of everything is not possible because it itself is in opposition to what the system not is. Therefore all theories of everything end in the thought distortion *Endless Split of the Thought*. That is what Nagarjuna´s argumentation would claim. The very assertion of any holistic, integral theory, are destroying the holistic, integral claim itself, because it must have a negation.

2) The thought distortion *Reductio ad absurdum* is characterizing positions that would have absurd consequences if true. As mentioned, then some of the theories Wilber includes in his system are in other contexts seen as deeply problematic, even misleading. As one example out of many could be mentioned Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP). According to Wilber NLP is as equally valid as any other theory. In that case there is no difference between true science and pseudoscience, etc. (see my article *Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)*).

The acceptance of all theories as equally good (because they are “complementary”), is a central idea in Wilber´s system, which, as all relativistic theories, claim to be very tolerant. It is possible for all to be correct and necessary for a complete account of human existence. But how long out in the absurd will Wilber continue to accept all theories as equally good (crazy therapies, delusional and dangerous ideas)?

If you for example preach relativism and believe, that everything is relative and for that reason equal true, you have thereby accepted, that nazism, fascism, dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence, are as equally great blessings for mankind as democracy, negotiation and dialogue. Then you have no basis in order to criticize, because you haven´t got any rational frame to start from. You can´t criticize anyone for argumentation bungling, or to replace arguments with machine guns, because this presupposes, that there is a rational foundation in your arguments.

And, if Wilber rejects this relativism, who is then to decide which theories are more valid than others? The whole of Wilber´s own classification-system, or his integral map, is, as mentioned, based on his own idiosyncratic beliefs about what he thinks is “positive”. It is selective and not all-inclusive, and it can never be, because of the principle of negation. Wilber seems to have misunderstood his great source of inspiration: Nagarjuna.
Wilber’s system can point to many “successes.” The devotees can demonstrate that their programs “work”. They can bring forth to testify on their behalf hundreds, if not thousands, of satisfied customers. But it is important to know, that testimonials do not validate a classification system. Scientifical seen this is pure nonsense, and deeply manipulative. All talk about that testimonials are a proof, is a sign of pseudoscience. Furthermore, the sense of improvement, might not be matched by improved behavior. Just because devotees feel they have benefited doesn’t mean they have. Often they simply have become a nuisance for their non-initiated surroundings. It is for example often a nuisance to have a discussion with Wilber devotees, who uses the typical Wilber jargon, filled with pseudo-profound words such as quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. It is also a nuisance to hear their constant talk about Wilber as “The Smartest Man on Earth,” “The Brilliant scientist,” “The Einstein of Consciousness,” “The Greatest Philosopher in History.”, etc., etc., etc.

Such people can’t have read much philosophy (or theory of science, or spiritual literature, etc.), except perhaps what they have read in Wilber’s own books.

When looking at testimonials one must always consider the power of a long line of thought distortions, such as for example Subjective validation, Selective thinking, Confirmation bias, Motivated reasoning, Classical conditioning and placebo effects, Proof by ignorance, etc., etc.

Worse is the refusal of critique, that shows that the system already has developed into an ideology.

That a thought-system has developed into an ideology shows in, that it is a closed system, which is shared by a large group of people. Such a closed system has especially two distinctive characters: 1) It allows no imaginable circumstance to talk against the ideology. 2) It refuses all critique by analysing the motives in the critique in concepts, which is collected from the ideology itself.

The typical way devotees refuse critique, is that they are claiming, that the critique already is included in Wilber’s system, and that also all future critique are included in his system, because the critique is “complementary”, and therefore ok, but of course in itself relative, and therefore not something to be taken seriously.

With such an “argumentation” all rationality and logic have been eliminated; the system has closed itself in an ideology. The same argumentation is by the way seen in other New Age theories as for example Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and The Human Design System, which both claim, that nothing from now on can be developed without including their systems, because they have caused a paradigm
shift. But this use of the concept paradigm shift is based on a misunderstanding of Thomas Kuhn’s work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occurred in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy (also see my article *The Sokal Hoax*).

Ideologies have always been a reflection of time, which manifests itself in the thoughts of human beings, specially the thoughts’ direction towards the future. The collective manifestations of the future have either appeared in form of rigid religious believe systems, or ideologies such as nationalism, national socialism, communism and liberalism. They all function with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lies in the future, and that the end therefore justifies the means. The goal is an idea, a point out in a future, projected by the mind, where the salvation comes in some form – happiness, satisfaction, equality, liberation, etc. (the age of Aquarius). It has not been unusual that the means to get there have been to make people into slaves, or by torturing them and murdering them here and now (see my article *The difference between philosophical education and ideological education*).

Wilber’s classification-system is harmful because it involves all the problems of what is called The Hermeneutics of Suspicion. There is no evidence for such systems at all. How do we test these kinds of claims? We cant. The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has referred to the “hermeneutics of suspicion” encouraged by writers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. What people think, and the reasons they produce, may not be the real reasons at work. It then becomes easy to become suspicious of the motives of everyone, whether as the representative of an economic class, or the purveyor of a morality, or just as an individual with psychological problems to solve. In Wilber the “real” reasons will be sought in his classification-system (read more in my article *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing*).

In that way it ends in being a refined way of justifying prejudice. Using Wilber’s integral method is simply a way of creating a system of prejudice. And that is anti-spiritual.

One of many examples of Wilber-prejudices, is for example Wilber’s own view of “lines of development” in relation to the great enlightened master Ramana Maharshi, whom, in Wilber’s eyes, can’t be considered as an “integral” master, because he was a cripple. Wilber directly says, that they don’t want sages, who are crippled, in his system. His reason is, that a future world teacher – that is: an integral master, a master that fits into Wilber’s system – has developed “both the gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body.” – here we see a clear fascistic element in Wilber.
So, we see how Wilber´s classification-system is an idealistic system, that, in devotees, causes a conflict between what you are and what you ought to be in relation to the system. And the ideal is, as mentioned, based on Wilber´s own idiosyncratic beliefs and selections.

A system that causes a conflict between what you are and what you ought to be is again anti-spiritual. It involves an existence-philosophical closing of your mind, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive towards being something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. And that is a hindrance for the opening in towards the source.

Spiritual growth is the direct opposite, it involves the existence-philosophical opening of your mind, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation are yourself, live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action (see my article The four philosophical hindrances and openings).

Prejudice, as Wilber´s classification-system ends up in justifying, is a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. Philosophy - that is: rationality and critical thinking – is opposed to prejudice. And true spirituality is philosophy. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question. Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to some beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (for instance wishful thinking); however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.

But Wilber´s system does the opposite. Though it on the surface sounds rational and logical, it actually removes rationality and critical thinking through the hermeneutics of suspicion. The removal of genuine rationality from the stage leaves open the possibility of accusations of rationalizations for ulterior motives. This form of analysis (leading us to think of groups or individuals like “what is in it for them? what stage of development are they on? what kind of type?”), is not only corrosive of trust in society. It is bound eventually to undermine itself. Why are such views themselves being propagated? What are those spreading them going to gain?

A critique of the Human Design System
In the following I will give a short introduction to The Human Design System (HDS), followed by six longer comments, where I describe the different kinds of New Age manipulation-tools used in the system. Though the comments relate to HDS, then they are formed as a general critique of these manipulation-tools as such (also see my article Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality).

HDS is said to be a tool – a system - which you can use, if you want. It is based on old “sciences” such as Kabbala, astrology, and I Ching, which are combined in new ways, and connected to new knowledge within Quantum Physics and genetics. The creator – or rather “The Receiver” of HDS is Alan Robert Krakower. He was born in Montreal, Canada, April 9, 1948. He lived on Ibiza under the name Ra Uru Hu, until his death in 2011.

He was a well-educated and successful businessman, who worked as a contractor and magazine publisher with own advertising agency. After this he gave up his wealth and worked as an artist, poet, musician and composer.

On Ibiza in 1987 he experienced an extrasensory intelligence, which he calls “The Voice.” During eight days and nights he was taught about the mechanical and spiritual structure of the Universe. Immense knowledge and countless details was channeled to him.

The experience was shaking him. Previous he had been arrogant and strongly self-centered. But after the experience he became humble and he created HDS, which, according to him, can replace all old systems.

Ra says, that HDS not is here because of him, but because of a supernova in 1987. Mankind was influenced by the neutrino stream from this supernova – precisely in the eight days and nights, where he received the informations about HDS. It was by the way the first time a supernova could be watched with the naked eye. It took place in Chile on the clear nightsky.

Neutrinos are some strange particles, which have almost no mass, and which travel thousands of light years through space. They move easily through almost everything – you, me, the earth. Their origin is supernovas (dying/exploding suns) and black holes in the universe.

HDS takes it basis in the way the neutrino stream influences our genes on the time of our birth, and on the 88th day before – the day where the soul – according to HDS –
goes into the body. This influence creates the energetical background for, how your personal HDS design chart looks like. The design from which everything are interpreted. It is your genetic blueprint, created by the neutrinos on the day of your birth, combined with the situation 88 days before.

HDS is a complex system of types, definitions, profiles, lines and gates, and their connections in between create a detailed model of you and your purpose in life. According to Ra, then every human being has a unique archetypical nature, which has to be investigated and expressed. Not by doing something, but by being yourself. With HDS you will get better in making decisions, because you live in accordance with your design – your true nature.

HDS is in that way a tool to find your inner authority – and your strategy of life. To know your lifestrategy and inner authority is the same as knowing which type you are. HDS works with four human types: Generators, manifestors, projectors and reflectors.

The six comments to The Human Design System are:

1) Pseudoscience
2) Karma and channeling
3) Personality typing
4) Astrology
5) Paradigm shifts
6) The “science” of awakening

**Comment one: Pseudoscience**

With the industrial modernization Man has cultivated a mind, which can solve almost any technological problem; that, which the German philosopher Habermas calls the instrumental reason. But apparently human problems have never been solved. On the contrary mankind are about to be drowned in its problems: problems concerning communication, the relationship with others, heaven and hell. The whole of the human existence has become one extremely complex problem. And apparently it has been like that through the whole of history. Despite the knowledge of Man, despite his millenniums of evolution, Man has never been free from such problems.
The solutions to such problems require a communicative reason, a reason, which understands the human community. But as Habermas says, then we are not using such a reason, on the contrary we are using an instrumental reason on human problems, where it only should be used on technical problems. We seek to solve human problems technically, where they should be solved in a philosophical way. The systems (the market, the economy, the bureaucracy, the systems) have colonized the lifeworld.

An aspect of, that the instrumental reason has conquered territory from the communicative reason consists in, that we in connection with human problems treat each other as means or as items, which have come on the wrong course (the treatment society). It is interesting, that the New Age movement, which actually should be a spiritual alternative to this, and be an advocate for a communicative reason, on the contrary is one of the most aggressive advocates for the instrumental reason. This is due to its psychologizing of philosophy. New Age is possessed with all kind of self-invented forms of treatment, and with pseudoscientifical attempts to justify them as science. Often they manipulative use instrumental/scientifical inspired terms about their methods, but which are without any scientifical meaning at all. It is just a rhetorical trick to persuade people to pay the fee.

It is also interesting to compare this characteristic trait of New Age with Aldous Huxley´s novel Brave New World (notice the similarities in the titles). This novel foresees the end of democracy in a pseudoscientific, technological fixated meritocracy. The novel is precisely about a totalitarian state, which keeps psychological and genetic control with everybody, so that they surrender to the claimed “blessings” of the progress of the instrumental or technical reason. Everything, also humans, and human problems, are treated instrumental or technical. Psychology and genetics are controlling people down to the smallest details, children are being born and “grewed” on bottles, brains are being trimmed, characters are being converted after the needs of the dominant state.

Notice the similarities with the New Age product called Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), which are about programming your brain so that you can become a success in society; that is: so that you work in favour of Consumer Capitalism (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)). And notice the similarities with The Human Design System.

HDS purely and simply claims that it is not a belief-system, but a new science. Though it admits, that not everything about it can be proven, then HDS claims, that
the veracity of the system itself is currently being tested. Statistical research has substantiated the reliability of the chart itself. Statistical studies of various populations show the system to be reliable in grouping people according to four different basic types.

HDS claims the following: There are two avenues of experimentation now taking place: objective and empirical. Objective validation is in progress through statistical and clinical work - empirical validation is in progress through the thousands of people around the world who are experimenting with their strategy and with the information about their own personal designs and that of others they know. So far the feedback has been that the system delivers much detailed information that is uncannily accurate and useful.

As with other New Age directions, there in HDS seems to have gone inflation in the thought distortion *Research has shown that*... A phrase, which often is used to convince the listener about, that the one who talks can reason what he says with concrete empirical proof. But this is often just an example of subjective argumentation, a kind of unethical manipulation (often based on wishful thinking), because it is extremely vague to claim that “research has shown” anything, unless you can reason the assertion with specific details about the claimed research. Who has carried out this research? Which methods were there used? What exactly did they found out? Have their results been confirmed by others who work within the area?

The thought distortion *Research has shown that*...is extremely widely spread within the New Age environment, where concepts such as research and science all too often are being mixed with spiritual concepts. An example of the lack of ability to understand oneself as philosophy/religion, and not science.

Let me make one thing clear: there is nothing whatever in HDS that has been supported by science, and it is not going to happen either, because of the problems I will show in the following. The massive talk about science within HDS, and the use of scientifically sounding concepts, are, as in other New Age directions, used for manipulation.

The so-called “research” within HDS is, as with other New Age directions, based on testimonials, which nothing has to do with a scientifical investigation. I will return to this.

HDS contains two kinds of pseudoscience, namely the demand for “alternative” sciences within New Age pseudoscience, and the pseudoscience of reductionism (read in detail about these pseudosciences in my articles *The pseudoscience of New*
Age and reductionism, and The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

HDS claims to gather knowledge from the wisdom traditions. I wonder if they know the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna. He said, that the Now’s lawfulness around the function of the negation power, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego’s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually nothing can say about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (śûnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created (read more about Nagarjuna’s argumentation in my article A Critique of Ken Wilber and his Integral Method).

This leads to the thought about that human beings 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfullnesses.

HDS is reducing everything to the energy aspect. As with a lot of other New Age directions it has no valid understanding of the consciousness aspect, though talking a great deal about it. And it is only the consciousness aspect, which can come to insight about karmacical structures.

But, as with other New Age systems, HDS is inspired by Theosophy, and its fascistic theories of evolution seen in connection with the development of consciousness.
I won’t go into the complex, confusing pseudoscientific jargon used within HDS - (because there is no meaning in it, but which of course seduces a lot of people) - but the following is an example of this typical New Age fascism, which is involved in HDS:

Fundamental to HDS, is the concept of a **binary consciousness**, both a mental and a physical consciousness. According to HDS, humans are endowed with two crystals of consciousness, a *Design Crystal* and a *Personality Crystal* which both receive and process neutrino information for the healthy functioning of the being. Learning to utilize ”binary consciousness” is, according to HDS, an evolutionary step in the human process that has not been previously available to humanity, according to HDS. Throughout history, consciousness has evolved through the evolution of human design as with the 5-centered Neanderthal (*Homo Neanderthalensis*) to the 7-centered Homo Sapiens. The 7-centered Homo Sapiens evolution corresponds loosely to the model of the 7-centered Hindu Chakra system. In 1781, the mutation to the current model of the 9-centered being began to appear in the population, and completely replaced the 7-centered strategic being by the 1860’s. The potential of the 9-centered being is just at the rudimentary level of understanding, which can develop far beyond the cognitive, sensory and awareness capabilities of the 7-centered being. Humans today still carry the chemistry of the 7-centered being in their cells, and continue to operate in an archaic 7-centered hierarchic social structure and world view, mostly unaware of their expanded potential.

According to HDS, the 9-centered being is a transitional form and that a further mutation will begin to appear in the population in 2027 with the emergence of a new species, called **The Rave**. As a transitional form, the current human design of the 9-centered being has consciousness capabilities beyond the scope of the 7-centered ancestral design, and it is this ability to utilize the binary consciousness that differentiates the 9-centered design from it’s past.

Note that the HDS design chart also is called a Rave chart.

Anyway, these fascist ideas also confronts HDS with the problem of ideology (read my article [The difference between philosophical education and ideological education](#)).

Read more about these rising fascist tendencies in my articles **The fascism of Theosophy, A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method, The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind, The new feminism and the philosophy of women’s magazines** and **Time travel and the fascism of the WingMakers Project**.
Read more about pseudoscience in my article *The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism*.

**Comment two: Karma and channeling**

*1) Karma:*

HDS claims to be a new way of explaining the concept of karma. So is The Law Of Attraction, but in a way that is in opposition with HDS (see my article *The New Thought movement and the law of attraction*). Who shall we believe? I believe in the original wisdom traditions, which I will go into in the following.

The problem with the alternative environment within the New Age movement, is that the normal inaccessible areas of the astral plane’s collective history, which in principle lie outside the area of the Ego-consciousness, are open for all sorts of fantasies (see my article *Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice*).

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmatically experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists, astrologers, etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to see into the astral plane’s collective history, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore they basically do not know what they are doing. They are lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no longer are woods (I will explain this in comment six). There is in this area of the astral plane’s collective history, with all its experts and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecisely guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation.

There are therefore some philosophical principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enormous, and growing market. The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that, in order to equalize old karma (HDS is using other words, but is doing the same mistake). This is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmatically talk and experiences of the experts and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual
reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, regression, clairvoyance, past (or future) lifes therapy, astrology, prophecy, shamanism – and in HDS. None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. And if they use the karma idea in that way, it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards or forwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the astral plane´s collective time (see my articles A Critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork and Regression psychotherapies).

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma. It is only the consciousness aspect of a human being, that has the key (HDS: chart) in its life. It helps nothing, what HDS may be able to see in the astral plane´s collective history, or fantasize about another person´s karmacially experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lifes) – and which have a certain reality for either the clairvoyant/astrologer/HDS consultant, or the client – are collective fantasies.

Collective fantasies have two aspects. The one aspect of the fantasies is a kind of archetypical, mythologically symbolizings of more personally, unclarified matter. The second aspect of the fantasies is relatively valid information about incidents, for example in other centuries. The misguiding happens because the two aspects are blended together. The clairvoyant/HDS consultant, or the client himself, can remember, that he has lived in a past incarnation (often very romantic, for example as a pharaoh), and he can even travel to the places, where he had been incarnated and find things which ”proves” his assertion. There has been made many examinations of things of that kind. But regardless how fascinating it is, then it proves nothing about past lifes. And therefore it is deceptive and dangerous to occupy oneself with.

Nobody can tell you about your karmacially structures. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans – and HDS consultants - who are claiming they can help you karmacial, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmacially course and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that´s the same with all spiritual.

The genuine karmacially structures do not lie in the astral plane´s collective history, that works in sequences in past and future, but in the universal history of the astral plane, which work in synchronism with the Now. And the Now is a quality of
awareness; that is: consciousness. Only by being aware you can find your karmacial structures. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correct, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, a system, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost.

In all briefness you can say, that genuine spiritual counseling tries to guide people, 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 you are lost in them, to lead you back on the right track.

Also see my article **What is karma?** For a longer examination, read my article **A Map of the Spiritual Journey** in my book **Dream Yoga**.

2) **Channeling**

Channeling is a process whereby an individual (the ”channeler”) claims to have been invaded by a spirit entity, which speaks through the channeler.

There are many non-enlightened New Age teachers today – (they might very well have strange paranormal abilities, it doesn´t matter in this question) – who get authority by claiming, that their teaching is being channeled from some kind of divine source. If such teachers put their teaching forward in this way, you can be hundred procent sure, that this teacher has a problem with ego-inflation (if he is not directly a fraud -and them there are thousands of within New Age). Why? Because no real enlightened master would argue in this way. True enlightened masters speak from their own source, and are always characterized by humility. Just look at Dalai Lama, who incessantly claims, that he hasn´t reached the full Rigpa, and that he is just a beginner. True enlightened masters are also always philosophers, who are giving reasons and presenting arguments to support conclusions.

Generally it is, in connection with channeling, good to have knowledge about the thought distortion called **Truth by Authority**, which is about taking statements to be true simply because an alleged authority (experts, teachers, divine sources, paranormal abilities, - a “Voice”) on the matter has said/justified that they are true. A level of critical thinking is always appropriate, because the statement may be based on magical thinking, false premises, faulty reasoning, wishful thinking or vested interests (see my book **A Dictionary of thought distortions**).
People, who in their arguments/teaching, again and again, have to defer to some authority (experts, teachers, divine sources, paranormal abilities) in order to justify their arguments/teaching, are hundred procent on the wrong track, even if they should have some paranormal abilities. Again it is interesting to see, that true enlightened masters never do this. And interesting, that probably most of the many people, who have made a business on being clairvoyant/mediums/channelers etc., will fall for Truth by Authority.

Read more about channeling in my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling.

Comment three: Personality typing

There exists several different kinds of personality typing, and there are still coming more. The many different kinds of personality typologies are now so huge, that it is beginning to get comically (who shall we believe?). Each new number of a New Age magazine with respect for itself, must include at least one new “revolutionary” theory of personality types, in the same way as it must present at least one new “revolutionary” spiritual theory “proved” by quantum physics.

Both in New Age, and in coaching, which claims to be purely neutral and scientifical, the so-called Enneagram is very popular. It is a New Age mandala, a mystical gateway to personality typing, and through this to spiritual consciousness and fuller being. The enneagram represents nine personality types. It is originally developed by Oscar Ichazo (b. 1931), who claims to have received it in a vision.

Later the enneagram has turned up in several new versions, funny enough often developed by people, who also claim to have received it in divine visions. So how the types are defined depends on whom you ask. The classification systems seem to have been modified according to the inventors´ own idiosyncratic beliefs. Often they do it in relation to astrology.

As mentioned, then the so-called “scientifical” research within New Age, often is based on testimonials.

Theories of personality types can for example point to many “successes.” They can demonstrate that their programs “work”. They can bring forth to testify on their behalf hundreds, if not thousands, of satisfied customers. But it is important to know, that testimonials do not validate a self-help program. Scientifical seen this is pure nonsense, and deeply manipulative. All talk about that testimonials are a proof, is a sign of pseudoscience. Furthermore, the sense of improvement, for instance peak
experiences, might not be matched by improved behavior. Just because they feel they have benefited doesn’t mean they have. Often they simply have become a nuisance for their non-initiated surroundings. Why?

A personality typing theory categorizes people in different psychological types. Such theories of psychological types are comparatively easy to invent, and earn money on, and they are certainly harmful because they involve all the problems of what I call The Hermeneutics of Supicion (see my article The Hermeneutics of Suspicion (the thought police of the self-help industry) and why I am an apostle of loafing).

There is no evidence for personality typing at all. How do we test these kinds of claims? We can’t. The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has referred to the “hermeneutics of suspicion” encouraged by writers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. What people think, and the reasons they produce, may not be the real reasons at work. It then becomes easy to become suspicious of the motives of everyone, whether as the representative of an economic class, or the purveyor of a morality, or just as an individual with psychological problems to solve.

And when a therapist or a coach - as it is the case most of the time - is lacking the ability of thinking deeper over things, then it ends in being a refined way of justifying prejudice. Personality typing is simply a way of creating a system of prejudice. And that is anti-spiritual.

Prejudice is a belief held without good reason or consideration of the evidence for or against its being true. Philosophy - that is: rationality and critical thinking – is opposed to prejudice. And true spirituality is philosophy. We are all riddled with prejudices on a wide range of issues, but it is possible to eliminate some of them by making an effort to examine evidence and arguments on both sides of any question. Human reason is fallible, and most of us are strongly motivated to cling on to some beliefs even in the teeth of evidence against them (for instance wishful thinking); however, even making small inroads into prejudice can transform the world for the better.

But theories of personality typing do the opposite. They try to remove rationality and critical thinking through the hermeneutic of suspicion. And they have success. A whole time-tendency within school, folk high school, universities and continuing education, focus on so-called “personal development”, which are inspired by them.

The removal of genuine rationality from the stage leaves open the possibility of accusations of rationalizations for ulterior motives. This form of analysis (leading us to think of groups or individuals “what is in it for them?”), is not only corrosive of
trust in society. It is bound eventually to undermine itself. Why are such views themselves being propagated? What are those spreading them going to gain?

Personality typing systems often make grandiose claims about that they are easy ways to get to know thyself, think for yourself and thereby be yourself. Actually the direct opposite happens if you in fact use them. You will end up in an existence-philosophical problem, where you in your opinion formation and identity formation strive after being something else than what you are (your type according to the system), where you imitate others (the types), are a slave of others’ ideas and ideals (the personality typing system), and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.

Everytime you have a personal problem you will begin to think in the ways the personality typing system has taught you to think, and you will begin to consider if you ought to get help (use money) from a consultant in precisely this system (more about the existence-philosophical problem later).

Notice that HDS actually claims that statistical studies of various populations show the system to be reliable in grouping people according to four different basic types. Have HDS not learned anything by studying the catastrophical human consequences of the Indian caste system, which precisely is about grouping people according to four different basic types?

Read more about personality typing in my article Personality typing is a refined system of prejudice.

Comment four: Astrology

Astrology is the teaching about the influence, which the celestial bodies moon, sun, planets and stars are believed to have on the life on Earth, as well as the art of predicting the future through calculations of the mutual relations between the positions of the celestial bodies (a Horoscope).

As an advocate of a communicative view of Man and nature, I am not in doubt about, that the parts within the wholeness are influencing each other. There are both ancient Chinese versions of astrology, as well as Tibetan versions, that I can see no reason to doubt the value of, when practised by a competent master. And the question about competence leads to my critique of astrology.

In its psychologized form, astrology is a type of New Age therapy used for self-understanding and personality analysis (astrotherapy). The danger of this is the same
as the danger of clairvoyance (see my article **Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with clairvoyance**). The word horoscope comes from the Greek words Hora, which means time, and Skopein, which means investigate, and in this also lies the danger; the danger of loosing yourself in time. Rather than helping clients to become stronger and more independent, it can induce in the client an abdiction of responsibility and a state of sickly dependence on the astrologer (or The Human Design System).

As already said: the so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normal be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that, in order to equalize old karma. This is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses.

And let me repeat: a good philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmcially talk and experiences of the experts and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards or forwards in time, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Only Man himself can find the progressive karma. The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what astrologers may be able to see in the collective time, or fantasize about another person’s karmacially experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lifes) – and which have a certain reality for either the astrologer or the client – are collective fantasies.

Nobody, and nothing, can tell you about your karmcially structures. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans, astrologers, HDS etc. etc., (and tools, as for example horoscopes, personality maps, etc., etc.), - who are claiming they can help you karmcial, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmcially course and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary it would harm (I will return to how it will harm in comment six). Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that’s the same with all spiritual.

The genuine karmcially structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now; that is: with the consciousness, which is a quality of the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correct, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most
intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost.

And again: In all briefness you can say, that genuine spiritual counseling tries to guide people, 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 you are lost in them, to lead you back on the right track.

**Comment five: Paradigm shifts**

The concept of paradigm shifts, and the included phrases “Old thinking and New thinking”, are very popular in New Age circles; and therefore also in HDS. The concept is often used as a weapon against critique. The concept has three sources:

1) George Orwell´s novel 1984.

2) Quantum mechanics

3) Thomas Kuhn´s work *The structure of Scientific Revolutions*

1) **George Orwell´s novel 1984**

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 was 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 used concepts such as Old thinking and New thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, everytime they use concepts within Old thinking.

Today, after having passed 1984, we live in a so-called postmodernistic dystopia, where eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away – and where we have been invaded by the ideology of relativism, which rulers, in creeping ways, use the same phrases as the rulers in Orwell´s novel, as if they had used it as inspiration (see my article *The Sokal Hoax*).

2) **Quantum mechanics**

There are especially two kinds of abuse of quantum mechanics within New Age:

1) The claim, that Einstein´s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, prove that relativism and subjectivism are valid points of views.
2) The claim, that Quantum mechanics and Einstein´s theories of relativity prove that classical physics (the age of enlightenment, rationality, objectivity) is not valid anymore.

These two claims are often making New Age followers, and relativists and subjectivists as such, use the following bullying of critics:

“that they are hewing to the ´objective´ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

They typically assert that this “dogma” has already been thoroughly undermined by the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics and that physical reality has been shown to be “at bottom a social and linguistic construct.”

This is used to term critics as Old thinkers, for example that their critique is part of a “patriarchal, racist, colonistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion discourse”

Relativists typically deride critics and scientists for continuing to cling to the “dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, “that there exists an external world whose properties are independent of human beings, and that human beings can obtain reliable, if imperfect and tentative knowledge of these properties “by hewing to the ‘objective’ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

And: “How can a self-perpetuating secular priesthood of credentialed ´scientists´ purport to maintain a monopoly on the production of scientific knowledge?”

Therefore they demand that science has to be integrated with alternative sciences (and alternative views of human rights); what I call the Illuminati aspect of the Matrix Conspiracy, because science can’t be mixed with spiritual or political concepts. If this happens, then it is not science anymore. The same thing with relativistic and subjectivistic views of human rights; then it is not human rights anymore (see my articles The Matrix Conspiracy and The new feminism and the philosophy of women´s magazines).

And, in short: New Age systems, and all relativistic theories as such, are actually themselves using classical physics to explain their own theories (for example by the help of the causality-principle), and that is precisely what quantum mechanics breaks with. Read more about this in my articles Quantum mysticism and its web of lies, and Quantum Mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr).

3) Thomas Kuhn´s work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions
I will explain Thomas Kuhn in relation to how he is abused in NLP (read about NLP in my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)).

NLP is founded by Richard Bandler and John Grinder.

John Grinder denies, that his and Bandler´s work is an eclectic hodgepodge of philosophy and psychology, or that it even builds from the work of others. He believes that what he and Bandler did was “create a paradigm shift.”

The following claim by Grinder provides some sense of what he thinks NLP is:

My memories about what we thought at the time of discovery (with respect to the classic code we developed – that is, the years 1973 through 1978) are that we were quite explicit that we were out to overthrow a paradigm and that, for example, I, for one, found it very useful to plan this campaign using in part as a guide the excellent work of Thomas Kuhn (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions) in which he detailed some of the conditions in the midst of paradigm shifts. For example, I believe it was very useful that neither one of us were qualified in the field we first went after – psychology and in particular, its therapeutic application; this being one of the conditions which Kuhn identified in his historical study of paradigm shifts. Who knows what Bandler was thinking?

As a comment to this the critical thinker Robert T. Carroll says: “One can only hope that Bandler wasn´t thinking the same things that Grinder was thinking, at least with respect to Kuhn´s classic text.”

Kuhn did not promote the notion that not being particularly qualified in a scientific field is a significant condition for contributing to the development of a new paradigm in science. Furthermore, Kuhn did not provide a model or blueprint for creating paradigm shifts! His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occured in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy and he certainly did not imply that anything NLP did, or is doing, constitutes a paradigm shift.

But the use of the concept of paradigm shifts is very popular within New Age, where a constant stream of new (revolutionary) systems (New thinking), often contradictory, are claiming, that it from now on is impossible to think in “old” ways anymore, without accepting their systems. The failure is due to their constructivistic ways of thinking; that is: relativism and subjectivism (read more about paradigm
shifts and constructivism in my article Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry).

Comment six: The “science” of awakening

Finally HDS is called the “science” of awakening. It is also called The Tao of HDS, and some are using Zen to explain it, for example that it is a new kind of Zen.

There are especially two problems with combining HDS with a process of awakening:

1) An existential-philosophical problem:

If you actually follow HDS, then you, in your opinion formation and identity formation, will strive after being something else than what you are, you are imitating others (the system), are a slave of others´ ideas and ideals (the personality types), and your actions will therefore be characterized by irresoluteness and doubt.

Directly opposite to what HDS itself claims. Tao, Zen and the existential-philosophical claim about being yourself are the last things you can combine with an instrumentally, technological fixated system as HDS. Have these people not studied these traditions? These traditions are directly a rebellion against any kind of authority and system. The father of existentialism, Søren Kierkegaard, would have turned in his grave if he had heard about that HDS is about being yourself.

2) A spiritual problem:

The existential-philosophical problem leads to the spiritual problem:

Let us hang on to that HDS claims to be a new kind of Zen. 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 consciousness (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary consciousness 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.
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, the astral world, or the Akashic Records. The Akashic records are 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 astral plane’s collective history is a very dangerous intermediate area, if you not are very trained in realization and compassion. And especially when you are working in accordance with a system it is a dangerous area.

The temptation to here, either to become afraid, or to experiment with various possibilities (astral travels, clairvoyance, telepathy etc. etc.) is great. It is a very forceful state. Goethe and Dante write about the collective time in ”Faust” and in ”The Divine Comedy”. Tolkien writes about it in ”The Lord of the Rings”, Ursula Le Guin in ”The Wizard Ged”.

The shamans had to dare the journey to the underground kingdoms with their shadow-inhabitants, demons and dead. And they had to handle the journey to the heavenly regions, where gods and goddesses, heros and heroines, accomodated. The mystics had to experience the descent to hell with its belonging devils, fire and sulphur and torment and suffering. And they had to handle get off to heavenly hosts of angels and light-creatures, if the temptation was as difficult to resist as the sexual impact of the devil.

The creativity, and the reality-creating ability, is in the astral plane´s collective time set free in fascinating degree. However you are, in this astral state, still on the plane of the collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and you are in danger ending up in a spiritual crisis (see my article Spiritual Crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena). A spiritual crisis is an expression of, that you have gone out in the collective time with your Ego, without having done the philosophical preliminary work; that is to say: the realization-work and the ethical training. You are not sufficiently awake on this area. The Ego will then make you loose your way in the collective time.

A spiritual crisis can be expressed in two ways: 1): as suffering, often called The Dark Night of the Soul, or 2) as Ego-inflation (inflammatio).
1) If the borders to the collective time is broken down or being exceeded out of hand, for example through LSD or through one-sided development techniques, or in shock, the consciousness and the personality will slide crucial out of balance and therefore suffer. The Ego will sideways with its personal identity and lifesituation, suddenly experience break in of tremendous astral energies, clairvoyant abilities, visions of mythological beings, good and evil forces, various demons and angels, death and themes of rebirth, unusual light phenomenons, messages from supernatural beings, memories from past lifes. These experiences will, because that the Ego´s nature has not been realized, be characterized by unreality and division, anxiety of going mad and anxiety of death, or the experience of a total meaningless and dark extinct world.

2) The personality can receive informations through the break in of astral and collective energies, images and symbols: information about, what approaches human beings from outside (from other people, from chance, destiny, life etc.). However informations through collective images are contradictional and split. Many have therefore been seduced by these colourful experiences and have remained there, with the ability to see the aura, with the ability to create images, to create in reality.

When the astral plane´s collective time is used spiritual in genuine sense, then the Ego, in its egoistic isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside. However the same forces can be used for other intensions. It can be creative, Ego-affirmative, political, demonical and so on. The forces which in spirituality are given to others´ disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same forces can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures and open creative channels, create super Egos, create political leaders and popular seducers.

The problem, or the danger, does not consist in using creativity or auric abilities. It is actually a good idea to formulate the experiences creatively; the danger is, whether the Ego grows and becomes swollen on the world´s positive responses. And if the Ego gains strength, takes the honour, or blows itself up, the transformationprocess of consciousness stops, the growth forward towards the goal: illumination and later enlightenment (see my article The ego-inflation in the New Age and self-help environment).

It is absolutely foolish to claim that a system like HDS directly is a “science” of awakening. How should the HDS system, and HDS consultants (who only have taken a short education), deal with the above mentioned problems of awakening?

In my article A critique of Stanislav Grof I more deeply describe the problem of incompetent teachers dealing with non-ordinary states of mind, which they themselves haven´t got any experiences with.
Appendix

Note: Advocates of The Human Design System are some of the most aggressive users of the thought distortion Backfire effect, when confronted with critique, probably because HDS is still new, and that they have invested a lot of money in it.

So, before HDS consultants are writing to me with insulting emails, I will advice them to read about the following thought distortions: Backfire effect, Classical conditioning and placebo effects, Ad hominem move, Good intentions bias, Nondual bias, Subjective validation, Illusion of control, That’s judgmental, Don’t knock it till you try it – because these thought distortions typical are involved in their attacks on me.

You can read about them in my book A dictionary of thought distortions (free download).

Time travel and the Fascism of the WingMakers Project

In this article I will investigate common theories of time travel as they have been discussed in science, fiction, and urban legends. Hereafter I will investigate the newest New Age invention The WingMakers Project, which, based on a theory of time travel, is creating a pseudohistorical hoax. I will, with starting point in quantum mysticism and the problem of consciousness in connection with time travel, argue for why this is invalid. Finally I will show how this hoax is a symptom of the rising of a new kind of fascism. The article is in that way divided into five parts:

1) Common theories of time travel
2) The WingMakers Project
3) Quantum mysticism
4) The problem of consciousness in connection with time travel
5) The fascism of the WingMakers Project
1) Common theories of time travel

Time travel is the concept of moving between different points in time in a manner analogous to moving between different points in space, either sending objects (or in some cases just information) backwards in time to some moment before the present, or sending objects forward from the present to the future without the need to experience the intervening period. (at least not at the normal rate).

Any technological device, whether fictional or hypothetical, that is used to achieve time travel is commonly known as a time machine.

Scientific theories

Einstein’s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, are today often used as arguments for the possibility of time travel.

Some interpretations of time travel also suggest that an attempt to travel backwards in time might take one to a parallel universe whose history would begin to diverge from the traveler’s original history after the moment the traveler arrived in the past.

Some theories, most notably special and general relativity, suggest that suitable geometries of spacetime, or specific types of motion in space, might allow time travel into the past and future if these geometries or motions are possible. In technical papers, physicists generally avoid the commonplace language of “moving” or “traveling” through time (‘movement’ normally refers only to a change in spatial position as the time coordinate is varied), and instead discuss the possibility of closed timelike curves, which are worldliness that form closed loops in spacetime, allowing objects to return to their own past. There are known to be solutions to the equations of general relativity that describe spacetimes which contain closed timelike curves (such as Gödel spacetime), but the physical plausibility of these solutions is uncertain.

Relativity states that if one were to move away from Earth at relativistic velocities and return, more time would have passed on Earth than for the traveler, so in this sense it is accepted that relativity allows “travel into the future” (according to relativity there is no single objective answer to how much time has “really” passed between the departure and the return, but there is an objective answer to how much proper time has been experienced by both the Earth and the traveler, i.e. how much each has aged.)
On the other hand, many in the scientific community believe that backwards time travel is highly unlikely. Any theory which would allow time travel would require that problems of causality be resolved. The classic example of a problem involving causality is the “grandfather paradox”: what if one were to go back in time and kill one’s own grandfather before one’s father was conceived? But some scientists believe that paradoxes can be avoided, either by appealing to the Novikov self-consistency principle or the notion of parallel universes (explanation follows).

Stephen Hawking once suggested that the absence of tourists from the future constitutes an argument against the existence of time travel – a variant of the Fermi paradox. Of course this would not prove that time travel is physically impossible, since it might be that time travel is physically possible but that it is never in fact developed (or is cautiously never used); and even if it is developed, Hawking notes elsewhere that time travel might only be possible in a region of spacetime that is warped in the correct way, and that if we cannot create such a region until the future, then time travelers would not be able to travel back before that date, so “This picture would explain why we haven’t been over run by tourists from the future.” Carl Sagan also once suggested the possibility that time travelers could be here, but are disguising their existence or are not recognized as time travelers.

However, the theory of general relativity does suggest scientific grounds for thinking backwards time travel could be possible in certain unusual scenarios, although arguments from semiclassical gravity suggest that when quantum effects are incorporated into general relativity, these loopholes may be closed. These semiclassical arguments led Hawking to formulate the chronology protection conjecture, suggesting that the fundamental laws of nature prevent time travel, but physicists cannot come to a definite judgment on the issue without a theory of quantum gravity to join quantum mechanics and general relativity into a complete unified theory.

**Theories of time travel in fiction**

Time travel has been a common plot device in fiction since the 19th century, but the thought is probably as old as the human thought. You see it in Hindu mythology in the Mahabharata (770s BCE to 300s CE), in the Talmud (220s to 400s CE), in the Japanese tale of "Urashima Taro"(720 CE), Samuel Madden’s *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century* (1733), Louis-Sébastain Mercier’s *L’An 2440, rêve s’il en fût jamais* (1771), Johan Herman Wessel’s *Anno 7603*, Washington Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle” (1819), Faddey Bulgarin’s “Pravdopodobnie Nebylitsi” (1824), Alexander Veltman’s *Predki Kalimerosa* (1836), *Missing one’s Coach: An Anachronism* (1838), Charles Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol* (1843), Pierre Boitard’s *Paris avant les hommes*

Time travel themes in fiction and media can generally be grouped into three general categories (based on effect – methods are extremely varied and numerous), each of which can be further subdivided.

*Note: These classifications do not address the method (the scientific explanation) of time travel itself, i.e. how to travel through time, but instead call to attention differing rules of what happens to history. But this attention is very important in order to understand all the paradoxes time travel involves, and I will go deeper into it, because it is important in relation to my further argumentation.*

1) **There is a single fixed history, which is self-consistent and unchangeable.**

In this version, everything happens on a single timeline which does not contradict itself and cannot interact with anything potentially existing outside of it.

1.1 This can be simply achieved by applying the Novikov self-consistency principle, named after dr. Igor Novikov, Professor of Astrophysics at Copenhagen University. The principle states that the timeline is totally fixed, and any actions taken by a time traveler were part of history all along, so it is impossible for the time traveler to “change” history in any way. The time traveler’s actions may be the cause of events in their own past though, which leads to the potential for circular causation and the predestination paradox; for examples of circular causation, see Robert A. Heinley’s story “By His Bootstraps”. The Novikov self-consistency principle proposes that the local laws of physics in a region of spacetime containing time travelers cannot be any different from the local laws of any other region of spacetime.

1.2 Alternatively, new physical laws take effect regarding time travel that thwarts attempts to change the past (contradicting the assumption mentioned in 1.1 above that the laws that apply to time travelers are the same ones that apply to everyone else). These new physical laws can be as unsubtle as to reject time travelers who travel to the past to change it by pulling them back to the point from when they came as Michael Moorcock’s *The Dancers at the End of Time* or where the traveler is rendered a noncorporeal phantom unable to physically interact with the past such as some Pre-Crisis Superman stories and Michael Garrett’s “Brief Encounter” in *Twilight Zone Magazine* May 1981
2) **History is flexible and is subject to change (Plastic Time)**

2.1 **Changes to history are easy and can impact the traveler, the world, or both**

Examples include *Doctor Who* and the *Back to the Future* trilogy. In some cases, any resulting paradoxes can be devastating, threatening the very existence of the universe. In other cases the traveler simply cannot return home. The extreme version of this (*Chaotic Time*) is that history is very sensitive to changes with even small changes having large impacts such as in Ray Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder”.

2.2 **History is change resistant in direct relationship to the importance of the event**

i.e small trivial events can be readily changed but large ones take great effort. In the *Twilight Zone* episode “Back There” a traveler tries to prevent the assassination of President Lincoln and fails, but his actions have made subtle changes to the *status quo* in his own time (e.g. a man who had been the butler of his gentleman’s club is now a rich tycoon).

In the 2002 remake of *The Time Machine*, it is explained via a vision why Hartdegen could not save his sweetheart Emma – doing so would have resulted in his never developing the time machine he used to try and save her.

In *The Saga of Darren Shan*, major events in the past cannot be changed, but their details can alter while providing the same outcome. Under this model, if a time traveler were to go back in time and kill Hitler, another Nazi would simply take his place and commit his same actions, leaving the broader cause of history unchanged.

In the *Doctor Who* episode *The Waters of Mars*, Captain Adelaide Brooke’s death on Mars is the most singular catalyst of human travel outside the solar system. At first, the Doctor realizes her death is a “fixed point in time” and does not intervene, but later defies this rule and transports her and her crew to Earth. Rather than allow human history to change, Captain Brooke commits suicide on Earth, leaving history mostly unchanged.

3) **Alternate timelines**

In this version of time travel, there are multiple coexisting alternate histories, so that when the traveler goes back in time, he/she ends up in a new timeline where historical events can differ from the timeline he/she came from, but her original timeline does not cease to exist (this means the grandfather paradox can be avoided since even if the timer traveler’s grandfather is killed at a young age in the new
timeline, he still survived to have children in the original timeline, so there is still a causal explanation for the traveler’s existence). Time travel may actually create a new timeline that diverges from the original timeline at the moment the time traveler appears in the past, or the traveler may arrive in an already existing parallel universe (though unless the parallel universe’s history was identical to the time traveler’s history up until the point where the time traveler appeared, it is questionable whether the latter version qualifies as “time travel”).

James P. Hogan’s *The Proteus Operation* fully explains parallel universe time travel in chapter 20 where it has Einstein explaining that all the outcomes already exist and all time travel does is change which already existing branch you will experience.

Though *Star Trek* has along tradition of using the 2.1 mechanic, as seen in “The City on the Edge of Forever”, “Tomorrow is Yesterday”, “Time and Again”, “Future’s End”, “Before and After”, “Endgame”, and as late as Enterprise’s Temporal Cold War, “Parallels” had an example of what Data called “quantum realities.” His exact words on the matter were “But there is a theory in quantum physics that all the possibilities that can happen do happen in alternate quantum realities,” suggesting the writers were thinking of the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics.

Michael Crichton’s novel *Timeline* takes the approach that all time travel really is travel to an already existing parallel universe where time passes at a slower rate than our own but actions in any of these parallel universes may have already occurred in our past. It is unclear from the novel if any sizable change in events of these parallel universes can be made.

In the Homeline of *GURPS Infinite Worlds* there are chaos – parallel universes at an early part of Homeline’s history but changes to their history do not affect Homeline’s history. However tampering with their history can cause them to shift quanta making access harder if not impossible.

A type of story which could be placed in this category is one where the alternative version of the past lies not in some other dimension, but simply at a distant location in space or a future period of time that replicates conditions in the traveler’s past. For example, in a Futurama episode called *The Late Philip J. Fry*, the professor designed a forward-only time travel device. Trapped in the future, he and two colleagues travel forward all the way to the end of the universe, at which point they witness a new Big Bang which gives rise to a new universe whose history mirrors their own history. Then they continue to go forward until they reach the exact time of their initial departure. Although this journey is not exactly a backward time travel, the final result is the same.
In the Japanese manga, *Dragon Ball Z*, the character Trunks travels back in time to warn the characters of their deaths soon to come. This does not change his timeline, only creates a new one in which they do not die. Soon two of the characters destroy the lab where the monster Cell is being created, stopping him from absorbing the androids, creating a third timeline. Later it is revealed that Trunks is killed by Cell in the future, then travels to three years before any of the events occurs, which creates a fourth timeline. No matter what any character does in the past, their own original timeline is unchanged.

**Theories of time travel in urban legends**

An urban legend is a form of modern folklore consisting of stories usually believed by their tellers to be true. Urban legends are sometimes repeated in news stories and, in recent years, distributed through the internet. Today urban legends therefore often use other genres such as secret history, conspiracy theories, collaborative fiction, alternate reality games, transmedia storytelling and alternate history.

*The Philadelphia Experiment*

A mystical experiment took place in Philadelphia’s naval port October 28 1943. When a line of big, electromagnetic generators were turned on aboard the destroyer USS Eldridge, a fog gathered around the ship, a heavily blue light followed, and USS Eldridge disappeared!

At the same time the ship appeared in Norfolk, Virginia, and was here observed in several minutes, before Eldridge turned back to Philadelphia. The sailors, who had experienced this travel in time and space, were hit by strange illnesses. Some became invisible, some went into disintegration, and others went insane.

So says the myth about The Philadelphia Experiment. There is disagreement about the precise date and whether there were one or two experiments, but the fundamental features in the story are the same.

The experiment was carried out by the American navy in an attempt to make naval vessels invisible to the radars of the enemy. However the results were much more far reaching. The ship ended namely with moving both in time and space. The navy had – conscious or unconscious – discovered a way of moving in time and space through so-called wormholes created by magnetic fields.
In the time before Second World War Albert Einstein also worked on formulating a "Unified Field Theory" about the connection between magnetism and gravitation. The theory is also called "The theory of everything", "God’s formula" and "The Holy Grail of Physics" and could acquire much more far reaching importance than the theory of relativity. Maybe even open to completely new potentials such as time travel and pure energy. Albert Einstein never reached to solve the riddle and was drawing his work back, but some conspiracy theorists think, that he in fact solved the riddle but was hiding the result, because mankind wasn't ready for the consequences of his theoretical work.

Albert Einstein wasn't the only one, who was occupied with time theories. The mystical scientist and inventor, Nikola Tesla, worked with rotatory magnetic fields, time travel, death beams, artificial lightning and transport of energy without wires. He doesn’t belong among the most famous physicists, but it was him, who invented the alternator, the remote control and the basic principles behind the radio. He has had the unit of measurement tesla, which indicates the strenght of magnets, named after him. Nikola Tesla was an odd man with many phobias. Afraid of germs, crazy with doves and extreme occupied by, that his actions went up in the number three! However something suggests, that he had success with parts of his mystical work, because when he died, his results were confiscated by the authorities – despite protests from family.

Conspiracy theorists disagree about, whether the American navy used Nikola Tesla´s results, Albert Einstein´s secret formula or even extraterrestrial technology, when they in 1943 carried out the experiment, which later should become known as The Philadelphia Experiment. One thing they however agree about: the result surpassed their wildest expectations.

In some versions of the story the ship not just moved in distance, it also moved in time. The destroyer was – either at the same time or in a following experiment – transported 40 years forward in time. The sailors thought, that they were back in Philadelphia´s port, and some of the terrified crewmembers jumped overboard and swam into the quay. Here they discovered, that they had come to Long Island in 1983! They were received by an old scientist and some military people, who had waited for this moment in 40 years. Ever after the experiment in 1943 they had known, that the ship would emerge. The crewmembers were directed back on board the ship not to create imbalance in the spacetime. Among the time travel´s side effects were, that the sailors risked to become insane or direct disintegrated. And that they years after the travel suddenly could freeze for hours at a time or become invisible in shorter or longer periods of time.
The myth about The Philadelphia Experiment took form at the end of the 1950s, when the author to the book *The Case for the UFO*, Morris k. Jessup, referred a story from Carl Meredith Allen aka Carlos Miguel Allende, who allegedly had seen USS Eldridge emerge in Norfolk. Through the years the myth has got new life in several books and a few movies. The most famous is William Moore and Charles Berlitz´s book *The Philadelphia Experiment: Project Invisibility* from 1979. They also used Morris k. Jessup as primary source. Morris k. Jessup committed suicide in 1959, but conspiracy theorists think, that he was murdered, because he came to close to the truth.

The theory about The Philadelphia Experiment has so many holes, that many consider it to be a regular urban legend started by Carl Meredith Allen. The two major problems of the theory is that:

1) Carl Meredith Allen is the only source and the only witness to the experiment. And that he in 1969 admitted, that parts of the story was made-up.

2) old crewmembers cannot confirm the story. They say, that USS Eldridge not at all was in Philadelphia at the time, where the experiment should have taken place. Bill van Allen, captain on USS Eldridge in 1943-44, has said to the newspaper Philadelphia Enquirer: “I don't have the slightest idea about, how these stories turned up.”

The lacks of the theory in form of clues and evidence have however not exploded the myth. If you think, that such experiments took place in secret, it is also natural to suppose, that the masterminds could hide the trails after the experiment. However, The Philadelphia Experiment is one of the conspiracy theories, which lies in the border between urban legends and conspiracy theories.

**The Montauk Project**

The Montauk Project was alleged to be a series of secret United States government projects conducted at Camp Hero or Montauk Air Force Station on Montauk, Long Island for the purpose of developing psychological warfare techniques and exotic research including time travel. Experiments involving teleportation, time travel, contact with extraterrestrials, and mind control are frequently alleged to have been conducted at the camp.

Conspiracy theories about the Montauk Project have circulated since the early 1980s. According to astrophysicist and UFO researcher Jacques Vallecé, the Montauk Experiment stories seem to have originated with the account of Preston Nichols, who
claimed to have recovered repressed memories of his own involvement (see my article *Regression psychotherapies*). He has authored five books on the subject, including Montauk Project: Experiments in time.

There is no definitive version of the Montauk Project narrative, but the most common accounts describe it as an extension or a continuation of the Philadelphia Experiment.

**Ong’s Hat**

Ong’s Hat, New Jersey, is a location of what has been called a ghost town in Southampton Township, Burlington County, New Jersey. As a long-abandoned small settlement, Ong’s Hat remained obscure until its name and location was co-opted in a book called *Ong’s Hat: The Beginning* by Joseph Matheny, which was based on stories that had circulated on computer bulletin boards, which held that a cult of outcast scientists opened an interdimensional gateway in Ong’s Hat. Matheny was not clear to whether his book was intended as fact or fiction.

Ong’s Hat was one of the earliest internet-based secret history conspiracy theories created as a piece of collaborative fiction (aka *Incunabula*) by four core individuals, although the membership propagating the tale changed over time. Joseph Matheny was intimately involved and eventually concluded the project.

The urban legend (or alternate history) states that a facility in Ong’s Hat manned by Princeton professors conducted quantum physics and chaos theory experiments, and according to conspiracy theories, discovered a new theory for dimensional travel using a device called EGG. This device was to later inspire a children’s TV series called Galidor to use an interdimensional travel device of the same name.

**Dimension UFOs**

UFOs and aliens are not necessarily visitors from distant solar systems. With the knowledge we have today, it is not possible to travel faster than the speed of light, a bit under 300,000 kilometres per second. It is at a snail’s pace in relation to the colossal distances in space. Therefore UFO enthusiasts eagerly talk about, how aliens can reach Earth from other stars without using centuries on the travel. Many UFO believers think, that the alien lifeforms travel through wormholes or others gates in spacetime. However there also exists a line of much more far reaching theories, which collect religion, life after death, UFO observations, ghosts and parapsychology, under one explanation.
The theories claim that the world we know only is one dimension in a set of parallel universes. That could mean, that UFO observations, ghosts, communication with the dead, etc. etc., in reality are visits from, or interaction with, other parallel worlds. The big mystery is then, how to move between the various planes. Perhaps it is death, which opens the door to a new dimension. Perhaps Earth and our dimension just are a kindergarten in the life of the soul, and UFOs a kind of educators, which keep an eye on us.

There exist many such New Age theories. The explanations are fascinating, and from a philosophical point of view the theories are also interesting, because they deal with the riddles of existence. But when the theories are used to more than philosophizing over the meaning of life, it can become dangerous. Many of the mystical neo-religious sects, which are building on UFO inspired theories, are notorious in using manipulation when recruiting new disciples. Even murder and collective suicide have happened in neo-religious sects. Marshall Applewhite (1931-1997) was leader of the UFO doomsday cult Heaven’s Gate. He and 38 other members committed suicide on March 26, 1997 – allegedly in order to meet aliens in a spacecraft disguised as the comet HALE-BOPP.

In the world of conspiracy theories there are a genre of theories, which are called Unified Theories – meaning theories, which collect many mysteries into one great theory. The theory about parallel universes is one of such unifying theories.

2) The WingMakers Project

Science has partly replaced ancient myths. But it can’t explain everything, and therefore many feel the need for a new and modern mythology. That is precisely what the American website wingmakers.com offers.

The origin of the mythology is an important part of the story on this website. We are told that two students, who in 1996 were hiking in the desert in the northern New Mexico, near an ancient archaeological site, called Chaco Canyon, found a mystical metallic artifact from space. A classified UFO department in the American security service NSA was assigned to investigate the discovery. This department is called the Advanced Contact Intelligence Organization (ACIO).

The place for the discovery was called The Ancient Arrow site, and the assignment for ACIO was called The Ancient Arrow Project.

The artifact, which becomes known among ACIO operatives as the Compass, led them to a large, spiral cave system of 23 + 1 chambers, which was created in the year
826 by beings from a distant galaxy. These beings call themselves WingMakers. WingMakers are time travelers from 750 years in the future, and have therefore traveled back in time to the year 826 in order to place time capsules here. They are shortly said future models of ourselves, who travel in time, in order to correct genetic and historical "flaws". We see here, that the WingMakers Story is based on the theory of time travel, which claims that history is flexible and is subject to change (Plastic Time).

In each chamber there was a wall painting and a technological artifact from space. In the last chamber the artifact was an optical disc presumably holding the information about the site’s creators and their purpose. After considerable effort to access the optical disc, the ACIO team, led by Jamisson Neruda, finally succeeds, and determines the creators of the site as the WingMakers. Over 8000 pages of philosophy, poetry, music, genetics, sub-dimensional equations, and cosmology are contained within the disc. This cave system is the first of seven so-called time capsules, spread around the world. The last six time capsules are yet to be discovered.

The optical disc was leaked one year after the discovery, and a part of the contents has thereafter ended up on wingmakers.com. The webmaster Mark Hempel says, that he is just passing on, what he is told by a contact person (Sarah de Rosnay).

In 2001, though, Hempel was contacted by a new person, James, who claims, that it is him who is the mastermind behind. Sarah de Rosnay is only his assistant. So, James is the creator of the WingMakers material. He is claimed to be a specialist from the WingMakers, and an expert in “transposing Tributary Zones to three dimensional space/time worlds in the form of encoded sensory data streams.” In other words, he is a kind of what Hindu religion calls an Avatar. In Western terminology he would be known as a Messiah. I will return to the website’s problem of using obscure language about very known concepts.

James also suddenly began to answer the email inquiries of interested individuals through the site’s webmaster, Mark Hempel, who acts as liaison (in 2001). James – it is told - was born as a human with very human parents. If you examined his DNA at birth you would find very little difference from your own. He is said to be a multidimensional being who lives simultaneously in a spectrum of realities. He says himself: “My dominant reality is different than yours. Because of this difference, I am able to process this human reality at a different frequency rate, which enables me to perceive behind and beyond the three-dimensional ‘surface’ of this reality.”

James furthermore states: “As a result of this ability, I am able to translate art, music, poetry, philosophy, and scientific insights that are from my dominant reality into
yours. In so doing, I have translated sensory data that will catalyze future discoveries that will redefine the human soul. I am a teacher of encoded sensory data streams and was trained, at my request, to embody as the human translator of the galactic Tributary zones, making them intelligible to the human race of the 21st century."

The website contains an (overwhelming) introduction, a half book (The Ancient Arrow Project Novel) about how the chambers was discovered, and Sarah de Rosnay’s four long interviews with the person, who leaked the optical disc (Dr. Jamisson Neruda).

The interviews can be read in extension of the book. They tell an even more fantastic story about how ACIO for a long time had been in contact with beings from other planets. They exchange knowledge and co-operate about the development of new technology, which makes possible clairvoyance, materializations, time travel and much more. Examples are Light Encoded Reality Matrix (LERN), Memory Restructure Program (MRP), Remote viewing Technology (RV), Personal Mole Tracking Devices (PMs), and of course Blank Slate Tecknology (BST), which is about interactive time travel, which purpose is to deflect the prophesied Animus from Earth. Here we see the inspiration from the Montauk Project.

So, there are also hostile beings (Animus), who want to take over Earth because of its great biological variation. They namely want to reproduce themselves by means of our genes.

But WingMakers is the most sophisticated race, it is said. They are the central race in the universe, and the first race, which was created by God. They have genetically created us humans, and they guard us. The also help us to develop ourselves, and around year 2080 a great deal of mankind will have realized The Soul or The self.

For those, who want to deepen themselves more in WingMakers´ spiritual teaching, there are four philosophical texts, and James´ responses to questions.

Moreover the website contains the 24 wall paintings, 48 poems and extract of pieces of music. It is all divided in relation to the 24 chambers in this time capsule, and the meaning is that they shall have a transcendent effect and in this way be a portal to ”other” dimensions of reality. The seven time capsules are also called DNA triggers. Altogether genetics is a central concept on the website.

The website is incredibly extensive, worked through, and beautiful done. It is a mythology, which wants something – a fantastic synthesis of science fiction, ufology, parapsychology, theosophy and conspiracy theory.
Since the original wingmakers.com in 1998, affiliated websites have been developed at lyricus.org, eventtemples.com, sovereignintegral.org, all of which are copyright Mark Hempel of WingMakers LLC.

The WingMakers Project is an attempt to create an alternate history. Alternate history or alternative history is a genre of fiction consisting of stories that are set in worlds in which history has diverged from the actual history of the world. Since the 1950s this type of fiction has to a large extent merged with science fictional tropes involving cross-time travel between alternate histories or psychic awareness of the existence of “our” universe by the people in another; or ordinary voyaging uptime (into the past) or downtime (into the future) that results in history splitting into two or more timelines.

WingMakers is also a so-called secret history. A secret history (or shadow history) is a revisionist interpretation of either fictional or real (or known) history, which is claimed to have been deliberately suppressed, forgotten, or ignored by established scholars. Originally, secret histories were designed as non-fictional, revealing or claiming to reveal the truth behind the “spin”. Today we see how secret history sometimes is used in a long-running science fiction or fantasy universe to preserve continuity with the present by reconciling paranormal, anachronistic, or otherwise notable but unrecorded events with what actually happened in known history; for instance in the already mentioned fictional time travel theories. The WingMakers story combines this with the urban legend and alternate history from the Ong’s Hat myth. Though the WingMakers website tries to avoid critique by saying it is a modern mythology (where urban legends are considered as a modern folklore) it also keeps on, precisely as in urban legends, to insinuate that the story is true (more about this below). It is therefore a piece of pseudohistory.

Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of isn’t history at all.

Pseudohistory should also be distinguished from historical fiction and fantasy. Anyone who cites a work of historical fiction as if it were a historical text is a practicing pseudohistorian. There are also writers of historical fiction who intentionally falsify and invent ancient history. A technique to do this is to claim to find an ancient document and publishing it in order to express one’s own ideas. An
example is The Celestine Prophecy. A variation on this theme is to claim that one is channeling a book from some ancient being, e.g, *The Urantia Book* and *Bringers of the Dawn*

It is clear that The WingMakers Story is inspired by everything we have investigated until now. The main source of inspiration is of course Theosophy. A secondary inspiration is the integral system of Ken Wilber (see my articles *The fascism of Theosophy* and *A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method*). Ken Wilber’s method is a system which relativizes all point of views (except its own) as totalitarian ideologies often have practiced it. The concept of the WingMakers is just another word for the theosophical concept of the Great White Brotherhood. All in all: the only thing that actually distinguishes the websites’ writings from other theosophical inspired New Age directions, is the invented terminology. What was “spirit” now becomes “Source Intelligence”, “The Soul” is now called “Sovereign Integral”, God becomes “First source”, The “Masters of Wisdom” get superseded by an even higher order of galactic super beings, the Lyricus Teaching Order, and so on.

The website is of course also inspired by the many Theosophy inspired UFO religions such as Aetherius Society, Church of the SubGenius, Heaven’s Gate, Industrial Church of the New World Comforter, Nation of Islam, Raëlism, Scientology, Unarius Academy of Science, Universe People.

A neo-Nazi esoteric Nazi Gnostic sect headquartered in Vienna, Austria called the Tempelhofgesellschaft, founded in the early 1990s, teaches what it calls a form of Marcionism. They distribute pamphlets claiming that the Aryan race originally came to Atlantis from the star Aldebaran (this information is supposedly based on “ancient Sumerian manuscripts”). They maintain that the Aryans from Aldebaran derive their power from the vril energy of the Black Sun. They teach that since the Aryan race is of extraterrestrial origin it has a divine mission to dominate all the other races. It is believed by adherents of this religion that an enormous space fleet is on its way to Earth from Aldebaran which, when it arrives, will join forces with the *Nazi Flying Saucers from Antarctica* to establish the Western Imperium. – I mention this last UFO religion in order to point out how much fascism there is contained in all of these Theosophy inspired movements. I will return to the problem of fascism.

The technique of inventing a new terminology, or replacing concepts and words in already existing works, for thereby to indicate, that you are presenting something new, is a wellknown trick made by first-year students in philosophy. The only result is, combined with the attempt of creating scientific sounding terms, that the texts become unnecessary obscure.
On the website called The WingMakers files (www.wingmakersfiles.110mb.com) you can find some critical comments on The wingMakers Project. For example it exposes the content of the websites´ art and music. But it also reveals an email written by Mark Hempel in 2000. He wrote about the WingMakers:

“I’ve spent the last two years searching this stuff out, and I haven’t found anything that’s particularly similar to this. The closest I’ve found is from a book called the Urantia Book, which also has mysterious origins as I understand it.”

And James acknowledge what he sees as the significance of the Urantia Book:

“Within this galaxy, the cosmology presented in the Urantia Book is considered one of the two best depictions of the structure of the Grand Universe. (The book referred to in the Ancient Arrow Project, Liminal Cosmology, is considered the other). It so happens that the WingMakers´ material is not based on this depiction, but rather is based on the reality of the physical Grand Universe, which happens to coincide with the view held by the Urantia Book.”

What is the Urantia Book? The Urantia Book (published 1955) is supposedly written by super-beings from heaven and deals with eugenics and “racial purity”. It is a kind of science-fictional bible (a bible of eugenics), a work of plagiarism peppered with ideas taken from the Seventh-Day Adventism and elsewhere.

The website furthermore exposes parts of the WingMakers material as direct plagiarism of the Urantia Book. The exact circumstances of the origin of The Urantia Book are unknown. The book and its publishers do not name a human author. Instead it is written as if directly presented by numerous celestial beings appointed to the task of providing an “epochal” religious revelation. For each paper, either a named celestial being, an order of being, or a group of beings is credited as its author.

As early as 1911, William S. Sadler and his wife Lena Sadler, physicians in Chicago and well known in the community, are said to have been approached by a neighbor who was concerned because she would occasionally find her husband in a deep sleep and breathing abnormally. The Sadlers came to observe the episodes, and over time, the individual produced verbal communication that claimed to be from “student visitor” spiritual beings. This changed in early 1925 with a “voluminous handwritten document”, which from then on became the regular method of purported communication. In 1924, a group of Sadler´s friends, former patients, and colleagues began meeting for Sunday intellectual discussions, but became interested in the strange communication when Sadler mentioned the case and read samples at their request. Shortly after, a communication reportedly was received that his group would
be allowed to devise questions and that answers would be given by celestial beings through the “contact personality” (in the WingMakers material this contact person is of course James). In this way it continued until all papers now collected together as *The Urantia Book* were obtained. The group was known as the Forum.

William S. Sadler had himself written some eugenicist works, and is claimed to have had hand in editing or writing the books, and that this is how the ideas were included.

The Celestine Prophecy is a 1993 novel by James Redfield that discuss various psychological and spiritual ideas which are rooted in many ancient Eastern Traditions and New Age spirituality. The main character of the novel undertakes a journey to find and understand a series of nine spiritual insights on an ancient manuscript in Peru. The book is a first-person narrative of the narrator´s spiritual awakening as he goes through a transitional period of his life.

Though James Redfield admits that, even though he considers the book to be a novel, his intention was to write a story in the shape of a parable, a story meant to illustrate a point or teach a lesson. Therefore the novel is seen as a spiritual guide for the New Age. In the novel, the meaning of life is revealed in the ancient Peruvian manuscript written in Aramaic. It predicts a massive spiritual transformation of society in the late twentieth century. We will finally grasp the secrets of the universe, the mysteries of existence, the meaning of life.

So, you can easily see that the Celestine Prophecy is talking about ideological education and not philosophical education as in true spirituality (see my articles *The difference between philosophical education and ideological education* and *Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality*). What is the problem with this? The novel has some good advice, which I of course don´t disagree with, such as “make love, not war.” But there is also references to vibrations and energy, advices to avoid the negative (you can tell good people by their eyes), stop doubting, follow your intuitions and premonitions, flow with coincidences, believe in the purposiveness of everything, join thousands of others on the quest, turn into your feelings and evolve to a higher plane. Follow your intuitions and dreams as you go through your spiritual evolution. Fact or fiction, it doesn´t matter. Truth is what you make it. Life´s too short and too complicated to deal with reality. Make your own reality.

This New Age subjectivism and relativism encourage people to believe that reality is whatever you want it to be. The line between fact and fiction gets blurry and obscured. And therewith people are directed into the area of magical thinking, where you don´t discriminate between image and reality. And therewith you also have the
elimination of critical thinking, which precisely is about discriminating between image and reality. Critical thinking is not only crucial in science and philosophy, but also in spirituality. The Dominican mystics call this steps discriminatio, the ability to discriminate between how the energy is used temporal or religious. And despite that magical thinking actually can create something magical, then in true spirituality it is still something temporal, or relatively (black magic/occultism), which will create negative karma if practised. The Orientals call it viveka, discrimination, the ability to use your will on that part of the energy, you can steer yourself, and steer it towards exercises, prayer, mantras, meditation, instead of towards career, worldliness, self-unfolding, as for example New Thought does (see my article The New Thought movement and the law of attraction). The central teaching in both science, philosophy and spirituality is: discriminate between image and reality!

So, where does New Age have this idea about subjectivism and relativism from? It neither comes from science or spirituality, but from the postmodern intellectualism on Western Universities. But if truth is what you want it to be, then you must accept, that everything from Nazism, Fascism, Dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence is as equally true as democracy, negotiation and dialogue. Subjectivism shuts down people’s critical faculties, making them suggestible for any ideology. It involves making people quit thinking critically in order to open them up to thinking magical about that thought distortions such as Subjective validation, Confabulation and Communal reinforcement lead to bliss (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions). In New Age hypnosis is directly used as a means for inducing in people certain worldviews (see my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception).

The subjectivism in the WingMakers Project can be seen in the question about whether the WingMakers material is fact or fiction. The introduction to the project says as follows: “It is fact wrapped in fiction otherwise known as myth.” So here we see how subjectivism is used as an attempt to get the line between fact and fiction blurry and obscured. It is also an attempt to avoid critique. Without success, because the story, as mentioned, ends in pseudohistory.

Sarah de Rosnay, assistent to James, says: “I have been asked by James to introduce him and the facts behind the mythology of the WingMakers. It’s important to understand that virtually every element of this story is based in reality. However, the story, in its totality, is not real. What is real is that a teacher has come to this planet at this time to transmit a multi-dimensional, multimedia story that will act as a catalyst.”
James himself says that WingMakers content “is disconnecting people from the established fabric of the New Age and acquainting them to new energies that are present within themselves, not the New Age.”

Yet he discusses the Urantia Book, extraterrestrials, 2012, the Shining Ones, DNA activation, Jesus, who he says is a member of the Lyricus Teaching Order, metaphysics, Remote Viewing, chakras, the Christ, the Galactic Federation, the Eternal Watcher, Zeti Reticuli, teachers of light, ascended masters and so on and so forth; all of which are standard New Age subject matter. He promotes ideas such as that all existence derives from one source of divine energy, and that everything is universally connected. He talks about energy fields and personal transformation by means of guided imagery and meditation that will ultimately help bring about global transformation. He promotes positive psychology (= The New Thought Movement and the law of attraction, which the WingMakers website also has a link to, explained as a metaphysics link), and quantum mysticism including the subjectivistic notion that thought creates reality. He discusses multidimensional reality and multidimensional beings. He claims to be a reincarnation of famous historical figures. All the WingMakers associated music would only ever be classed as New Age Music.

The only thing that distinguishes James´ writing from New Ageism is, as mentioned, the invented terminology.

On the associated website eventtemples.com you can find some guided meditations. And when meditation and other spiritual exercises (it doesn’t matter that such meditations are about positive things such as healing etc.) are used in combination with the subjectivistic techniques of shutting down people´s critical faculties (the only means we have in order to clarify thought distortions – again: see my book A dictionary of thought distortions), the energy, which meditation gathers, will be projected into our thought distortions, and meditation will become communal reinforcement of the fascistic ideas of WingMakers.

3) Quantum mysticism

Quantum mysticism is a pseudoscientific version of quantum mechanics. The pseudoscience shows in two ways:

1) That Einstein´s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, prove that relativism and subjectivism are valid points of views.
2) That Quantum mechanics and Einstein’s theories of relativity prove that classical physics (the age of enlightenment, rationalism) is not valid anymore.

1) That Einstein’s theories of relativity, and quantum mechanics, prove, that relativism and subjectivism are valid points of views.

Subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn’t exist any objective truth, or reality. Truth, or reality, is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. All truths are therefore equally true and equally valid, and if one person’s truth, or one culture’s truth, try to intervene in the truths of other individuals or cultures, then this is considered as an aggression.

There both exists an individual version of relativism, and a collective version. The individual version is called subjectivism. This version is often connected with a right-wing liberalism. The other version is a collective relativism, cultural relativism, which often is connected to a left-wing socialism. However both are common in distorting both science and human rights. Both are demanding “alternative” views of science, and for example also human rights. And both are introducing intellectual apartheid in different ways.

In the pseudoscience of reductionism you see both versions in the so-called heredity and environment arguments, where the right-wing version typical supports the heredity side, and the left-wing version supports the environment side (read more in my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

In New Age pseudoscience it is not (yet) so much a political agenda that distorts science, but occult and religious point of views (read my article The pseudoscience of New Age and reductionism). In the works of Fritjof Capra, though, you see the beginning of the combination. Fritjof Capra (born February 1, 1939) is an Austrian-born American physicist. He is a founding director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California, and is on the faculty of Schumacher College.

Capra is the author of several books, including The Tao of Physics (1975), and The Turning Point (1982). Quantum mysticism seems to have originated with Capra in his book The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism. The book’s first two parts are excellent expositions on ancient religions and modern physics. The third part, which tries to connect the two is an abysmal failure. Nevertheless, it has been this third part, which has influenced numerous New Age advocates to claim that quantum mechanics proves the reality of everything from chi, prana, ESP, etc., etc., – to time travel.
His other book, *The Turning Point*, shows the ideology in it, where he combines quantum mysticism with reductionism, especially reductionisms such as historism and sociologism (though he is very aware of the reductionism of the “old” mechanical worldview).

The use of relativism and subjectivism in management theory (“it is not facts, but the best story, that wins!”), can be seen in a new trend within New Age: storytelling (see my article *Management theory and the self-help industry*). This can be seen in New Age movies such as *The Secret*, *What the Bleep Do We Know?*, and *The Living Matrix*.

In my article *The New Thought movement and the law of Attraction* I have examined *The Secret*.

*What the Bleep do We Know* combines documentary-style interviews, computer-animated graphics, and a narrative that describes the spiritual connection between quantum physics and consciousness. The plot follows the story of a deaf photographer; as she encounters emotional and existential obstacles in her life, she comes to consider the idea that individual and group consciousness can influence the material world. Her experiences are offered by the filmmakers to illustrate the movie’s thesis about quantum physics and consciousness (read more about this movie in my article *Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self industry*).

*The Living Matrix* claims to bring breakthrough information that will transform your understanding of how to get well and stay well. Dynamic graphic-animation is woven with interviews with leading researchers and health practitioners as they share their discoveries on the miracle cures traditional medicine can’t explain. These experts reveal how energy and information fields – not genetics – drive human physiology and biochemistry, and illustrate the benefits of integrating conventional and alternative health care. What is introduced is the new paradigm in biology: Quantum biology.

The producers of the above mentioned films probably believe in their ideas, but there is an even newer trend within New Age, where you fully conscious are creating a hoax. This is, as already mentioned, seen in the WingMakers´ Project.

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

In the same way the theories of relativity, epistemological seen, give no background for any relativism about, that ”everything is relative”. The seen does not depend of the eyes that watch when it comes to physical phenomenons, neither in quantum mechanics, nor in relativistic physics.

But it is actually possible to use quantum mechanics to support both philosophical and spiritual point of views. The creator of quantum mechanics, Niels Bohr, is in his philosophy very inspired by Taoism. His coat of arms is showing the yin and yang symbol. The paradox is, that his philosophy/spirituality, which of course is grounded in quantum mechanics, directly pulls the carpet away under quantum mysticism. Quantum mechanics shows namely, that it is the order of nature that decides how we shall use our thoughts and language, it is not us that can create in reality as it fit us.

This confusion in quantum mysticism (and in the New Age environment as such) arises because it is neither quantum mechanics, nor spirituality, that are the background for the theories, but the postmodern intellectualism, today especially represented by social constructivism (see my articles Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry and The Sokal Hoax).

2) That Quantum Mechanics and Einsteins theories of relativity prove, that classical physics (the age of enlightenment, rationalism) is not valid anymore

This misunderstanding is especially based on an misunderstanding of Thomas Kuhn´s work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, where he shows the development of physics – implemented in the concepts: normal science, anomalies, crisis, revolution and the creation of a new paradigm.
I will explain Thomas Kuhn in relation with how he is abused in Neuro-linguistic Programming (see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)).

NLP is founded by Richard Bandler and John Grinder.

John Grinder denies, that his and Bandler’s work is an eclectic hodgepodge of philosophy and psychology, or that it even builds from the work of others. He believes that what he and Bandler did was “create a paradigm shift.”

The following claim by Grinder provides some sense of what he thinks NLP is:

My memories about what we thought at the time of discovery (with respect to the classic code we developed – that is, the years 1973 through 1978) are that we were quite explicit that we were out to overthrow a paradigm and that, for example, I, for one, found it very useful to plan this campaign using in part as a guide the excellent work of Thomas Kuhn (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions) in which he detailed some of the conditions in the midst of paradigm shifts. For example, I believe it was very useful that neither one of us were qualified in the field we first went after – psychology and in particular, its therapeutic application; this being one of the conditions which Kuhn identified in his historical study of paradigm shifts. Who knows what Bandler was thinking?

As a comment to this the critical thinker Robert T. Carroll says: “One can only hope that Bandler wasn’t thinking the same things that Grinder was thinking, at least with respect to Kuhn’s classic text.”

Kuhn did not promote the notion that not being particularly qualified in a scientific field is a significant condition for contributing to the development of a new paradigm in science. Furthermore, Kuhn did not provide a model or blueprint for creating paradigm shifts! His is an historical work, described what he believed to have occurred in the history of science. He made no claim that anything similar happens in philosophy and he certainly did not imply that anything NLP did, or is doing, constitutes a paradigm shift.

But the use of the concept of paradigm shifts is very popular in the postmodern intellectualism and its more common spiritual movement New Age, where a lot of different “spiritual” systems (new-thinking), often contradictory, are claiming, that it from now on is impossible to think in “old” ways anymore, without accepting their systems. The failure is due to their constructivistic ways of thinking; that is: subjectivism and relativism.
The phrases old-thinking and new-thinking are also very popular within the so-called postmodern intellectualism, which is the background for what I consider as a wrong spiritual turn within the more popular, common movement of New Age. In this movement I for example have heard people refer to themselves as New Thought Ministers (again: see my articles Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality and The New Thought movement and the law of attraction).

The phrases old-thinking and new-thinking are often used as a weapon against critique, and I see them as a signal of the rising of a dangerous ideology. In lack of better - in our postmodern world - I have called this ideology The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

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 was 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 used concepts such as old-thinking and new-thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, everytime they use concepts within old-thinking.

Today, after having passed 1984, we live in a so-called postmodernistic dystopia, where eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away – and where we have been invaded by the ideology of relativism, which rulers, in creeping ways, use the same phrases as the rulers in Orwell´s novel, as if they had used it as inspiration (the nearest to an attempt of actually creating a new language, which implies some rules about what is considered as “negative” and “positive”, is probably the creating of the so-called Giraffe-language – see my article Nonviolent Communication is an instrument of psychic terror).

This new language accepts the use of thought distortions (see my book A dictionary of thought distortions) – as for example rhetoric, ad hominem move, sophistry, and is extreme hostile towards critical thinking.

Often you hear postmodern intellectuals use the following bullying of critics:

“that they are hewing to the ‘objective´ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

They typically assert that this “dogma” has already been thoroughly undermined by the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics and that physical reality has been shown to be “at bottom a social and linguistic construct.”
This is used to term critics as old-thinkers, for example that their critique is part of a “patriarchal, racist, colonistic, eurocentric, cultural dominion discourse”

Relativists typically deride critics and scientists for continuing to cling to the “dogma imposed by the long post-Enlightenment hegemony over the Western intellectual outlook, that there exists an external world whose properties are independent of human beings, and that human beings can obtain reliable, if imperfect and tentative knowledge of these properties by hewing to the ‘objective’ procedures and epistemological structures prescribed by the so-called scientific method.”

And: “How can a self-perpetuating secular priesthood of credentialed ‘scientists’ purport to maintain a monopoly on the production of scientific knowledge?”

Therefore they demand that science has to be integrated with alternative sciences (and alternative views of human rights), what I call the Illuminati-aspect of The Matrix Conspiracy, because science can’t be mixed with spiritual or political concepts. If this happens, then it is not science anymore. The same thing with relativistic and subjectivistic views of human rights; then it is not human rights anymore.

Postmodern intellectualists are through this use of language often trying to get a political agenda forced through. If you change the political terms with spiritual terms, though, the same language is used in New Age circles. As an example is the famous American New Age guru Deepak Chopra, who has invented the concept of quantum healing, which again is based on the misunderstanding of quantum mechanics, that the mind can control everything. Chopra is without hesitation going into discussions with experts, and is precisely using the above-mentioned language (read more about Chopra in my article Quantum mysticism and its web of lies).

**Critique**

The emergence of quantum mechanics has not made classical physics invalid; it is still valid, but Planck’s constant (the quantum postulate) has given it a limited scope of application.

According to Niels Bohr quantum mechanics is a generalization of classical physics, and the complementarity principle is a generalization of the classical causality principle. In the same way the theory of relativity is a generalization in another direction of the classical physics.
According to Bohr you can’t replace classical physics with quantum physics, because the validity of classical physics is a necessary precondition for, that you can describe the quantum mechanical phenomena, and set out for the macroscopical (“classical”) experimental arrangement.

This means, that both materialism and idealism (subjectivism and relativism) are invalid point of views. On the one side quantum mechanics breaks with the principle of causation and determinism, so that neither the human brain/thought, or nature and evolution, can said to be fully cause-determined systems, as materialism claims. On the other side you can’t say neither, that the principle of causation and determinism are invalid, as idealism (subjectivism and relativism) claims. They are still valid, but with a limited scope of application. Instead you must use the complementarity-principle. The fact that causality is preserved in quantum mechanics makes time travel theories based on quantum mechanics invalid.

An interesting thing is, that almost all New Age versions of quantum mysticism, which totally deny the validity of the principle of causation and determinism (law of attraction, quantum healing, time travel, etc., etc.) actually are based on extreme cause-determined theories, for example the law of attraction, which claims, that if you think in a certain way, then the universe will reward you in a certain way. But that is what quantum mechanics breaks with.

If you want a deeper going examination of quantum mechanics, read my article *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr*.

4) The problem of consciousness in connection with time travel

In Zen it is 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 consciousness (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary consciousness 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.

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 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 Akashic records are 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).

Parallel universes, and other dimensions, only exist on an astral plane. I therefore accept the theory of Dimension UFOs. But there are also dangers connected with the astral plane such as for example spiritual crises (see my articles Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena and Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice). And the problem of consciousness is the same on the astral plane as on the normal plane. I will explain this problem below.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now´s lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part not is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. In that way Nagarjuna´s philosophy advocates a
kind of dualism if we shall use our thinking and language in an unambiguous way. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to everything else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego’s evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore these polar partners, in their extremes, finally will switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can’t say anything about the wholeness, only dualistic about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (sûnyatâ) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created. The WingMakers Project doesn’t seem to have this argumentation included in his system, since it in opposition with this directly creates a lot of dogmas, theories and viewpoints.

The concept of emptiness refers to the intuitive experience of reality, that all inner and outer phenomenons are devoid of independent existence and form of being. What they can be said to be, they can only be said to be in relation to something else, a complementary thing and vice versa. In that way they are nothing by virtue of themselves, and therefore nothing by virtue of something else either, etc. They are insubstantial, or as Nagarjuna calls it: codependent originated (everything that exists does so dependently on other things) (pratityasamutpanna). In absolute sense nothing exists independently, eternally or unchangeable. All existence is impermanent; everything that exists is transitory, lasting only a moment.

But this doesn´t mean, that Nagarjuna is an advocate of the absolute non-existence of things. Non-existence means namely neither negation nor opposition to existence. Therefore also non-existence is, as everything else, correlative. Codependent origination is what Nagarjuna calls emptiness. The creation of things, images and concepts ends in the emptiness. And by trying to reveal the unreality of the relative, conventional world, you can reach the absolute reality, which is lying in this emptiness. The emptiness is in that way the inexpressible (Nirvana). Because Nirvana is lying in the revelation of the unreality (Samsara), then Nirvana and Samsara is not at all different.

Nagarjuna´s teaching is in that way a kind of Dream Yoga (see my article What is Dream Yoga?).
What Nagarjuna’s teaching also tells us is that if we should use thoughts and language in an unambiguous way, it is necessary to advocate a kind of epistemological, or gnoseological dualism. In this dualism critical thinking is essential.

So if we should describe a human being in an unambiguous way, then Nagarjuna’s argumentation leads to the thought, that human beings have two complementary 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, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also means that it in itself is without realization.

The problem with time travel is then of course, that it is only in the energy aspect of humans you can talk about time travel. The same problem is happening when you on the astral plane try to go back or forth in time, you would then loose more and more consciousness. I will return to this problem below.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is the area of progressive karma, spiritual development, or spiritual growth; it is the area of realization, the area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is: experiences, which are followed by realization. It is only here you can talk about spiritual growth (also see my article What is Karma?).

In the WingMakers Project everything is reduced to the energy aspect, though. This reductionism is due to the attempt of synthesizing spirituality, science, yes, all kinds of theories. The WingMakers Project is here inspired by Darwinism, and its theories about human evolution. The idea comes originally from Theosophy, later from Ken Wilber’s system, where spirituality, apart from Darwinism, furthermore is sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy and natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics.
The WingMakers´ problem is the integral method itself; that is: the attempt of synthesizing science, spirituality, consciousness, evolution, etc., etc. According to The WingMakers Project all evolution is basically the evolution of consciousness. So, consciousness is reduced to evolution, or, the energy aspect of Man. And such a philosophy of consciousness ends in serious metaphysical problems, such as the free will problem, and the problem of personal identity, which are quite central, when you talk about spirituality (again: see my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

In the following I will argue for that time travel not is possible.

It is no coincidence when I say, that the thought about time travel is as old as the human thought, and that this has been shown in fiction, or, if in science, only as a theory. My main arguments against the possibility of time travel is namely that all the different theories of time travel confuse thought with reality; that their arguments are based on magical thinking, even if they are materialists. The theory of time travel is often supported by materialists (physicists), but they are ending up in subjectivism.

The past and the future, which theories of time travel are talking about, are the past and the future of the thought; that is: psychological time, not physical time. Or, said in another way: they are talking about subjective time, not objective time. So, when you are talking about traveling back to the past, you are talking about traveling back into the imageworld of what has been. And when you are talking about traveling into the future, you are talking about traveling into the imageworld of what could be. Said shortly: when you are talking about traveling in time, you are talking about traveling back or forth in the images of time, whether it is the personal or the collective images of time. You are not talking about traveling in reality. When talking about time traveling in reality you are confusing the thought (images) with reality.

If you should time travel in reality, this would mean, that you should bring reality with you, either back in time, or forwards in time. And with reality we are talking about the wholeness, everything. And with reality and wholeness I also mean the now and therefore consciousness. You would also had to bring the now, and the consciousness, either back in time, or forwards in time. And what becomes of the reality and the now you have left? And all the people and their consciousnesses? And the whole of the universe? All this would now either be the future or the past. That would mean that time travel had to change everything in the wholeness, which then again mean, you had to change everything in an infinitely number of times. In that way a time travel theory would have to explain how everything had to be changed infinitely. A time travel theory had to involve a theory of everything, and a theory of
everything is not possible as Niels Bohr claims (see my article *Quantum mechanics and the philosophy of Niels Bohr*).

If you traveled back and forth in time, then the consciousness of course should follow you, and therefore reality, and therefore the now, and therefore the wholeness, and therefore infinity. That would mean that the now you had left would have to change into, either the future or the past. Everything you had left therefore had be destroyed an endless number of times and when you arrive in either the past or the future everything should be created an endless number of times. It ends in the thought distortion I have called *Endless split of the thought* (see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

And if you should meet yourself, either as young (in the past) or old (in the future), who has the consciousness? Who is experiencing reality?

You can´t talk about consciousness in the energy aspect of Man. You can´t talk about consciousness (and therefore the now/reality/wholeness) in the same area as time travel. You end in an endless split of the thought.

### 5) The fascism of The WingMakers Project

Before we go further it is important to mention, that evolutionism – also in its most modern Neodarwinistic version – is a natural historical report, and not a natural scientifical theory. Neodarwinism can – as all other historical sciences – only *retrospective* explain the development up to now in a rational way. This appears clearly from the fact, that it can´t give any scientific well-founded prediction of the future development. It is *not possible* with any reasonable precision to *predict the future biological development* on the background of the theoretical foundation of evolutionism.

Until today Man has not been able to do anything in order to change his genes. This has been changed with the modern genetic engineering, which already in principle has made it possible to change the genes of our gametes. In the future the problem about conscious changing peoples´ genes in order to improve certain characteristics is not any technical difficulty. It is in turn a serious *ethical* and political problem about setting limits and about, where these limits have to be set.

The reductionism of The WingMakers Project is due to the attempt of synthesizing spirituality and science. As in Theosophy, and in Ken Wilber, and in The Human Design System (about The human Design System: see my article *A critique of The Human Design System*) - the WingMakers Project also is inspired by Darwinism,
and its theories about human evolution. And this is furthermore sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy, natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics. The whole thing is presented as an ideology with a lot of attempts to predict the future evolution of Man, often connected with eugenics: the applied “science” or the bio-social movement (social Darwinism) which advocates the use of practises aimed at improving the genetic composition of people, usually referring to human populations.

Although Fascism is considered to have first emerged in France in the 1880s, its influences have been considered to go back as far as Julius Caesar. Thomas Hobbes, Niccoló Machiavelli, and Hegel have also been considered as influential, as well as contemporary ideas such as the syndicalism of Georges Soral, the futurism of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the nationalist and authoritarian philosophy of Oswald Spengler and the conservatism and Social Darwinism of Enrico Corradini.

The synthesizing of authority, hierarchy, race, eugenics, purity, unity, spirit, within these influences, is shared by the WingMakers Project, where reductionisms such as biologism, psychologism, sociologism and historism go hand in hand.

Fascism is often mischaracterized as “extreme right”, although writers have found placing Fascism on a conventional left-right political spectrum difficult. There is a scholarly consensus that Fascism was influenced by both left and right. Some fascists have themselves promoted their ideology as a “third way” between Capitalism and Communism.

And here we precisely have the heredity and environment ideology, which includes reductionisms, that support respectively right-wing and left-wing political point of views (again: see my article The pseudoscience of reductionism and the problem of mind).

And combined with New Age, we can begin to see the rising of a new kind of Fascism; what I under one title call The Matrix Conspiracy (see my article The Matrix Conspiracy). The WingMakers Project is only a symptom of this. I don’t think it in itself will have much success.

Latest news!

The people behind the WingMakers website have a couple of times changed the concept of the WingMakers. It seems like they are doing this in order to avoid critique, or to keep on producing new sales articles. In 2014 they have changed the concept, and the website, once more. The original concept is now one book (The
Ancient Arrow Project), among others - or you might say: one interpretation of truth, among others.

I have uploaded a free PDF Version of the WingMakers own original introduction, when this book was the whole content of the website - click here. I have also uploaded a free PDF Version of the book The Ancient Arrow Project – click here.

I have done this because it is this information my article is based on. But the critique in the article is still valid, since the message of The WingMakers is the same: there is a spiritual hierarchy (the WingMakers as the superior spiritual essence of humanity) which James Mahu, a real existing channeler, are channeling, and who therefore is the creator of the whole content of the website.

Therefore you also hear the continuing claim that the content of the website is a mix of fact and fiction. And therefore all the problems of pseudohistory, pseudoscience, quantum mysticism, reductionism, evolution, genetics, spirit, hierarchy, and consequently fascism - which I have described in my article - persist to characterize the website.

Appendix

Me and my Avatar

Through my avatar in Second Life I offer philosophical counseling and cafés (or just interacting as such) – and I’m in this way using Second Life as an experimental analogy to central aspects of my teaching Meditation as an Art of Life, for example The Matrix Conspiracy and Dream Yoga.

In the following I will explain this analogy in six parts:

1) My avatar and Me (a Danish documentary)

2) The Matrix Conspiracy

3) Dream Yoga
4) James Cameron´s movie Avatar

5) Confabulation

6) On arranging philosophical counseling and cafés with me in Second Life

1) My avatar and Me (a Danish documentary)

Second Life is an online virtual world, where the users, called Residents, can interact with each other through avatars. Residents can explore the world (known as the grid), meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services with one another.

The users of Second Life are of course aware, that they are in a virtual (unreal) world, but they differ in how absorbed, fascinated, they become over the possibilities in this world.

The Danish documentary My Avatar and Me, is a creative documentary-fiction film, and a film that might expand your sense of reality. It is the story about a man who enters the virtual world Second Life to pursue his personal dreams and ambitions. His journey into cyberspace becomes a magic learning experience, which gradually opens the gates to a much larger reality.

The plot is as follows:

Mikkel Stolt - is a troubled and unsuccessful documentary filmmaker, who decides to create a new identity, and join the pioneers and settlers in the virtual world “Second Life” on the other side of his computer screen. He chooses the name Mike Proud for his “avatar” and starts off with a typical off-the-shelf standard body.

Shortly after his arrival, a mysterious and influential woman named Helena picks him up and takes him under her wing. Helena gives Mike a complete makeover, and turns him into a sophisticated avatar, equipped with all the animations he needs to interact with the most advanced users of Second Life.

Mikkel is very attracted to Helena, and extremely curious to find out more about her, but she refuses to meet him in real life and her true identity remains a mystery.

Helena introduces Mike to Rob, a professional filmmaker who works for BBC in his real life. They become friends and decide to go into business together. The business thrives as Helena uses her in-world influence to pave the way for Mike’s career.
Mike truly enjoys his new status as a popular member of the Second Life jet set, but Mikkel’s real life is gradually falling apart. He is spending more and more time in front of the computer screen, bleary-eyed, sleep-deprived and out of touch with reality. When his long time girlfriend decides to break up their relationship, it doesn’t really affect him. All he can think about is his virtual career, and Helena, who has become more important to him than his real-life family and friends.

When Helena suddenly departs from Second Life, Mike’s virtual world starts to fall apart. The moment she terminates her Second Life account, Mikkel knows that he has thirty days to watch everything he has accomplished in the virtual world literally vanish forever.

The painful experience of losing his business empire and the love of his “second life” sets Mikkel on a different path, and gradually the gates to a much larger reality start to open.

His search for Helena brings him to a mysterious Island named Akasha, where he finds the gateway to a parallel world inhabited by mysterious light-beings. The light-beings promise him that he will be re-united with his lost love, but first he needs to carry out a mission, which includes a journey to the Mountain of the Long Now in Nevada, USA, where the legendary computer scientist Danny Hillis is building a monumental mechanical clock - designed to keep time for the next 10,000 years.

English trailer

Facebook

Website

The 10,000 Year Clock

2) The Matrix Conspiracy

The background for the word Matrix, used in my context, is the movie Matrix (the word Matrix is actually a mathematical concept, which is too complicated to be explained here).

In our time it is the very popular to compare the consciousness with a computer. Among others in the supporters of the new materialism, which the development of computers with still more extensive programs, neural networks and so on, have been a source of inspiration for. For instance the American philosopher Daniel C. Dennett,
who in his book - with the ambitious title Consciousness Explained - seeks to explain consciousness, partially through computer analogies, partially through neurology and psychology.

Within cognition psychology the so-called ”information processing theory” has been dominating for a number of years. In this theory is focused on the ”inner psychic” processes looked on as symbolic information processing in analogy with the processes which happens in computers.

Both in Eastern and Western philosophy they have always worked with the so-called Dream Hypothesis; the philosophers have always reflected over, whether life is a dream. These philosophical questions have always followed them: whether we sleep, whether we dream this long dream, which is life? How can we know that life not is a dream? How can we know, that we are not lying sleeping somewhere, dreaming the whole world?

The philosopher René Descartes created his own variant of the Dream Hypothesis, the Argument of the Evil Demon: How can I know, that I am not decepted by an evil demon concerning all realization?

In the discussion about the reliability of our realization you often meet a variant of Descartes´ Argument from the Evil Demon. The variant (the so-called Brain-in-jar Hypothesis) says as follows: Some day surgery will have reached so far, that you will be able to operate the brain out of a human being and keep it alive by placing it in a jar with some nutrient substratum. At that time the computer research will perhaps have reached so far, that you will be able to connect a computer to such a brain and feed it with all kinds of data, so that the brain thinks that it is a human being, who lives in the real world with all the experiences, memories etc., this is implying, while the fact is that it only is a brain in a jar (read more in my article The Dream Hypothesis and the Brain-in-jar Hypothesis).

It is this hypothesis the movie Matrix is based on. Here humans are used as a kind of batteries (slaves) for machines, that get their energy by supplying them with a virtual reality, while the fact is, that they only are lying sleeping in a jar, giving their energy away.

There certainly exist computer scientists, who think, that you can understand the consciousness as ”soft-ware” and the brain as a ”hard disc” - (Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) is for example very close to this thought – see my article Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT)) - and that you in very few years will be able to decode a human being for its whole content of consciousness, immediately before it dies, and therewith provide
its soul an eternal life – admittedly on a discette, but what the hell, it is after all always better than to pass into nothingness, and the discette will after all be able to be played again and again.

I don’t talk about people as batteries for machines, but as batteries for an ideology: The Matrix Conspiracy.

It is a fact, that we today see an ideology behind the democracy, where true spirituality, philosophy and science systematical are seeked destroyed; that is: the destruction of the best tools Man has in his love of wisdom, and quest for truth.

The main theory of this ideology is relativism. There both exists an individual version of relativism, and a collective version. The individual version is called subjectivism. This version is often connected with a right-wing individualized liberalism. The other version is a collective relativism, cultural relativism, which often is connected to a left-wing socialism. However both are common in distorting both science and human rights. Both are demanding “alternative” views of science, and for example also human rights. And both are introducing intellectual apartheid in different ways, by seeking to eliminate critical thinking.

Both subjectivism and relativism claim, that there doesn’t exist any objective truth. Truth is something we create ourself, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn’t exist any objective truth, there doesn’t exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith they also say, that we live in a Matrix, a dream, a kind of virtual reality, we have created ourselves, and that there is no chance of getting out of this. Therefore the best is to be interested in finding ways of getting on in this world, rather than being interested in finding ways of discovering the truth.

To teach people this, is the main job of what I call The Matrix Sophists. The relationship between the Sophists (teachers of rhetoric) and Socrates (the philosopher) is the central issue in the whole of Plato’s work (see the introduction to my book A dictionary of Thought distortions).

My claim is that we today are facing a new kind of Sophists, namely The Matrix Sophists. The Matrix Sophists are a common term for the tens of thousands of consultants, coaches, practitioners, identity-experts, therapists, sexologists, educators, teachers, social workers, spin doctors, psychotherapists and psychologists, who all share the ideas of The Matrix Conspiracy; that is: some kind of mix between postmodern intellectualism (subjectivism/relativism), management theory, self-help and New Age.
But their message about that we can’t come out of the dream/the thought construction/the Matrix, is in opposition to the message of the movie The Matrix, which is, that we should create a rebellion, and try to get out of the illusion – in the same way as they is true spirituality are trying to get people out of their illusions.

In that way you can say that the new Sophists are the “machines”, or the rulers of the Matrix, which keep people as slaves (read more in my article The Matrix Conspiracy).

3) Dream Yoga

In order to make changes in your dreams (illusions) it is necessary, that you in your awaken life support the work of the energy-laws in the dreams. This is a part of what is called Dream yoga.

If you therefore begin to practise being in the Now, and flexible (critical) thinking, you can exempt the dreams from having to contra-balance imbalances and finish unfinished situations, what will give an ever increasing feeling of freedom.

But first after many years of spiritual practice, will the continuous supporting exercises, by themselves, begin to penetrate, first the dream life, and later the deep, dreamless sleep.

The development concerning daily spiritual practice shows itself in the dreams´ consciousness in three ways:

1) In the dreams you begin to practise the continuous supporting exercises the same way as in the awaken daily life (about the supporting exercises, see my book Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader).

2) Dreams, which become lucid and the, to this responding, most suitable practice.

3) The dreams´ consciousness becomes astral and the, in relation to this, most suitable practice.

1): That your spiritual practice at all reflects itself in the dream life, is a beneficial sign in your total effort. In the moment of falling asleep you simply begin to train relaxation and Hara practice. Moreover you remember to write the dreams down when you wake up. Later you can experience, that you in a dream suddenly begin to practise.
2): Lucid dreams are dreams, in which you know, that you are dreaming. There are many different causes to, that there can arise lucidity in dreams, for example stress conditions or illogical circumstances, or that you watch yourself in a mirror, or so-called flying dreams. You discover that you can alter in the dream as you like. To use lucidity to different experiments is therefore an understandable temptation, but basically without spiritual content.

When you know that you are dreaming, while you are dreaming, the dream is called lucid. The word lucid means luminous, and the name is referring to the unusual clarity, which is in such dreams.

The lucid dream is a little more awake, a degree more awake, than an ordinary dream. Such dreams can therefore be said to be a state between dream and awake, however still more akin to dream.

Normally the Dream Self is not distanced from the dream scenario. To know that you are dreaming is due to, that a part of the Dream Consciousness separates you from the immediate identity with the scenario and content of the dream. The phenomenon is analogous with meditation, or neutral observation. In neutral observation there are two functions. The one is the observer, who separates himself from the stream of thoughts. The second is the neutrality that neither says yes or no, considers or comments.

When dreams become lucid, then it is analogous with the activating of the first function: the segregation of a Dream Witness, an instance, which knows that this is a dream. As a rule the mind in this situation then gets caught by the new, creative possibilities, which are lying in the lucidity. You can transform dreams as you want and have fantasy to. You can fly through walls, walk on water and wish yourself to other planets etc., etc.

Dream Yoga is about, that if a dream becomes lucid, you add – from the habit with meditation in the waking practice – the second function, namely the neutrality, that just – in dreams – to observe and not control, intervene or in other way interfere in the dream´s own stream. If both factors are active in dreams, there is no functional difference between awake neutral observation and dreaming neutral lucidity.

According to experience there are a couple of dream situations, or elements, which favour the rise of lucidity, for example stress, illogical situations, etc. Furthermore it is possible to train lucidity in dreams; there both exists ancient Tibetan ways, Shamanistic ways and new American ways.
In spiritual practice however, you neither ought to train or worship lucidity. What on the other hand is appropriate is to use lucidity for Hara practice; that is, that you in the lucid dream focus your awareness in Hara, and therewith looks into your self, at the same time as your are observing the dream. In this way the dreaming awareness changes accent from the dream production, from the content of the dream to the dreaming awareness itself.

The most suitable training in lucid dreams is therefore to begin to practice the continuous supporting exercises. Second best, but however still excellent, is to seek towards light, which brings you closer the lucidity and thereby the Source. Alternatively to seek towards a spiritual teacher, or in lack of a such, to seek towards a person of wisdom, archetypical understood. But best is to begin to practice the supporting exercises.

3): The astral ”dream state” can evolve spontaneous, or evolve out of the lucid dream. In an astral ”dream state” you know, that you are lying in the bed in this chamber and are sleeping, alternatively dreaming. In the lucid state you know, that you are dreaming, while you are dreaming. But you dont know, that this happens, while you in fact are lying sleeping in your bed. However in the astral state you also know, that you are lying in your bed sleeping. The sleeping body, the bed and the room is included in the astral ”dream state”. The consciousness is often located outside the body, observing the sleeping body from outside.

The temptation to here, either to become afraid, or experiment with various possibilities (astral projection, clairvoyance, telepathy etc. etc.) is huge. You are suddenly Peter Pan. It is a very forceful state. The creativity and the reality creating ability are much more free than in the lucid dream state. However you are still on the collective history of the astral plane, which work fragmented in sequences in past and future, and there is danger for, either that you remain here, in the fascination and the enthusiasm, whereby your spiritual development stops, or that you directly end up in a spiritual crisis.

In spiritual practice the most appropriate is again to use the astral state to begin to practice the continuous supporting exercises. For example you can centre the astral consciousness in the Hara centre of the sleeping body, or in the heart centre.

If you as a sleeper remember to use such an opening spiritual seen correct, this can give your total development a considerably lift forward.

But in order to do this it is of vital important that you examine the nature of lucid dreams and astral states. Let’s therefore look a bit further into it.
So, another aspect of lucid dreams is the astral state: astral travel or astral projection (out-of-body experiences). In both ordinary and lucid dreams the dreamer, in the vast majority of cases, is not aware that, and where, the body is lying sleeping. The astral state is characterized by, that the consciousness knows that the body is sleeping and can watch the sleeping body. The consciousness is here located outside the body, floating over the body in a not all too long distance. This consciousness is called the dream body.

Dalai Lama has this to say about awakening our dream body and using it for spiritual progress and development: "There is said to be a relationship between dreaming, on the one hand, and the gross and subdue levels of the body on the other. But it is also said that there is a ‘special dream state.’ In that state, the special dream body (the astral body) is created from the mind and from vital energy (prana) within the body. It looks like the physical body, but is of a finer and transparent substance. Through training it is possible to learn to send the dream body out of the body; it then works completely as an extension of the physical body, because the senses and the consciousness of the body seems to follow.”

This special dream body is in other words able to dissociate entirely from the gross physical body and travel elsewhere, and experience the astral worlds of the collective time.

One way of developing this special dream body is first of all to recognize a dream as a dream when it occurs. Then you find that the dream is malleable, and you make efforts to gain control over it. Gradually you become very skilled in this, increasing your ability to control the contents of the dream so that it accords to your own spiritual practice. Eventually it is possible to dissociate your dream body from your gross physical body. In contrast, in the normal dream state, dreaming occurs within the body. But as a result of specific training, the dream body can go elsewhere.

An interesting modern computer-analogy to lucid dreaming and astral projection is precisely Second Life. The avatars in Second Life are then of course equivalent with the dream body in lucid dreaming and astral projection. Like lucid dreaming the users of Second Life are of course aware, that they are in a virtual (unreal) world, but they differ in how absorbed, fascinated, they become over the possibilities in this world.

The intention with Dream Yoga is in all simplcity about separating and dismantling the identification with your dreams/thoughts, in order to reach into a deeper dimension. You discover that you not are your dreams/thoughts, that there in your innermost exists a pure awareness, which is peace, light and love.
The magnet of attraction, which the ego is controlled by – (the ego’s identity with the material world: instincts, sexuality, emotions, desire, collective ideals, dreams, thoughts, ownership, personal power) – will in a true spiritual practice lose its attraction. Investments in the material world’s ups and downs, its demands, temptations and dramas, become undramatized, uninteresting, even meaningless, in relation to the consciousness’ opening direction in towards its spiritual essence: the now, the wholeness, life itself, and finally: the eternal otherness, from where the good, the true and the beautiful are streaming as grace and forgiveness.

This awareness seems to be a quality of the Now, and therefore it is also a quality of life itself (reality). This way you discover, that life itself is to be present in the Now with the whole of yourself, in the self-forgetful openness and devotion to the world. Life itself is therefore love. Your innermost, the awareness, is in this way one with life itself, love.

This oneness is the Source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful in itself, not as images. The Source is the unmoved being of the Now. In other words: in this oneness you have your identity in a presence, a presence which both is the essence in yourself, and the essence behind everything else.

When you live from this source you are in very deed yourself, you live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby you achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. Furthermore you achieve the self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom.

Second Life – as well as my philosophical counselling and cafés in Second Life – is therefore an experimental analogy to this training.

As mentioned, lucid dreaming is a learnable skill, though achieving lucid dreams on a regular basis can be difficult. In the following I will mention three techniques, that are consistent with spiritual practice:

1) Dream recall

2) Wake-initiated lucid dreams (WILD)

3) Reality testing

1) Dream recall
Dream recall is the ability to remember dreams. Good dream recall is often described as the first step towards lucid dreaming. Better recall increases awareness of dreams in general; with limited dream recall, any lucid dreams has can be forgotten entirely. To improve dream recall, some people keep a dream journal, writing down or recording dreams. The writing down shall happen in the same moment you wake up.

2) Wake-initiated lucid dreams (WILD)

Wake-initiated lucid dreams occur when the sleeper enters REM sleep with unbroken self-awareness directly from the waking state. There are many techniques aimed at entering a WILD. The key to these techniques is recognizing the hypnagogic stage, which is in between being awake and being asleep. If a person is successful in staying aware during this stage, that person will eventually enter dream while lucid. Meditation, or training of awareness will improve this ability by itself.

3) Reality testing

Reality testing (or reality checking) is a common method used by people to determine whether or not they are dreaming. It involves performing an action and observing if the results are consistent with results expected when awake. By practicing these tests during awake life, one may eventually decide to perform such a test while dreaming, which may fail and let the dreamer realize they are dreaming.

As a part of this training is critical thinking (spotting thought distortions, created by dualistic unbalance, both in yourself and in others). In my book A Dictionary of Thought distortions, I have made a list over such thought distortions. When you are dreaming, such thought distortions dissolve in images, which can show as extremely complicated visionary scenes of unreality, that are almost impossible to understand. The important thing is, that you in the awake state investigate such thought distortions, and don’t identify with them, whereby you avoid being controlled by them. When you identify yourself with thought distortions, you believe in them; you believe, that they are expressions of valid facts, and thereby they control you. Therefore you should confront yourself with the fact, that the thought distortions not are expressions of valid facts, that they diminish your quality of life and hinders you in using your abilities and potentials. A good exercise in that connection is reality testing.

So, these not quite ordinary states in dreams, are caused either by goaloriented conscious training, or for example by near-death experiences, threatening psychosis, shock, high fever or similar dramatic circumstances. In rare cases they can occur undramatically and spontaneous.
The primary importance of lucid dreaming to the practice of Dream Yoga has four stages:

1) In order to make the time we spend dreaming more meaningful, we must first recognize that we are dreaming. That is the initial exercise.

2) The next step is called transforming the dream.

3) The third is known as multiplying.

4) The fourth practice is to unify the dream with the clear light.

Recognizing, transforming, multiplying and unifying the dream with the luminosity of the true nature: these four outline the essential applications of Dream Yoga.

Tibetan Dream Yoga is also described by Evans-Wentz in his book *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* as one of the six subtypes of yoga elaborated by the Tibetan guru Marpa and passed down by his disciple Milarepa. The author here describes six stages of Dream Yoga:

1) In the first stage, the dreamer is told to become lucid in the dream.

2) In the second stage, the dreamer is instructed to overcome all fear of the contents of the dreams so there is the realization that nothing in the dream can cause harm. For instance, the lucid dreamer should put out fire with his hands and realize fire cannot burn him in the dream.

3) Next the dreamer should contemplate how all phenomena both in the dream and in waking life are similar because they change, and that life is illusory in both states because of this constant change. Both the objects in the dream and objects in the world in the Buddhist worldview are therefore empty and have no substantial nature. This is the stage of contemplating the dream as maya (illusory), and equating this sense of maya with everyday experience in the external world.

4) Next, the dreamer should realize that he or she has control of the dream by changing big objects into small ones, heavy objects into light ones, and many objects into one object.

5) After gaining control over objects and their transformations, in the fifth stage, the dreamer should realize that the dreamer’s dream body is as insubstantial as the other objects in the dream. The dreamer should realize that he or she is not the dream body. The dreamer who has gained complete control over dream objects could, for instance, alter the body’s shape or make the dream body disappear all together.
6) Finally, in the sixth stage, the image of deities (Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, or Dakinis) should be visualized in the lucid dream state. These figures are frequently seen in Tibetan religious art (thangas) and used in meditation. A Western parallel is the use of Christian icons. They are said to be linked to or resonate with the clear light of the void. They can therefore serve as symbolic doorways to this mystical state of being (the Void or clear light). The dreamer is instructed to concentrate on these symbolic images without distraction or thinking about other things so that the revelatory side of these symbols will become manifest (see my article *The value of religion and supporting exercises* in my book *Dream Yoga*).

According to contemporary Dzogchen teachers Namkhai Norbu, Lopön Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal, the perceived reality and the phenomenal world are considered to be ultimately “unreal” – an “illusion” (refer Mahamaya): a dream, a phantasmagoria, a thought-form. All appearances and phenomena are a dream or thought-form, inter- and intra- reflecting and refracting jewels and mirrors of possibility and potentiality, “arising in relationships” or “dependent co-arising” (read more about this in my article *A critique of Ken Wilber and his integral method*, where I explain dependent co-arising in relation to the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna).

It is held by these lineages and due to the realizations of the spiritual practice, that the dream of life and regular nightly dreams are not dissimilar, and that in their quintessential nature are nondual.

The non-essential difference between the general dreaming state and the general waking experience is that the latter is generally more concrete and linked with attachments, samskara and skandha; whereas, standard non-lucid dreaming is ephemeral and transient, and generally reinforced as baseless and empty.

In Dream Yoga, living may become the dream, and the dream may become the living. Progressing the spiritual practice may be metaphorically likened to living the scientific hypothesis of a resolved superposition. The resolved superposition being a mindstream conflation of Dharmakaya with Shunyata and Indra’s Net.

The entwined Mantrayana lineages of Nyingmapa, Bonpo, Ngagpa and Mahasiddha are saturated with trance and dream transmissions of teachings, doctrine, etc., etc., that transcend constructs of time, place and space, these are often called “whispered traditions” and terma. Refer lucid living.

Also according to this teaching, there is a correspondence between the states of sleep and dream and our experiences when we die. After experiences of intermediate state of bardo an individual comes out of it, a new karmic illusion is created and another
existence begins. Taking stock of store consciousness (the Akashic Records – see my article *Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice*) is the spontaneous perpetuant and fuel of the transmigration process.

So, the primary aim and foundation of dream practice is to realize during a dream that one is dreaming. Once lucidity has been established the applications are limitless. One can then dream with lucidity/astrality, and do all sorts of things, such as: spiritual practice; receive initiations, empowerments and transmissions; go to different places, planes, heavens and hells, other planets, both physical and astral planets; dialogue with sentient beings, creatures and people such as guru; fly; shapeshift, etc.

In the astral state the creativity of the consciousness is, as mentioned, set even more free than in the lucid dream state. Controlled astral states give, among other things, access to clairvoyance, telepathy and astral travel (astral projection). This has to do with, that time and its images still work fragmented in sequences in past and future, though on a much more fascinating collective/astral level.

But in spiritual practice it is of vital importance, that you begin to practice Hara (or other supporting religious/spiritual exercises as in the above-mentioned stage 6), if there should occur an astral state. This consists quite simple in stopping the fascination of the anti-spiritual (ego-based) experiences and their temptations, and instead focus the awareness in Hara, and therewith lead the awareness into your self. This will lead the consciousness towards the more universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now.

If you remain in, or explore the astral worlds of the collective time, which the astral state gives access to, then you in other words distract your awareness in past or future. This can cost awakenness and life energy, if you not are under guidance of an enlightened master, and can in addition cause Ego-inflation and other spiritual crises (see my article *Spiritual Crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena*).

It is in other words very important that you do not move accent from awake day to dreams and sleep, do not use drugs or one-sided development techniques, which promise you great experiences concerning either lucidity or astrality.

You have to have patience. Even for people with a regular and well-ordered practice (2-3 hours every day) there can pass weeks, months or years between the reflections into the processes of dreams and sleep. However if practice is appropriate, the spiritual consciousness will with time automatically penetrate the nightlife’s vegetative forms of consciousness.
When one realizes and embodies the doctrine of Dream Yoga, complete realization is imminent and elementary. Namkhai Norbu gives advice, that the realization that life is only a big dream can help us finally liberate ourselves from the chains of emotions, attachments, and ego and then we have the possibility of ultimately becoming enlightened (read more in my article What is Dream Yoga?).

4) James Cameron´s movie Avatar

James Cameron´s movie Avatar is, with its paradoxical interplay between nature and technology, simple spirituality and greedy materialism, one of the best movies for many years, and it is also, with its provocative concluding moral, one of the most revolutionary.

My fascination of the movie is of course also due to that it contains the most essential elements in my own philosophy, which I call Meditation as an Art of Life.

With a sale record on over two billion dollars, and nine Oscar nominations, James Cameron has emphatically ensured his science fiction adventure a prominent place in the history of movies.

The movie owes its thunderous success a paradoxical interplay between nature and technology. On one side the viewers are moved by the vigorous moon Pandora and its inhabitants, the Navi, a race of blue, three meter tall noble savages, who live in spiritual and ecological harmony with nature. On the other hand we have the humans, who, with a lot of technology, are on the moon in order to exploit its natural resources for own winning. To this comes the ultramodern animation and 3D technology, which brings the Navi alive on the screen, together with images of Pandora, which are of a beauty seldom seen before in a movie.

With this paradoxical interplay the movie touches one of its many fascinating philosophical discussions, that in stunningly way reminds about my own teaching.

Man has, with the industrial modernization, has cultivated a mind, which can solve almost any technological problem; that, which the german philosopher Jürgen Habermas calls the instrumental reason. But human problems have apparently never been solved. On the contrary mankind are about to be drowned in its problems: problems concerning communication, the relationship with others, heaven and hell. The whole of the human existence has become one extremely complex problem. And apparently it has been like that through the whole of history. Despite the knowledge of Man, despite his millenniums of evolution, Man has never been free from such problems.
The solutions to such problems require a communicative reason, a reason which understand the human community. But as Habermas says, then we are not using such a reason, on the contrary we are using the instrumental reason on human problems, where it only should be used on technical problems. We seek to solve human problems technically, where they should be solved in a philosophical way. The systems (the market, the economy, the bureaucracy) have colonized the lifeworld.

You can also talk about an instrumental and communicative view of nature (see my book A Portrait of Lifeartist part four: The Life Artist as a natural being, and part five, The Life Artist as a communicative being. The instrumental view of nature is only seeing nature as something causal and mechanical, and as a means for human exploitation. There is no meaning in nature in itself. The communicative view of nature however claims that nature is of value in itself, that there is a beauty and richness in nature, which is of non-causal and non-mechanical kind, and that Man as a natural and communicative being has a community with this nature.

So the movie is of interest for environmental activists, who fight for both human rights and environmental rights, and who will save the world through protection of forests and global peace.

But the movie is also of spiritual interest. There are some fascinating equal signs with Tibetan Dream Yoga and traditional Shamanism, which not must be confused with New Age though. Dream Yoga is, as explained, a spiritual night practice where you through certain techniques can develop a so-called astral body, or dreambody. With the help of this you can leave your body during your sleep and travel elsewhere, both on this planet and other planets, but also into the so-called astral worlds. These worlds have had many names: it is Plato’s world of forms, the Bardoworlds of the Books of the Dead, the Anabasis of the mystery cults, the image galleries of the Alchemists, the Akashian Archives, the collective subconscious, the dreamtime of the aboriginals etc. etc.

The moon Pandora can of course be seen as such an astral world. This focus on dreams as admission to Pandora is no way accidentally, but on the contrary based on Avatar itself. The technological and storytelling clue in the movie is namely, that a new technology anno 2154 makes it possible to grow an artificial body, a so-called avatar, based on DNA from both humans and Navis. You can be connected to the avatar, by the help of certain machines, while your human body is lying sleeping in the machine and is dreaming.
By the way you can say that the concept of Avatar original comes from Hinduism, where it designates the incarnations of the god Vishnu, for example Rama and Krishna, who, by the way, are considered as being blue. So the main character, Jake Sully, could be seen as an incarnation of Vishnu.

The deity of the Navi is called Eywa. Again this reminds about a lot of spiritual traditions - and with a communicative view of nature. It is a balancing energy or consciousness, which is in everything. It is a holistic concept, and because the wholeness is a reality then all parts of this wholeness are defined by each other. If there is put too much energy in one part then this unbalance will be contrabalanced by the energy’s swing over in the part’s opposition. We for example know this from the Chinese philosophy of Yin and Yang.

Now, if we take the growth fanaticism and ego-fixation that characterize the humans of today, then this Ego-extreme is reflected in countless fields. Too much energy is invested in armament; too many atomic weapons; too much pollution; too unequal distribution of the riches of the Earth; too unequal distribution of the food and fruits of the Earth. And first of all: too many people are too focused in their Ego; they accumulate energy to their Ego, to oneself; or to the family Ego; the company's Ego; the national Ego.

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

So, the provocative moral of the movie is, that we, like Jake Sully, must become some kind of philosophical rebels or spiritual anarchist, and give up the ideology, which our society right now is infected with, and which spreads globally: consumer capitalism.

We must become Life Artists who dance with the energylaws of nature. We must create balance. If you are on a wavecrest then remember the trough of the wave, if you are in the one extreme of a thought-swing, then remember the opposite extreme. Remember that your energy-radiation recirculates and returns to yourself.

All this together do, that I consider Avatar to be one the most revolutionary movies I have ever seen. And therefore one of the best.
5) Confabulation

My use of Second Life is also a kind of experimental use of the thought distortion called *Confabulation*, which New Agers, as we shall see below, seriously are using in complete ignorance (see my book *A dictionary of thought distortions*).

The drive to find personal meaning or significance in impersonal or insignificant coincidences (the thought distortion *Subjective validation*) may be related to the powerful “natural” drive to create stories, narratives that string together bits and pieces of information into a tale. Of course truth matters most of the time, but many of our narratives satisfy us regardless of their accuracy. This tendency to connect things and create plausible narratives out of partially fictitious items is called Confabulation.

A confabulation is a fantasy that has unconsciously replaced events in memory. A confabulation may be based partly on fact or be a complete construction of the imagination. The term is often used to describe the “memories” of mentally ill persons, memories of alien abduction, and false memories induced by careless therapists or interviewers (see my article *Regression psychotherapies*).

Have you ever told a story that you embellished by putting yourself at the center when you knew that you weren’t even there? Or have you ever been absolutely sure you remembered something correctly, only to be shown incontrovertible evidence that your memory was wrong? No, of course not. But you probably know or have heard of somebody else who juiced up a story with made-up details or whose confidence in his memory was shown to be undeserved by evidence that his memory was false.

In my book *A Portrait of Lifeartist* Confabulation is a central issue. I here show how memories are constructed by all of us and that the construction is a mixture of fact and fiction.

Confabulation is an unconscious process of creating a narrative that is believed to be true by the narrator but is demonstrably false.

Young Earth creationists (YECs) provide an excellent example of Confabulation mixed with the thought distortion *Motivated reasoning*. To maintain their position, YECs must reject nearly all science and confabulate new laws of nature and rules of logic and evidence, and subject themselves to ridicule for their willful ignorance and irrational adherence to the myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people. The same we see within the postmodern intellectualism on Universities, which therefore justifies
the tendency within Management theory and New Age to confabulate stories which are not true (see my article *Constructivism: the postmodern intellectualism behind New Age and the self-help industry*).

As management theorists say: “It is not facts, but the best story that wins!”

So, in our time with the spreading of subjectivism and relativism - and therefore the thought distortion *Magical thinking* - we are seeing how Confabulation somehow gets a justification. There is in fact - as I claim in my article *The Matrix Conspiracy* - a New World Order emerging: the world of Alternative History, Alternative Physics, Alternative Medicine and, ultimately, Alternative Reality.

The thought distortion *Communal reinforcement* is a social phenomenon in which a concept or idea is repeatedly asserted in a community, regardless of whether sufficient evidence has been presented to support it. Over time, the concept or idea is reinforced to become a strong belief in many people’s minds, and may be regarded by the members of the community as fact.

Often, the concept or idea may be further reinforced by publications in the mass media, books, or other means of communication. There is no doubt about that The Matrix Conspiracy (which is a strong advocate for the use of hypnosis and hypnotherapy) will be made propaganda for through mass media phenomena such as Transmedia Storytelling, Alternate Reality Games (for example The Blair Witch Project), Viral Marketing/Internet Hoaxes and Collaborative Fiction.

The phrase “millions of people can’t all be wrong” is indicative of the common tendency to accept a communally reinforced idea without question, which often aid in the widespread acceptance of urban legends, myths, and rumors.

The new New Age product called the WingMakers Project is an attempt to create an alternative history. It is not directly an example of Confabulation, since the creators of the website hardly believe their story to be true, but it will certainly create confabulation in others (see my article *Time travel and the fascism of the WingMakers Project*).

Alternative history or alternate history is a genre of fiction consisting of stories that are set in worlds in which history has diverged from the actual history of the world. Since the 1950s this type of fiction has to a large extent merged with science fictional tropes involving cross-time travel between alternate histories or psychic awareness of the existence of “our” universe by the people in another; or ordinary voyaging uptime (into the past) or downtime (into the future) that results in history splitting into two or more time-lines.
WingMakers is also a so-called secret history. A secret history (or shadow history) is a revisionist interpretation of either fictional or real (or known) history, which is claimed to have been deliberately suppressed, forgotten, or ignored by established scholars. Originally, secret histories were designed as non-fictional, revealing or claiming to reveal the truth behind the “spin”. Today we see how secret history sometimes is used in a long-running science fiction or fantasy universe to preserve continuity with the present by reconciling paranormal, anachronistic, or otherwise notable but unrecorded events with what actually happened in known history; for instance in the fictional time travel theories. The WingMakers story combines this with the urban legend and alternate history from the Ong’s Hat myth. Though the WingMakers website tries to avoid critique by saying it is a modern mythology (where urban legends are considered as a modern folklore) it also keeps on, precisely as in urban legends, to insinuate that the story is true. It is therefore a piece of pseudohistory.

Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of it isn’t history at all.

Pseudohistory should also be distinguished from historical fiction and fantasy. Anyone who cites a work of historical fiction as if it were a historical text is a practising pseudohistorian. There are also writers of historical fiction who intentionally falsify and invent ancient history. A technique to do this is to claim to find an ancient document and publishing it in order to express one’s own ideas. An example is The Celestine Prophecy. A variation on this theme is to claim that one is channeling a book from some ancient being, e.g, The Urantia Book, Bringers of the Dawn, and A Course in Miracles (see my article Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with channeling).

New Age is permeated with references to vibrations and energy, advices to avoid the negative (you can tell good people by their eyes), stop doubting, follow your intuitions and premonitions, flow with coincidences, believe in the purposiveness of everything, join thousands of others on the quest, turn into your feelings and evolve to a higher plane. Follow your intuitions and dreams as you go through your spiritual evolution. Fact or fiction, it doesn’t matter. Truth is what you make it. Life’s too short and too complicated to deal with reality. Make your own reality.
This New Age subjectivism and relativism encourage people to believe that reality is whatever you want it to be. The line between fact and fiction gets blurry and obscured. Subjectivism shuts down people’s critical faculties, making them suggestible for any ideology. It involves making people quit thinking critically in order to open them up to thinking magical about that subjective validation and communal reinforcement lead to bliss. Hypnosis is in New Age directly used as a means for inducing in people certain worldviews (see my article Hypnosis, hypnotherapy and the art of self-deception).

The subjectivism in the WingMakers Project can be seen in the question about whether the WingMakers material is fact or fiction. The introduction to the project says as follows: “It is fact wrapped in fiction otherwise known as myth.” So here we see how subjectivism is used as an attempt to get the line between fact and fiction blurry and obscured. It is also an attempt to avoid critique. Without success, because the story, as mentioned, ends in pseudohistory.

Anyway, my experimental use of confabulation in Second Life is of course based on an attempt to help people to detach from its control, and to learn about what I have explained in this article.

6) On arranging philosophical counseling and cafés with me in Second Life

If you want to arrange philosophical counseling and/or philosophical cafés with me in Second Life, you’ll have to contact me on my profile there.

Through our Avatars we can either use text chat or voice chat (for voice chat you’ll need to set up a headset or speakers and a microphone. Using a headset avoids annoying echoes of your own voice).

Click here for Second Life Quick Start Guide.

If you are seeking philosophical counseling and/or cafés with me, you must be clarified in your relationship with me as a counselor, as well as with my teaching and my critique of New Age and self-help, which I use in my counseling. Concerning Second Life you must of course also, as me, think that this is a funny and interesting way of interacting.

Remember: all my services are based on Gift Economy
If you want to arrange philosophical counseling and/or philosophical cafés with me in the real world: Click here