

# Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien



Morten Tolboll

(this is an unpublished personal book, and not an academical treatise)

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Dedication:

Soli Deo Gloria

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## Preface

This online book is not an academical treatise dealing exclusively with Tolkien's philosophy. It is book about how I use Tolkien in connection with philosophical counseling in Rold Forest in Denmark, and is in that way as much a summary of my own philosophy. I see it as my philosophical testament. It is also a textbook, and therefore contains links to further reading.

Philosophical counseling in Rold Forest is a work with spiritual healing and forest Therapy. It therefore contains some certain shamanic elements (in my blog archive you can follow my writings on the relationship between shamanism and philosophy on the page [Nordic Shamanism and Forest Therapy](#)).

Rold Forest is called “The Seven Mile Forest of Fairy Tales”. Denmark’s largest original forest naturally has a comprehensive wildlife. Rold Forest’s 8,000 hectares encompass so many different habitat and forest types that a very large number of forest, bog and meadow animals are found here. Spread around in the forest you can find 6000 years old grave mounds, so the place is filled with history and legends going back to Norse mythology.

Forest therapy is based on the magical healing powers of nature itself. Rold Forest is in itself a so-called [Healing Forest](#) – a way of discovering the magical healing powers of nature.

The counseling mostly happens through hiking, at power places, or at Hotel Rold Storkro (a cosy Inn in the middle of the forest). There are a lot of possibilities. If the guest is staying for several days it can be a combination.

Tolkien is a frame of reference during the counseling. Rold Forest is precisely the kind of Northern European forest which inspired Tolkien’s creation of The Old Forest, Lothlorien, Fangorn, and Mirkwood. During the counseling the guests and me will encounter ancient beech trees creating a magical trolls’ wood of gnarled trees, a hiding place for the robbers from Rold, springs rising up from the ground everywhere, a burial place from prehistoric Denmark with 50 large grave mounds, the Mines of Thingbæk, the most beautiful heathery hills in Denmark, and maybe we’ll meet the witch, Dannie Druehyld. And at the same time we will enter deeper into our own minds.

The spiritual healing work is in other words not about constructing a philosophy or a life-project. It is about re-discovering your true philosophy and your true calling in life, which always have been there as an invisible script in your progressive karma (divine providence, or spirit help). Tolkien’s philosophy has a universality and an ontological pluralism (many angles on reality), that makes it useful as a help in re-discovering your own philosophy.

In short: philosophical counseling, spiritual healing and forest therapy are about “healing your spirit” or “soul retrieval”.

In this online book I claim that Sauron's One Ring has two demonical movements which are seen in our culture of today: the movement into the ego (the will to power), and the movement out towards the others in ideology. Hereby the Truth, Beauty and Goodness of the Wholeness is reduced to power and ideology. The danger is the reductionism of modernity.

Tolkien's philosophy is a pre-modern world-view, where the Wholeness is more alive, more dreaming, more awake. In modernity (and even worse: postmodernity) the Wholeness is reduced to its parts. Truth, Beauty and Goodness is sleeping, suffering and dying. In Tolkien's philosophy Truth, Beauty and Goodness is dreaming and eventually awake. More than that: there is so much life in things that we would call it "magic".

There are two very different kinds of magics in Tolkien's work. The two magics are not just different but opposed. In fact they are at war, and our civilization is in crisis because of the war between these two kinds of magic. One kind of magic, Enchantment, is our healing, and the other – the kind exemplified by the Ring – is our destruction.

The aim with philosophical counseling, and therefore with this book, is to inspire to a re-enchantment of our dying world.

Inspired by Peter Kreeft's book *The Philosophy of Tolkien – The Worldview Behind the Lord of the Rings*, the book is written as a course in philosophy. Kreeft will also be a theological support throughout the book. I will also use references from Patrick Curry's book *Defending Middle-earth – Tolkien: Myth and Modernity*.

As a textbook I will frequently refer to my other books and articles. They are all available for free reading, either on my blog ([www.mortentolboll.blogspot.com](http://www.mortentolboll.blogspot.com)) or my website ([www.mortentolboll.weebly.com](http://www.mortentolboll.weebly.com)).

All references to *The Lord of the Rings* are to the one-volume, American edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) of *The Lord of the Rings* (hereafter LOTR).

## Introduction

This online book is the second in a series of my three literary spiritual mentors: Karen Blixen, J.R.R. Tolkien and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The book on Karen Blixen is an Ebook called [Karen Blixen – The Devil's Mistress](#). The blog post [The Philosophy of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry](#) is included in this book in chapter 5, Epistemology, part

3: *The Peter Pan Project*. The most important aspects of my Blixen book will also be included in this book, so that it can be read independently.

So, this online book has developed into a larger work. It is so to speak a concentrate of my entire work, written as a course in philosophy. It is an answer to the question *What is your philosophy?* It is therefore necessary for me to explain my personal background for writing this book. Through this I will present some concepts which will be central in explaining essential concepts in *The Lord of the Rings*.

The work on my three literary spiritual mentors could be said to follow Kierkegaard's three stages on the way to becoming a true self: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Each of these "stages on life's way" represents competing views on life and as such potentially conflicts with one another. In my interpretation Karen Blixen belongs to the aesthetic stage. Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry belong to the ethical and religious stage, though this doesn't mean that aesthetics not is a part of their work. It certainly is (Kierkegaard's three stages will be investigated deeper in chapter 7, Aesthetics).

Karen Blixen is not for children. She is for adults. Tolkien represents a movement towards the child, and Saint-Exupéry is about rediscovering the child in us all; the last religious stage which in my view is the mystical experience. Both ethics and religiousness belong to the heart. In my view.

Therefore I see Tolkien's philosophy as a movement towards the religious, or the mystical experience. To reach this requires spiritual practice. On my website I have characterized [my teaching in a nutshell](#). It goes like this:

I have called my teaching *Meditation as an Art of Life*.

My teaching in a nutshell consists of two quotes, three aspects of spiritual practice, the Peter Pan Project, A Finger Pointing at the Moon, and the Luciferian Movement.

### 1) The two quotes:

*I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.*

Henry David Thoreau [read more in my [Link to Idlers](#)]



*I have no view of my own. My critical arguments are simply reduction to absurdity of the views ignorance has created.*

Nagarjuna

## **2) The three aspects of spiritual practice:**

1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions created by dualistic unbalance, both in oneself and in others - See my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#). I also call this aspect *The Navigator*, or the philosopher.

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](#)). This aspect I also call *Learning to see with the Heart*, or Heartmeditation (Tonglen).

3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images – see my book [Sûnyatâ Sutras](#). This book is part two in “a spiritual bath” in the development of boundaries and protections). This aspect I also call *The Compass*, or Hara Awareness.

## **4) The Peter Pan Project**

## **5) A Finger Pointing at the Moon:**

My teaching is supposed to help people develop their own teaching, to become a light for themselves, where they now happen to be in life. My teaching should therefore not be treated as an authority/conclusion, but only as “a finger pointing at the moon.” Don't mistake the finger for the Moon.

## **6) The Luciferian Movement:**

The Luciferian movement in my work can be summed up in the three aspects of spiritual practice:

1) Head: The presentation of the Navigator (the philosopher and critical thinking)

2) Heart: The presentation of Tonglen, ethical work with the shadow. Ethics means moral philosophy, and therefore again critical thinking, though supplied with heartmeditation.



3) Hara: The presentation of the Compass, the downward movement, the break with the top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of the ladder. Instead is introduced the symbolism of the embryo and the circle.

My concept of Lucifer Morningstar simply means a counter-theory and a reverse practice. This is inspired by Karen Blixen. In short: an alternative to the Matrix Conspiracy.

All of this will be clarified as we proceed.

*The Philosophy of Tolkien* is a book by the Catholic philosopher Peter J. Kreeft. From the start I knew that Tolkien was a devoted Catholic and directly has said that *The Lord of the Rings* is a Catholic book. I therefore found it necessary to read Kreeft's book. I was amazed how I found my own intuitions about Catholicism, and my love for philosophy, written down in every second sentence. I therefore decided to let his book be a theological support for this online book. Kreeft namely knows more about theology than I do. And if Tolkien's work indeed is a Catholic work, it would be unfair not to pay respect to that.

Kreeft says that philosophy and literature belong together. They can work like the two lenses of a pair of binoculars. Philosophy argues abstractly. Literature argues too – it persuades, it changes the reader – but concretely. Philosophy says truth, literature shows truth.

Human thought is both concrete (particular) and abstract (universal) at the same time. You could also say that the thought has an Inner Side and an Outer Side. All things have an Inner Side and an Outer Side. This way of description will be quite central in this book. It is connected to the three states which the Wholeness can be in: sleep, dream and awake. The Outer Side of things is the side most people experience. When you only see the Outer Side of things the wholeness is sleeping, or the things are sleeping. The Inner Side is the side of enchantment. When you see the Inner Side of things, then the Wholeness is dreaming, and therefore the things are dreaming. This is the source of enchantment. Eventually the Wholeness, and therefore the things, can be completely awake (the spiritual practice where you are going beyond all images and ideas).

We cannot think of abstract universals like “man” without imagining some concrete, particular example of a man.

Authors like Karen Blixen, Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry see the universals in man and life. They see the Inner Side of man and life. Whenever we think of an abstract

universal, we have to use a particular concrete image. But the converse is also true: whenever we recognize a concrete particular as intelligible and meaningful, we use an abstract universal to classify it, to categorize it, to define it: we see or imagine the Bedouin as a man, not an ape.

When you look through binoculars, you look through both lenses at once. Because human thought is binocular, abstract philosophy and concrete literature naturally reinforce each other's vision. Philosophy makes literature clear, literature makes philosophy real. Philosophy shows essences, literature shows existence. Philosophy shows meaning, literature shows life.

The universal, the Inner Side, belongs to the heart. It can only be seen with the heart. As Saint-Exupéry famously wrote in *The Little Prince*:

*Here is my secret. It is very simple: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.*

And:

*"What makes the desert beautiful," said the little prince, "is that somewhere it hides a well..."*

The necessity of philosophy in a spiritual practice refers to the necessity of the sword of discrimination, the ability not to be yourself carried away in feelings. That is the first aspect of spiritual practice: critical thinking, or the creation of *the Navigator*. A central danger in spiritual practice is the confusion of heartfeelings and ordinary feelings. This has led to a war against intellectuals (especially philosophers) and scientists (see my article [Anti-intellectualism and Anti-science](#)). It has created a basic anti-rational Zeitgeist, a catastrophical turn, since it precisely hasn't anything to do with *Learning to see with the Heart*, but with a myttery against *The Navigator*.

It is therefore a bit misleading to call heartfeelings feelings, because they rather have something to do with space, being and clarity. I will return to this in chapter 10, Ethics, part 4: *Tonglen – Rediscovering Love*.

Kreeft writes his book on Tolkien simply as a course in philosophy, and uses the interplay between philosophy and literature to show what's the heart in Tolkien's philosophy, and therewith of course also what is the heart of philosophy as such. In outlining the themes, or kinds of questions, or basic divisions of philosophy, he moves from the more abstract and theoretical questions (e.g., those of metaphysics and theology) to the more concrete and practical ones (e.g., those of personal ethics),

even though this means beginning with the least *interesting* points to most readers. But these are the most philosophically *important* points; for ethics depends on metaphysics, and to see this logical dependence is itself one of the most important, and often forgotten lessons we need to learn today. According to Kreeft we can fully understand concrete and specific tactics in a war, or in a game like chess or football, only when we understand the abstract and general principles of strategy. We can understand the motions of the planets only after first learning the principles of geometry, and we can understand a philosopher's ethics only after we understand his metaphysics, his worldview.

*The Lord of the Rings* is a Catholic book. This is Tolkien's own words, therefore it would be a misunderstanding not to see it in that light. Kreeft is a Catholic thinker with much more insight in Catholic theology than I. Therefore I will let his book be a theological support for this book, which I will write as longer comments to this basic text. All my writings are a part of my own philosophical diary. They are created in a state of meditative writing, and function in order to review my teaching and refresh my practice. The style of this online book is therefore mainly informel. I will give my own argument, and the book is therefore completely nonacademic. I do therefore not in every instance attempt or purport to convey the intended meaning of Kreeft, nor Tolkien. Rather, I will highlight the philosophical significance of them, seen in relation to my own teaching Meditation as an Art of Life. As mentioned: the book is as much a summary of my own philosophy.

Tolkien was a Catholic, and Saint-Exupéry was a Catholic, and their works both show what's the heart in Roman Catholicism. Tolkien himself described Middle-earth as a "world of natural theology, containing a monotheistic but sub-creational mythology." Writing to Fr Robert Murray, he maintained that *The Lord of the Rings* "is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imagery world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism."

And this technique is precisely what shows the *spirit* in Catholicism, instead of the usual boring and dried out theology. This is also the reason why so many are getting surprised when getting this information, often people who otherwise are enemies of the Catholic Church. This could also be said about Saint-Exupéry's master work *The Little Prince*.

All in all: the series on my three literary spiritual mentors constitutes my work on a philosophy, which should be seen in the light of Nordic Shamanism, Christian

mysticism and Tibetan Dream Yoga. This philosophy is presented in relation to philosophical counseling in Rold Forest.

It would be wrong of me to present myself as a Buddhist, a Christian or a Shaman, since this would involve that I used a specific vocabulary and practice belonging to each of these. My whole work is based on extreme paranormal experiences (the awakening of kundalini), and the accompanying development of strategies to handle these experiences. No single religion would be able to cover that.

The danger is the corruption of philosophy itself, a corruption of the search for truth, beauty and goodness. The transcendentals are the properties of being that correspond to three aspects of the human field of interest and are their ideals; science (truth), the arts (beauty) and religion (goodness). Philosophical disciplines that study them are logic, aesthetics and ethics.

The corruption in all this is what Tolkien saw in modernity. The central danger is the danger of relativism and subjectivism being mixed in with spirituality, and that anything goes. This is of course especially tragic when seen in relation to the questions Kreeft asks in his chapter on ethics: *Is Evil real? How powerful is evil? How weak is evil? How does evil work?* If evil actually is real, then evil in relativism has got a way of justifying itself. And that is *precisely* what we see. In my philosophical counseling practice I have had many former new agers who have ended in spiritual crises and they all say the same: “Perhaps one of the greatest victories the devil had in my life was to convince me that he doesn't exist.”

All in all: this online book will be build up as a just war between reductionism versus wholeness, machine versus nature, power versus humility, and relativism versus absolutism.

Why can Tolkien’s “mythology” be described as universal? Because it embodies an attack on unchecked modernity in all its worst aspects, and presents a world of community, nature and spiritual values that successfully, albeit barely, struggles to survive such destruction. That world seems to be a different one, with strange people and places; yet at the same time, it is also recognizably ours. And because the processes of rampant modernization – economic, political, cultural – are now truly global, the potential appeal and relevance of Tolkien’s attack and alternative are also effectively universal. This is a social and historical development; there is nothing necessarily mystical about it.

The universality is especially seen in the One Ring, and its two demonical movements: the movement into the ego-structures (the will to power), and the

movement out towards the many by means of ideology. The common spiritual sign of this is ego-inflation. The ego-inflation, the will to power and the connection with ideology, are exceptionally described in Thomas Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*. Mann partially builds his figure on Nietzsche, and the whole of the novel is on a collective plane about, what the Germans did under The Second World War, where demonical polarized energy spread from Hitler and the secret SS-rituals. This novel could easily be a description of how the One Ring is working.

Indeed, I think we can speak about a collective ego-inflated spiritual awakening within the enormous movement of New Age, which expresses itself in a variety of intellectual, identitical and euphorical ego-inflations (and the long wake of psychic wrecks who have ended up in *The Dark Night of the Soul*). I guess this is what New Agers are speaking about when they are talking about the "global spiritual awakening" which shall lead to the prophesized New Age: the Age of the Aquarius. Just try to google "how to open your third eye" and you'll get 19.800.000 results (when I tried). Most of the techniques given are in my view examples of spiritual vampirism and directly criminal if there were any way of proving it.

Ego-inflation can be seen in relation to Sauron's burning eye, which precisely describes what is going wrong. The Eye of Sauron was a symbol adopted by the Dark Lord during the Second Age and the Third Age. It was said that few could endure the eye's terrible gaze. The Eye was used on armor and banners of Mordor as a symbol of Sauron's quasi-omnipotence, and was adopted as something of an insignia by Sauron's forces in general.

The most scary about this development is that there seems to be a thought behind it. I have called this the 666 conspiracy. The 666 conspiracy is about Evil's plot against mankind. Is the third Antichrist among us, and will our worship of him be a sign of Judgment Day? It is clear that the Antichrist must be about anti-love and anti-existence. The techniques of "how to open your third eye", will, if you actually succeed, without question lead to a top-down, ego-inflated awakening. They will create a bottle-neck of energy in the throat, which will block the opening down towards the heart and hara; that is: it will block the possibility for love and existence.

Sauron's burning Eye is an eye without body and heart, without existence and love.

But Tolkien's universality comes about in another way, too. For the very terms of his critique are mythic; after all, that is ultimately the most (and perhaps the even only) effective way to counter a worldview which is rigidly reductionist and scientific. And there is literally nowhere in the world without some native tradition of a mythical way of relating to the world in which it is alive and saturated with spiritual

meaning – enchanted, in a word. Those traditions may be deeply buried, but – like the gods they embody – they can be revived by recognition. Tolkien’s living mythicity thus touches older memories still which are effectively shared by all humanity. As such, it is a powerful stimulus to re-enchantment.

Paradoxically, its power is all the more universal, for being a precise portrait of a time and place that (in a literal sense) never was. Tolkien’s tale thus partakes of the fairy-tale’s quality of “Once upon a time” – never but always, nowhere but everywhere. As Sallust, the ancient Roman historian wrote in *Of Gods and of the World*: “These things never happened, but are always.”

To me Kreeft has a deeply satisfactory take on the same things I’m fighting against, especially the modernist aspect of the Matrix Conspiracy (and even worse: the postmodern aspect). When he talks about the greatness of *The Lord of the Rings*, he mentions that the literary establishment in England [the modernists and the postmodernists] was stunned, shocked, and scandalized by an event of millennial significance when a major bookstore chain innocently polled English-speaking readers, asking them to choose the greatest book of the twentieth century. By a wide margin *The Lord of the Rings* won. Three times the poll was broadcasted: to a worldwide readership, into cyberspace via Amazon.com, and even to “the greatest book of the millennium”. The same champion won each time.

As Kreeft explains it, the [modern and postmodern] critics retched and kvetched, wailed and flailed, gasped and grasped for explanations. One said that they had failed and wasted their work of, and I quote Kreeft, “ed-u-ca-tion”. Why bother teaching them to read if they’re going to read that?

Kreeft claims that the poll revealed one important thing about *The Lord of the Rings*: That it is a classic, that is, a book loved by human nature, wherever it is found. And they revealed one important thing about the critics: that humanity isn’t found in that arrogant oligarchy of utterly-out-of-touch elitists. And they revealed one important thing about our culture, the same thing revealed by many polls that ask questions about values and about philosophy: that our culture is *not* egalitarian at all, in fact, that it is perhaps the least egalitarian culture in the history of the world. Kreeft asks: “For in what other culture has the worldview and life view of the teachers differed so radically from that of the students?”

Every human soul craves “the good, the true and the beautiful” absolutely and without limit. And it is precisely about these three most fundamental values that the gap is the widest. Ordinary people still believe in a real morality, a real difference between good and evil; and in objective truth and the possibility of knowing it; and in

the superiority of beauty over ugliness. But our educators, or “experts” feel towards these three traditional values the way people think medieval inquisitors felt towards witches. Our artists deliberately prefer ugliness to beauty, our moralists fear goodness more than evil, and our corrupted philosophers embrace various forms of postmodernism that reduce truth to ideology or power.

So it is no surprise that in a culture in which, as Kreeft puts it, “philosophers scorn wisdom, moralists scorn morality, preachers are the world’s greatest hypocrites, sociologists are the only people in the world who do not know what a good society is, psychologists have the most mixed-up psyches, professional artists are the only ones in the world who actually hate beauty, and liturgists are to religion what Dr. Van Helsing is to Dracula – it is no surprise that in this culture the literary critics are the last people to know a good book when they see one.”

Since this universal danger best is seen in the history of Western philosophy, I will follow Kreeft’s book, and his idea of writing it as a course in philosophy.

## **1. Metaphysics**

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy exploring the fundamental questions, including the nature of concepts like being, existence, and reality. It has two branches – cosmology and ontology, which I will investigate in the next two chapters.

Metaphysic is the most important, most foundational, part of philosophy. It is rational, not irrational. It shares this with science. Science is in fact developed out of philosophy. It is a body of knowledge ordered through explanation and causes. Like the rest of philosophy, it does not use the methods of the modern scientific method. It uses the tools of thinking and meditation alone. But it shares the concept of rationality with science, and it should not be classified under “the occult”, as it is in some bookstores. This is an example of how New Age is in progress of colonizing philosophy as well.

Metaphysics explores reality as such, all of reality, not just some part or dimension of reality, such as living things, chemicals, human history, or morality. It seeks the truths, laws, and principles that are true of all being.

I will begin with introducing my own metaphysics, and hereafter investigate it in relation with Tolkien. I will begin like this since it shows what metaphysics is, and therefore can give an introductory understanding of what the metaphysics of Tolkien



is all about. Tolkien will therefore gradually be brought in through the chapters on cosmology and ontology, and hereafter in all the following chapters.

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

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

The Indian philosophy claims, that the movement of time in itself is a negation-power (Asat, Avidya, or Shabda-Brahman, the self-sacrifice). In Christian terms this would be called Logos or the Christ principle. Time is one great negation (self-sacrifice) of the Now's unmoved being (Atman), which is the unmanifested, the actual source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Or said in Indian terms: a sacrifice of pure being (Sat) pure consciousness (chit) and pure joy (ananda).

In Western theology the Good, the True and the Beautiful is God. In Indian philosophy God is called Brahman. God is the nondual reality or Wholeness. The only thing that can be said to be nondual is the Wholeness. According to the Taoistic teaching of Yin and Yang there isn't anything beyond the world. You can't see the world from outside. You are in the world and you can only describe something from its opposition. What is the good? This you understand if you know what the evil is. You can't say anything about the world as a whole, because you can't put the Wholeness in opposition to anything. The Wholeness is therefore the indescribable (Tao). It is an absolute Otherness in relation to the known.

The negation-power is in that way the power behind the world's manifestation. Logically speaking, then the concept of negation probably is the best concept to describe why the ultimate, absolute truth can't be reduced to something particular. The negation principle (the Christ principle) is an impossible logical principle to escape from, especially when speaking about reductionism. But when moving from the negation-principle towards the manifestation of the world we need to use other concepts.

Indian philosophy claims that the manifestation of the universe thus has arisen on the background of a mighty universal vision (Mahat or Mahat Atman – a vision of

beauty), which originates from past universes. It is compared with the experience of objectivity when you awake from a deep sleep an early summer morning with singing birds. All religions have concepts of this great vision: it is the Dreamtime of the Aborigines, God's words in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the Pythagoreans' Music of the Spheres, 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 Akashic Records of the Occultists. In Indian philosophy it is also called the causal body (*karanadeha*), or, as in Christianity, the spirit in the symbolism of body, soul and spirit.

In this way, the future arises, and an outgoing creative movement; a movement, which can be compared with what they within science call The Big Bang (but it is not the same). In the outgoing movement, the great vision becomes, because of the negation-power, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision; signs from Eternity. In this way, the past arises, and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested. And then a destructive backmovement is created. This longing and backmovement are the background for life seen as a Quest, or a Pilgrimage.

In that way, the movement of time consists of two universal movements, which we could call the outgoing movement and the backmovement; future and past, creation and destruction. These two movements are reflected throughout the universe in a multiplicity of different lifecycles; they are Samsara's wheel of up-cycles which are followed by down-cycles and vice versa (for example life and death, success and fiasco, joy and sorrow) – all this which lie behind the law of karma and rebirth. In Western theology: original sin. This universe is for example considered to be a reincarnation of a past universe, the same way as a human being is considered to be a reincarnation of a past existence.

So the images in the movement of time is shattered reflections of the great vision of the universe, and are background for the manifestation of the holy scriptures of India, the Vedas, which are claimed to have been "heard" by wise men (the so-called Seers) in the dawn of time, and by word of mouth delivered over oceans of time. They are shadows, dreams, masks, mirrors, fables, fairy-tales, fictions: signs from Eternity. The Vedas therefore both include the most sublime and difficult available philosophy, as for example in the Upanishads, and good folktales as Ramayana and Mahabharata (with the famous Bhagavadgita), which with its clear ethical messages is told in village temples, to the children as bedtime stories, and which is inspiration for great poets as Rabindranath Tagore.

This is a description from Indian philosophy which I philosophical seen find very satisfying. In Western theology the great vision would be the same as God's word, or said with the Pythagoreans: the Music of the Spheres. *Musica universalis* (literally universal music), also called Music of the Spheres or Harmony of the Spheres, is an ancient philosophical concept that regards proportions in the movements of celestial bodies—the Sun, Moon, and planets—as a form of music. This "music" is not usually thought to be literally audible, but a harmonic, mathematical or religious concept. The idea continued to appeal to thinkers about music until the end of the Renaissance, influencing scholars of many kinds, including humanists. Further scientific exploration has determined specific proportions in some orbital motion, described as orbital resonance. This musical metaphysics is quite central in Tolkien's philosophy, as we shall see in the following chapters.

Because of the negation-power the images in time are coming only to exist in relation to their negation. For example, images of the powerful, the perfect and the good, only exist in relation to the powerlessness, the fiasco and the evil. So, all images contain a structure of opposites. The most universal images include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures or yantrafields. The more collective and personal images expel their polar partners. However, this is in accordance with the logic of the images not possible, and the result is contradiction and division (suffering).

As the Buddhist philosopher, Nagarjuna, said, then the Now's lawfulness around the function of the negation-power, is due to, that energy works as streams and divisions 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.

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 (*śūnyatā* - see my book *Śūnyatā Sūtras*) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created.

Now, when we have looked at this quite grand, and pre-modern, metaphysics, how “grand” would other people look at it? In his book *The Philosophy of Tolkien*, Peter Kreeft asks the question: “How big is reality?” and says that there are three logically possible answers to this question:

The first is that “there is more things in heaven and earth (i.e., in reality) than are dreamed of in your philosophies (i.e., in thought).” That was Shakespeare’s philosophy, as expressed by Hamlet to Horatio, who found it hard to believe in ghosts. This is the philosophy of the poet and of the happy man, for whom nature is a fullness, a moreness, and therefore wonderful. Kreeft claims that it is the philosophy of all pre-modern cultures.

The second possible answer is that there are *fewer* things in reality than in thought; that most of our thought is mere myth, error, convention, projection, fantasy, fallacy, folly, dream, etc. Kreeft claims this is the philosophy of the unhappy man, the cynic, the pessimist: “Trust nobody and nothing.” This philosophy is hardly ever found in any pre-modern culture, except in a small minority.

The third possibility is that there are exactly the same number of things in reality and in thought, that is, that we “know it all”.

“What difference does it make to your life which philosophy you believe?” asks Kreeft. And answers that it makes a total difference, a difference to absolutely every single thing in your life. It colors everything. For if you believe the first philosophy, as Shakespeare did, as Tolkien did, and as most pre-modern peoples did, then your fundamental attitude toward all reality is wonder and humility. You are like a small child in a large house. As Tolkien said in one of his letters, “You are inside a very great story.” You expect mysteries, you expect moreness: terrors to stop your heart and joys to break it. Reality is *big*.

The larger-than-life world is the one our ancestors lived in. Our culture’s greatest sadness is that we no longer live in this world. Tolkien’s greatest achievement is that he invites us to inhabit this world again. He shows us that this world is our home. He even shows us heroism: he not only shows us heroes but he also shows us that we ourselves believe in heroes. For after we have read Tolkien’s unashamedly heroic epic, we do not say, “Well, that was a pleasant little escape from reality”, but, “Hey! That was real!”

If you believe in the second philosophy, that there are *fewer* things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamed of in our philosophies, then you are, in Kreeft's words, a cynical, sceptical, suspicious, bored, jaded, detached, ironic, and definitely non-heroic. You are a reductionist: you reduce mystery to puzzle, love to lust, thought to cybernetics, reasoning to rationalizing, ideals to desires, man to ape, god to myth. In other words, you are a typical modern or post-modern man (is there much of a difference?) You buy into the first step of the scientific method: "Doubt everything that is not proved; treat every thought as guilty until proved innocent, false until proved true." This is the metaphysical theory called materialism.

Materialism is a form of philosophical monism which holds that matter is the fundamental substance in nature, and that all things, including mental aspects and consciousness, are results of material interactions. This is view point of for example Richard Dawkins, whom I will return to.

The third philosophy is idealism. In philosophy, Idealism is the group of metaphysical philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as humans can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial. Epistemologically, idealism manifests as a skepticism about the possibility of knowing any mind-independent thing. Idealism is the ultimately expression of Sauron's Eye: a view of the world where both body and existence are considered illusions.

Kreeft calls idealism rationalism, in fact, arrogant rationalism: everything in my thought is real, and everything real is in my thought. In ancient Greece Parmenides said, "What is thought and what is real is the same", and in modern Germany Hegel said, "The real is the rational and the rational is the real"; but Kreeft says that only those with a divinity complex can actually believe that. I call it the ultimate ego-inflation, namely solipsism. Idealism is also a reductionism. It has reduced the unknown to the known, the Otherness to your own psyche, and enchantment to magical thinking. This is the top-heavy Indo-European create-your-own-reality ideology, where you like Sisyphos, constantly need to do mind-work in order to maintain your own control of reality.

The second and the third philosophy, materialism and idealism, are in my view the two central metaphysical theories of the Matrix Conspiracy. Idealism is today especially seen in the power psychology has in in New Age. Let's have a look on two of the most famous representatives of materialism and idealism, Richard Dawkins and Oprah Winfrey.

With the Matrix Conspiracy we have two ruling metaphysical theories in the Western society: materialism (the bias of atheist fundamentalism) and idealism (the New Age bias). The consequences of both are a worship of the ego.

In materialism this could be depicted in Richard Dawkins's notion of *The Selfish Gene*. In her book *The Solitary Self – Darwin and The Selfish Gene*, the renowned philosopher Mary Midgley, explores the nature of our moral constitution to challenge the view that reduces human motivation to self-interest. Midgley argues cogently and convincingly that simple, one-sided accounts of human motives, such as the “selfish gene” tendency in recent neo-Darwinian thought, may be illuminating but are always unrealistic. Such neatness, she shows, cannot be imposed on human psychology. Midgley returns to the original writings of Charles Darwin to show how the reductive individualism that is now presented as Darwinism does not derive from Darwin but from a wider, Hobbesian tradition in Enlightenment thinking. She reveals the “selfish gene” hypothesis in evolutionary biology as a cultural accretion that is not seen in nature. Heroic independence, argues Midgley, is not a realistic aim for *Homo Sapiens*. We are, as Darwin saw, earthly organism framed to interact with one another and with the complex ecosystems of which we are a tiny part. For us, bonds are not just restraints but also lifelines. *The Solitary Self* is a significant re-reading of Darwin and an important corrective to recent work in evolutionary science, which has wide implications for debates in science, religion, psychology and ethics.

My own claim is that Richard Dawkins's notion of *The Selfish Gene* (or *The Selfish Meme*) is a pure fantasy of how the environment is stored in some kind of postulated cultural gene, which has no more scientific or philosophical validity than many of the theories of “the evolution of consciousness” we see in the idealism of New Age. Both are paradoxically enough new kinds of Social Darwinism. And both are involved in the rise of a new kind of fascism (see the Matrix Dictionary entry [The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism](#)).

In idealism the ego-worship could be depicted as self-assertion (or even self-love): the ultimate narcissism. Both materialism and idealism are included in The Matrix Conspiracy, though idealism is the ruling philosophy. The reason why both is included is that they define each other; they are so to speak complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same necessarily must supplement each other. (As we shall see in chapter 5, Epistemology, Part 1: *The Simulation Theory*, I directly demonstrate that they are two sides of the same coin, which in the simulation theory finally has removed reality all together).

As a famous representative of the idealist worldview we could look at Oprah Winfrey. In Oprah Winfrey lore, one particular story is repeated over and over. When

Oprah was 17, she won the Miss Fire Prevention Contest in Nashville, Tennessee. Until that year every winner had had a mane of red hair, but Oprah would prove to be a game changer.

The contest was the first of many successes for Oprah. She has won numerous Emmys, has been nominated for an Oscar, and appears on lists like Time's 100 Most Influential People. In 2013, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She founded the Oprah Book Club, which is often credited with reviving Americans' interest in reading. Her generosity and philanthropic spirit are legendary.

Oprah has legions of obsessive, devoted fans who write her letters and follow her into public restrooms. Oprah basks in their love: "I know people really, really, really love me, love me." And she loves them right back. It's part of her "higher calling". She believes that she was put on this earth to lift people up, to help them "live their best life". She encourages people to love themselves, believe in themselves, and follow their dreams.

Oprah is one of a new group of elite storytellers who present practical solutions to society's problems that can be found within the logic of existing profit-driven structures of production and consumption. They promote market-based solutions to the problems of corporate power, technology, gender divides, environmental degradation, alienation and inequality.

In this climate of stress and uncertainty, Oprah tells us the stories of her life to help us understand our feelings, cope with difficulty and improve our lives. She presents her personal journey and metamorphosis from poor little girl in rural Mississippi to billionaire prophet as a model for overcoming adversity and finding "a sweet life".

Oprah's biographical tale has been managed, mulled over, and mauled in the public gaze for 30 years. She used her precocious intelligence and wit to channel the pain of abuse and poverty into building an empire. She was on television by the age of 19 and had her own show within a decade.

The 1970s feminist movement opened the door to the domestic, private sphere, and the show walked in a decade later, breaking new ground as a public space to discuss personal troubles affecting Americans, particularly women. Oprah broached topics (divorce, depression, alcoholism, child abuse, adultery, incest) that had never before been discussed with such candor and empathy on television (see my article [The New Feminism and the Philosophy of Women's Magazines](#)).



The show's "evolution" over the decades mirrored the "evolution" of Oprah's own life. In its early years the show followed a "recovery model" in which guests and viewers were encouraged to overcome their problems through self-esteem building and learning to love themselves.

But as copycat shows and criticisms of "trash talk" increased in the early 1990s, Oprah changed the show's format. In 1994, Oprah declared that she was done with "victimization" and negativity: "It 's time to move on from 'We are dysfunctional' to 'What are we going to do about it?'" Oprah credited her decision to her own personal evolution: "People must grow and change" or "they will shrivel up" and "their souls will shrink".

In an appearance on Larry King Live, Oprah acknowledged that she had become concerned about the message of her show and so had decided to embark on a new mission "to lift people up". Themes of spirituality and empowerment displaced themes of personal pathology. For Oprah, the transformation was total: "Today I try to do well and be well with everyone I reach or encounter. I make sure to use my life for that which can be of goodwill. Yes, this has brought me great wealth. More important, it has fortified me spiritually and emotionally."

A stream of self-help gurus has spent time on Oprah's stage over the past decade and a half, all with the same message. You have choices in life. External conditions don't determine your life. You do. It's all inside you, in your head, in your wishes and desires. Thoughts are destiny, so thinking positive thoughts will enable positive things to happen.

When bad things happen to us, it's because we're drawing them toward us with unhealthy thinking and behaviors. "Don't complain about what you don't have. Use what you've got. To do less than your best is a sin. Every single one of us has the power for greatness because greatness is determined by service—to yourself and others." If we listen to that quiet "whisper" and fine-tune our "internal, moral, emotional GPS", we too can learn the secret of success. Can we really? Well, a simple *reductio ad absurdum* argument can show how much lack of thinking this involves. If true it would mean that the starving mom in Africa who are trying to find ways to feed her children has drawn this situation towards her with unhealthy thinking and behaviors. It is not the external conditions (for example drought) that have determined her life, because the external conditions doesn't exist, or if it exist, it is only as your own thought creation.

Janice Peck, in her work as professor of journalism and communication studies, has studied Oprah for years. She argues that to understand the Oprah phenomenon we

must return to the ideas swirling around in the Gilded Age. Peck sees strong parallels in the mind-cure movement of the Gilded Age and Oprah's evolving enterprise in the New Gilded Age, the era of neoliberalism. She argues that Oprah's enterprise reinforces the neoliberal focus on the self: Oprah's "enterprise [is] an ensemble of ideological practices that help legitimize a world of growing inequality and shrinking possibilities by promoting and embodying a configuration of self compatible with that world."

Nothing captures this ensemble of ideological practices better than *O Magazine*, whose aim is to "help women see every experience and challenge as an opportunity to grow and discover their best self. To convince women that the real goal is becoming more of who they really are. To embrace their life." *O Magazine* implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, identifies a range of problems in neoliberal capitalism and suggests ways for readers to adapt themselves to mitigate or overcome these problems.

Oprah recognizes the pervasiveness of anxiety and alienation in our society. But instead of examining the economic or political basis of these feelings, she advises us to turn our gaze inward and reconfigure ourselves to become more adaptable to the vagaries and stresses of the neoliberal moment.

Oprah is appealing precisely because her stories hide the role of political, economic, and social structures. In doing so, they make the American Dream seem attainable. If we just fix ourselves, we can achieve our goals. For some people, the American dream is attainable, but to understand the chances for everyone, we need to look dispassionately at the factors that shape success.

The current incarnation of the American Dream narrative holds that if you acquire enough cultural capital (skills and education) and social capital (connections, access to networks), you will be able to translate that capital into both economic capital (cash) and happiness. Cultural capital and social capital are seen as there for the taking (particularly with advances in internet technology), so the only additional necessary ingredients are pluck, passion, and persistence— all attributes that allegedly come from inside us.

The American dream is premised on the assumption that if you work hard, economic opportunity will present itself, and financial stability will follow, but the role of cultural and social capital in paving the road to wealth and fulfilment, or blocking it, may be just as important as economic capital. Some people are able to translate their skills, knowledge, and connections into economic opportunity and financial stability, and some are not—either because their skills, knowledge, and connections don't

seem to work as well, or they can't acquire them in the first place because they're too poor.

Today, the centrality of social and cultural capital is obscured (sometimes deliberately), as demonstrated in the implicit and explicit message of Oprah and her ideological colleagues. In their stories, and many others like them, cultural and social capital are easy to acquire. They tell us to get an education. Too poor? Take an online course. Go to Khan Academy. They tell us to meet people, build up our network. Don't have any connected family members? Join LinkedIn.

It's simple. Anyone can become anything. There's no distinction between the quality and productivity of different people's social and cultural capital. We're all building our skills. We're all networking.

We are the perfect, depoliticized [sic], complacent neoliberal subjects.

When the stories that manage our desires break their promises over and over, the stories themselves become fuel for change and open a space for new, radical stories. These new stories must feature collective demands that provide a critical perspective on the real limits to success in our society and foster a vision of life that does fulfill the desire for self-actualization (read more in *The Matrix Dictionary* on [Oprah Winfrey](#)).

The fundamental reason for the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* is that people sense it is *real*. No mere *escape* from reality can be voted "the greatest book of the century". We shall return to this seemingly paradox several times: *The Lord of the Rings* is an imaginary work, and yet it often seems more real than our own world.

And that is why Tolkien does not tell us half of what he knows about this world. You can tell everything about your fantasies, your dreams, or your thoughts, but not about anything real.

That is also why *The Lord of the Rings* bears endless rereading: it is heavy enough to bear the mind's journeys into it, like our world. In fact, it is perhaps the most "heavy", full, detailed, complex, *real* invented world in all of human literature.

Tolkien himself tells us that he felt, in creating it, as we feel in reading it: that it was rediscovered, not invented, that it had always been there, and it was as much a surprise to Tolkien to discover it as it is to us: "I had the sense of recording what was already 'there,' somewhere; not of 'inventing'." Great authors often say that about

the experience of writing their masterpieces. They have seen and heard the signs and signals from Eternity.

## **A. Cosmology**

Cosmology deals with the world as the totality of space, time and all phenomena. Historically, it has had quite a broad scope, and in many cases was founded in religion. The ancient Greeks did not draw a distinction between this use and their model for the cosmos. However, in modern use metaphysical cosmology addresses questions about the Universe which are beyond the scope of science. It is distinguished from religious cosmology in that it approaches these questions using philosophical methods like logic and reasoning.

### **1. The Instrumental and Communicative View of Nature**

In the view of nature in natural science, nature is reduced to atomic particles, empty space, fields, electromagnetic waves and particles etc., etc. Characteristic is, that nature is explained, and is described, in a way, which is a world away from our immediate sense experiences.

The support of a natural scientific view of nature has almost always led the supporters forward to combine it with an instrumental (technological) view of nature. This conception of nature is seeing it as pure material, or alone as a means for the unfolding of Man.

The instrumental view of nature rests on a sharp division between Man and everything else; that is to say: between inner and outer nature. Man is by force of his inner nature radical different from, and is standing over, the outer nature. This is, among other things, due to, that he, with reason and science, is in the position to master nature.

By the way, the thought about Man as a self-producing being, characterizes almost all traditional Western philosophy, where the art of philosophizing is due to thinking alone, even though the theories within this tradition in other crucial points are highly contradictory. You find it in Christianity, in Descartes' view of Man as a self-dependant being, in the Enlightenment philosophers, in Romanticism's view of Man as a historical being, in Kierkegaard, Karl Marx and Auguste Comte, who respectively founded existentialism, Marxism and positivism. This thought is called the self-production thesis. It is characterized by the top-heavy Indo-European thinking, which my concept of the Luciferian movement is a break with.

Naturalism stands for any view, which considers nature, or the natural, as the most common basis for explanations and evaluations. A naturalistic view of human nature is this conception: Man is a piece of nature.

Naturalistic views can be traced back to the oldest Greek philosophy, but all newer forms of naturalism are characterized by modern natural sciences. Naturalism therefore very often advocates the conception, that all phenomena in the world can be studied through natural science. However it is important to be aware, that naturalism in itself isn't a scientific point of view, but a philosophical point of view. No single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If you are claiming anything else, you end in reductionism; that is: where you reduce Man and reality to only being a result of a single influence. You accentuate one influence at the same time as you understate all others, and therewith you get a problem with creating unity and coherence in your theory. Both Man and reality are all too complex to be written down to one influence.

The view of nature, which is characterizing naturalism today, is characterized by three things:

1) Nature is understood as something, which goes off regularly. This regularity can be formulated mathematical, and is what we understand as the laws of nature. Through insight in the laws of nature Man can learn to make use of nature to his own advantage.

2) This regularity is not an expression of any, to Man, understandable reason. That will say: there are no purposes or intentions with how the ways of nature function. They are only controlled by causal regularity of a mechanical kind. This materialistic ontology claims, that the only thing which has real existence, is mass entities in motion. The whole of nature can fully be explained from the knowledge of these mechanical principles. All explanations use the cause and effect relation. They are causal. Teleological explanations - that is: explanations from purposes - are rejected.

3) Nature is understood and explained from itself. In other words: nature contains in itself its causes. It develops itself by force of immanent powers. It produces itself, is a natura naturans. Naturalism doesn't set the scene for religious (pre-modern) explanations.

In opposition to this, and under impression of the discussion about the damage, which we have caused nature, there has in the later years been worked out conceptions, which claims, that nature has a value in itself. It is not only a means, but ought to be respected for its beauty and richness. It is by the way a point of view, which also is

well known from older times. In lack of better you could call it a communicative view of nature, since it is implying, that we in some sense have a community with nature. This is the beginning of the Luciferian movement; that is: a movement away from the top-heavy self-production thesis, towards a self-forgetful realm. This self-forgetful realm is the realm that allows the mystical experience, a complete pre-modern concept, which is looked at with contempt by modern and postmodern intellectuals.

The communicative view of nature 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 being has a community with this nature. For instance: The Danish theologian and philosopher of life, K.E. Løgstrup, is not naturalist in the way the word was used in the above-mentioned. Through the whole of his life he had an energetic controversy with all positivism and empirical naturalism. His main objection is, that these reduce reality for important dimensions. What Løgstrup calls “the sovereign and spontaneous life-expressions” are given with “life itself”. You can say, that they belong to our nature, if you thereby understand it as a metaphysical nature. This you can also call naturalism, but it is in that case important to emphasize, that it is a metaphysical naturalism. Metaphysical naturalism is a view I have adopted, and I will develop it further throughout this book.

Another Danish philosopher of life, Mogens Pahuus, has in his book *Karen Blixen's philosophy of life* argued, that Blixen, when she speaks about God, is using the word in a quite other meaning than the traditional. According to him she uses it completely synonymous with nature, or rather, the creative powers in nature. In any eventuality it seems, like she thinks of the human nature as being related to the rest of nature. The human nature is a unity of spirit, instinct, sensation, body and feelings, something which you can't control and master by standing outside it, but which is connected to life-feeling, spontaneity and self-forgetfulness, when you are one with it. Reason, you can say, is lying in an adaption to the realities, both in oneself and the surroundings. Also here we can talk about a metaphysical naturalism, and it is from Karen Blixen I have the concept of the Luciferian movement. This is explained in my Ebook [Karen Blixen – the Devil's Mistress](#).

In his book *The Light of Nature* the Danish philologist of Middle Ages, Axel Haaning, is portraying a line of philosophers of nature from the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance, who advocate a communicative view of nature, and who try to illustrate both religion, as well as science of nature, in a more large-scale perspective, but who have been standing in the shadow of the Age of Enlightenment, as well as the breakthrough of modern sciences. It is names such as Roger Bacon, Albert the

Great, Jean de Rupescissa, Marsilio Ficino, Paracelsus, Gerhard Mandrel, Giordano Bruno.

Finally shall be mentioned Buddhism, which in some areas can sound very materialistic and naturalistic, but again we here talk about a metaphysical naturalism. It is speaking about the Buddha-nature as the final goal of Man. The Buddha-nature is the original and innermost nature of the mind, which always is completely untouched by change and death.

In agreement with such a communicative view of nature Kreeft claims that cosmology is a division of philosophy seldom seen anymore because most philosophers think its questions have all been answered by the natural sciences, ever since the discovery of the modern scientific method.

But he also claims that there are certainly some questions about the cosmos that the physical sciences do not have the method for answering, while philosophy does: for instance, the justification of principles science takes for granted, such as the uniformity of nature, causality, and the correlation between objective intelligibility in nature and subjective intelligence in man's mind, as well as nonquantifiable questions like the beauty and value of nature, and why we find a mysterious nonutilitarian joy in things like forests, stars, and storms.

The cosmos is the whole, and the reductionisms reduce this whole to the part. Tolkien said: "I have, I suppose, constructed an imaginary *time*, but kept my feet on my own mother-earth for *place*...The theatre of my tale is this earth, the one in which we now live, but the historical period is imaginary."

"Middle-earth" itself is a modernization "of an old word for the inhabited world of Men, the *oikoumene*: middle because thought of vaguely as set amidst the encircling Seas and (in the northern imagination) between the ice of the North and the fire of the South..." (as Tolkien added, it is definitely not, as many early reviewers seemed to assume, another planet!)

What is most striking about this larger world? Certainly its variety, richness and consistency are extraordinary. The resulting sense of place gives rise to a startling sensation of primary reality. The fact is that Middle-earth is more real to many readers than many "actual" places; and if I should suddenly find myself there (which would of course astound me – but not utterly) I would have a better feeling for it, and a better idea of how to find my way about, than if I had been dropped in, say, central Asia or South America. Many others have felt the same way. "Tolkien's readers all



have the same impression: they have walked or ridden every inch of Middle-earth in all its weathers”

This sense of Middle-earth being more “real” than our own world, has to do with something I will explain throughout this book: namely the concept that the Wholeness, the reality, or the cosmos, can be in three states: sleeping, dreaming and awake. Our own reality is sleeping, all things are closed and grey. It is only showing The Outer Side of the world. In Middle-earth the things are dreaming, more open and colorful. Middle-earth is in addition to the Outer Side also showing the Inner Side of the world, and therefore it is more enchanted, more awake, more real. The whole idea about the attack from Mordor is therefore to depict the attempt to reduce the Wholeness to its parts, to put it to sleep, or directly kill it.

Middle-earth is therefore a primordial image of our own world which is under attack from modernity and reductionism. Middle-earth far exceeds the Shire, and what is most striking about it is the profound presence of natural world: geography and geology, ecologies, flora and fauna, the seasons, weather, the night-sky, the stars and the Moon. The experience of these phenomena as comprising a living and meaningful cosmos saturates Tolkien’s entire story. It wouldn’t be stretching a point to say that Middle-earth itself appears as a character in its own right. And the living personality and agency of this character are none the less for being nonhuman; in fact, that is just what allows for a sense of ancient myth, with its feeling of a time when the Earth itself was alive, dreaming, or even awake. It whispers: perhaps it could be again; perhaps, indeed, it still is, because the Inner Side is still here. And there is an accompanying sense of relief: here, at least, a reader may take refuge from a world where, as in a hall of mirrors gone mad, humanity has swollen to become everything, and the measure of everything. Escaping a bloated solipsism, there is a sense of perspective, context, and sanity.

In his book, *Defending Middle-earth – Tolkien: Myth and Modernity*, the philosopher Patric Curry have argued that Tolkien’s works are thoroughly infused with a strong environmentalist message. Curry goes as far as to claim that *The Lord of the Rings* served as a kind of clandestine environmental manifesto that was later most appreciated during the rise of the radical environmental movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In that way it certainly was viewed in the counterculture in Denmark, where one of the leading figures from that time, lived in a commune where they all took the same surname, Kløvedal (Rivendell). It was names such as for example Troels Kløvedal, who later should be famous and beloved as an adventurer, captain and author. But Tolkien himself, who disliked allegory, would have demurred if offered such a characterization of his own work. When faced with comparisons

between the plot of *The Lord of the Rings* and the events of World War II, he insisted that there was no intended connection to any contemporary events.

Yet it is impossible to ignore the strong environmental themes in the book, especially in the devastations wrought by Sauron and Saruman, keepers of the fictional two towers. For example, at the end of the cycle where the Hobbits return to the Shire and find that Saruman has transformed their pastoral Eden into a nineteenth-century industrial wasteland (a kind of Middle-earth version of turn-of-the-century Manchester or Pittsburgh), don't we get a clear critique of the ravages of industrialism pulling apart the traditional connections between people and the land? Under any circumstance Curry gives some wonderful analyses of *The Lord of the Rings* seen in this light.

Curry says that every forest in Middle-earth – Mirkwood, the Old Forest, Fangorn, even Woody End in the Shire – has its own unique personality. And none is more memorable than the green city of Caras Galadhon in Lothlórien (also called Lórien), “the heart of Elvendom on earth,” the height of whose mallorn-trees “could not be guessed, but they stood up in the twilight like living towers. In their many-tiered branches and amid their ever-moving leaves countless lights were gleaming, green and gold and silver.”

Incidentally, says Curry, these colours receive repeated emphasis. Treebeard's two drinking vessels glow, “one with a golden and the other with a rich green light; and the blending of the two lights lit the bay, as if the sun of summer was shining through a roof of young leaves.” The light in Sam's mind, trapped in the arkness with Shelob, “became colour: green gold, silver, white;” and when he awoke in Ithilien, through the leaves of the beech-trees overhead “sunlight glimmered, green and gold.” Even Théodan's bier was green and white, “but upon the king was laid the great cloth of gold...” The traditional association of gold and silver with the Sun and Moon is plain enough, but as anciently valued I think they also symbolize human civilization, but whose reiterated contiguity with green Tolkien meant to convey a harmonious relationship between humankind and nature. Indeed, an inseparable relationship: when asked rhetorically, “Do we walk in legends or on the green earth in the daylight?” Aragorn rightly replies that “A man may do both...The green earth, say you? That is a mighty matter of legend, though you tread it under the light of day!”

Tolkien does not romanticize nature, however. You can easily freeze to death, die of overexposure, drown or starve in Middle-earth. Curry asks us to consider these remarks by Angela Carter on the wood in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

*The English wood is nothing like the dark, necromantic forest in which the Northern European imagination begins and ends, where its dead and the witches live...for example an English wood, however marvelous, however metamorphic, cannot, by definition, be trackless...But to be lost in the forest is to be lost to this world, to be abandoned by the light, to lose yourself utterly with no guarantee you will either find yourself or else be found, to be committed against your will – or worse, of your own desire – to a perpetual absence from humanity, and existential catastrophe...The Wood we have just described is that of nineteenth-century nostalgia, which disinfected the wood, cleansing it of the grave, hideous and elemental beings with which the superstition of an earlier age had filled it. Or rather, denaturing, castrating those beings until they came to look like those photographs of fairy folk that so enraptured Conan Doyle.*

The interest of this passage for us, says Curry, lies mainly in how it *doesn't* apply to Middle-earth. In fact, such “denaturing,” which transformed Tolkien’s beloved Elves from “a race high and beautiful, the older Children of the world...the People of the Great Journey, the People of the Stars” into the wee “fairy folk” he so hated, was exactly what Tolkien held against Shakespeare. The Hobbits may go rambling through an English wood on a day’s outing, but as Bilbo soon learned (and as any reader of *The Hobbit* could tell you), wandering off the path in Mirkwood definitely amounted to an “existential catastrophe.” Tolkien made no attempt to prettify “the hearts of trees and their thoughts, which were often dark and strange, and filled with a hatred of things that go free upon the earth, gnawing, biting, breaking, hacking, burning: destroyers and usurpers.”

Curry says that individual trees figure importantly too. *The Lord of the Rings* begins with the old Party Tree, and ends with a new one. (It nearly ends prematurely with Old Man Willow.) The tree that blossoms in the courtyard in Minas Tirith is a scion of Telperion the White, which with Laurelin the Golden is one of Tolkien’s cosmogenic trees of life. In the internal mythology of Middle-earth, they embodied the first light in the universe, and before they died bore a great silver flower and golden fruit: the Sun and the Moon. Their light otherwise remains visible only in the “star” of Eärendil. And, of course, Hobbits were not Tolkien’s only unique creation; he also gave us Ents, and the unforgettable character of Treebeard.

Curry goes on to describe the wars on trees. When asked the cardinal question in any kind of war – in fact, the question that is itself (however discreet) the first act of war (however polite): “Whose side are you on?” – Treebeard replies, “I am not altogether on anybody’s *side*, because nobody is altogether on my *side*, if you understand me: nobody cares for the woods as I care for them, not even Elves nowadays. Still, I take more kindly to Elves than to others...And there are some

things, of course, whose side I am altogether not on; I am against them altogether: these – *burárum*’ (he again made a deep rumble of disgust) – these Orcs, and their masters’”.

Curry says:

“Without any suggestion of exact substitution, that it is easy to hear the voice of Tolkien himself here. He freely acknowledged his own ‘tree-love,’ writing that ‘I am (obviously) much in love with plants and above all trees, and always have been; and I find human maltreatment of them as hard to bear as some find ill-treatment of animals.’ In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, published on 4 July 1972, Tolkien objected to an editorial description of Forestry Commission plantations as possessing ‘a kind of Tolkien gloom.’ Probably writing in view of his “totem tree,” a birch in his front yard, he pointed out that:

*In all my works I take part of trees as against all their enemies. Lothlórien is beautiful because there the trees were loved...It would be unfair to compare the Forestry Commission with Sauron because as you observe it is capable of repentance; but nothing it has done that is stupid compares with the destruction, torture and murder of trees perpetrated by private individuals and minor official bodies. The savage sound of the eclectic saw is never silent wherever trees are still found growing.*

Curry asks: “Was Tolkien exaggerating?” and looks at the situation in Britain, which is probably average in a global context (the same is the case in Denmark). Half of the remaining ancient woodlands have been destroyed in the last fifty years – as much as in the last four centuries; only 10 % of the country is now forested at all, and most of that is non-native coniferous. The Forestry Commission, supposedly owner of woods on behalf of the nation, is being privatized “sold off to the highest bidders for profit) by stealth. Another priority of those in power has been to build, usually through pristine countryside, yet more roads for the unsustainable use of cars. This was never more vividly symbolized than when the 250-year old Sweet Chestnut tree on St. George’s Green, in Wanstead, East London, was smashed down and cut up, after determined but non-violent resistance, on 10 December 1993.

Nor is the situation better elsewhere, Curry explains. Also the magnificent forests of the Pacific North-west, in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia – some groves of trees 1600 years old, and home to a fantastic array of flora and wildlife – are being felled at a rate that exceeds that of Brazil, leaving clear-cut moonscapes. Roughly an incredible 90 % of Western and Central Europe’s original temperate forests have already disappeared. In both cases, the remaining pockets (and that is all they are) of

old-growth are going fast, along with their lynx, wolf and bear, mostly to be replaced with factory forests: the lifeless “green deserts” of monoculture timber plantations. Transnational timber companies are hungrily eyening the last big temperate forests in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. Meanwhile, of primary (untouched) tropical forest – which only occupies 6% of the Earth’s land surface, but contains half of its species – about 40% has already gone; every year, another area the size of England and Wales is felled. And Third World governments use the continuing irresponsibility of rich countries to continue despoiling their own.

“The Dream of the Rood” is an Anglo-Saxon poem from the tenth century, and one with which Tolkien knew well. Its author makes it a glory of the tree that it forms the Cross and bears the body of Christ. Curry quotes John Fowles: “it is not Christ who is crucified now; it is the tree itself, and on the bitter gallows of human greed and stupidity.”

Even leaving continuity, renewal and joy offered by “tree-love” to one side – which cannot be done forever – Curry makes it clear that we are talking about living things which cool and filter the air, absorbing pollutants and noise; regulate and purify rainfall, and retain and enrich the soil; produce oxygen (a mature tree can produce enough to meet the annual requirements of 10 people) and provide shelter and shade as well as aesthetic satisfaction, historical continuity and psychological refreshment; give wildlife somewhere to live; and provide renewable resources of timber, compost, fuel, and medicines.

“For these attributes alone, trees are worthy of reverence”, says Curry. But they are also living symbols, spiritually and culturally as well as physically. As Jonathan Bate writes, “‘romantic ecology’ reverences the green earth because it recognizes that neither physically nor psychologically can we live without green things...’ And of those green things are the oldest and biggest in the world – the elders of the plant kingdom upon which human beings, along with all other living things, depend utterly. There is no substitute for photosynthesis. As such, they embody (more than just symbolize) both continuity with life in and of the past, in the places and times in which they have slowly grown, and faith in its future, measured in the hundreds, and in some cases, thousands, of years they can live to.

It is thus not surprising that trees have been worshipped as sacred in most cultures and times. The Roman philosopher Seneca (c. 5 BC-65 AD) wrote:

*When you find yourself within a grove of exceptionally tall, old trees, whose interlocking boughs mysteriously shut out the view of the sky, the great height of the forest and the secrecy of the place together with a sense of awe before the dense*

*impenetrable shades will awaken in you the belief in a god. And when a grotto has been hewn into the hollowed rock of a mountain, not by human hands but by the powers of nature, and to great depth, it pervades your soul with an awesome sense of the religious.*

Nearly two millennia later, Robert Luis Stevenson found that “it is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men’s hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of the air, that emanation from the old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit.” Not a few people feel the same way today.

Conversely, says Curry, there is an awful, sick feeling of wrongness when a big tree falls. As Jay Griffith writes, “felled trees lying flat” are like “the horizontal lines of sadness in the human face, or in the human form knocked flat to the ground. Hope, by contrast, is vertical – in the standing tree, in the standing human figure. The only hope for the tree is that enough people will stand up for them, answering an ancient and universal call...”

Curry goes on to say: “And it is a universal call, extending from the sublime: the World Tree of Yggdrasil, the Biblical Trees of Life and of knowledge, the Buddha’s Bo Tree – through the tribal-cultural: The English May and Apple-tree, [The Danish Beech], the Greek Olive and Myrtle, Celtic Oak and Mistletoe – to the touching if slightly ridiculous: our Christmas Trees, blithely transplanted in space and time from pagan Germany to Victorian London. The stone groves in Gothic cathedrals, honouring long-lost arboreal ancestors, still inspire wonder; and more local comrades, like our long-suffering urban trees, affection. In the words of the historian of comparative religion, Mircea Eliade, ‘the tree represents – whether ritually and concretely, or in mythology and cosmology, or simply symbolically – the *living cosmos*, endlessly renewing itself.’”

Curry says that Tolkien would have been particularly aware of Yggdrasil, the world Tree and *axis mundi* (centre of the unknown world) of the Norse and Germanic worldview, and one which precedes and survives the gods themselves. It was sometimes thought to be an Ash, although the self-renewing and evergreen Yew seems a stronger candidate. Besides these two, other symbolic local trees include the Oak, sacred to Thor, and the Apple, “the favourite fruit-bearing tree of the North,” its fruit the gift of choice from Nob and Bob to Samwise, with a typically Tolkienian emphasis on the plain people and simple pleasures, upon the Ring’s departure from Bree. But what is important here is the mutual dependence of the universal and the particular. To quote Eliade again, “the Whole exists within each significant fragment...because every significant fragment reproduces the Whole.” Thus “in the dialectic of the sacred, a part (a tree, a plant) has the value of the whole (the cosmos,

life), a profane thing becomes a hierophany. Yggdrasil was the symbol of the Universe, but to the Germans of old any Oak (or ash) tree could become sacred if it partook of the archetypal condition, it it ‘repeated’ Yggdrasil.”

In this way, says Curry, crucially, a universal sacred symbol is brought back to particular and unique things, places and people (both human and non-human). This is what nourishes the sense of local distinctiveness that is so important for resisting the homogenization of modernity, whereby everywhere and thence everything becomes more or less the same. Such local roots also resist manipulation by abstract political ideologies.

Curry describes how Tolkien once referred to *The Lord of the Rings* as “my own internal Tree.” It was not the only one: “I have many among my “papers”, he once wrote, “more than one version of a mythical ‘tree,’ which crops up regularly at those times when I feel driven to pattern-designing...the tree bears besides various shapes of leaves many flowers small and large signifying poems and major legends.” The reference, or application, to his own short story “Leaf by Niggle” is obvious: Niggle’s surviving painting “Leaf” was but a tiny fragment of the Great Tree of his ambition and final (spiritual) achievement.

“Tolkien’s trees, whether ‘internal’ or ‘external,’ are indeed mythic” Curry explains. In the context of the hallowed place of trees in mythology – of which, as Curry has said, he was well aware – his dendrophilia was more than a mere personal idiosyncrasy. His “totem” Birch tree, for example, is sacred to indigenous peoples throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Just these kinds of values, rooted in an enchanted world, are still found among surviving indigenous peoples. Their rediscovery, and a consequent re-enchantment, is one of the keys to our collective future survival, let alone renewal; for “disenchanted” people will fall for the first rationalization for exploiting and destroying, and a disenchanted world doesn’t feel worth defending.

Tolkien’s involvement with trees combined the mythically resonant with the personally poignant in a way which led to an extraordinary vivid depiction in art. Curry says that he would have liked John Fowles’ avowal that “If I cherish trees beyond all personal (and perhaps rather peculiar) need and liking of them, it is because of this, their natural correspondence with the greener, more mysterious processes of the mind – and because they also seem to me the best, most revealing messengers to us from all nature, the nearest its heart.”

“But Tolkien’s trees are never *just* symbols”, Curry makes clear, and in their individuality convey the uniqueness and vulnerability of “real” trees. One was a



“great-limbed poplar tree” outside his house in the late 1930s, an inspiration for “Leaf by Niggle,” that was “suddenly lopped and mutilated by its owner, I do not know why. It is cut down now, a less barbarous punishment for any crimes it may have been accused of, such as being large and alive.” As Kim Taplin remarks, after Tolkien, “The wanton felling of trees may have allegorical overtones, but it is also an actual evil...and the presence of trees, and the love of trees, are actual as well as symbolic goods.”

Tolkien was also historically minded, says Curry, and his trees have deep historical as well as mythological and psychological roots. Thus, Middle-earth’s own Old Forest was not so-called “without reason, for it was indeed ancient, a survivor of vast forgotten woods...” But even in the Third Age, those were already a thing of the past. And at the opening of the story in *The Lord of the Rings* – itself supposedly in the (imaginary) past of our world – even such remnants are on the edge of doom. On the very border of Fangorn Forest, as Treebeard says, Saruman

*Is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment.*

*...Down on the borders they are felling trees – good trees. Some of the trees they just cut down and leave to rot – orc-mischief that; but most are hewn up and carried off to feed the fires of Orthanc. There is always a smoke rising from Isengard these days.*

*...Curse him, root and branch! Many of those trees were my friends, creatures I had known from nut and acorn; many had voices of their own that are lost for ever now. And there are wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves...*

And if that were not enough, “it seems that the wind is setting East, and the withering of all woods may be drawing near.” For in what remains of the green garden of Middle-earth, already tormented by Sauron, has appeared “the Ring of Power, the foundation of Barad-dûr and the hope of Sauron.” (It is also the hope of Saruman, of course; but he is no more than one of Mordor’s imitators and servants.) “The Ring! What shall we do with the Ring, the least of rings, the trifle that Sauron fancies?” Elrond alone permits himself any irony, even as he too, like all the good and great, acknowledges his helplessness before the Ring on the hand of its maker and master.

In short: *The Lord of the Rings* is a popular defence of a communicative view of nature, facing the instrumental reason of the Ring.

## 2. Reductionism

Along with the development of the modern sciences the so-called reductionisms have got status of whole research programmes. After Darwin many thought, that everything could be explained biologically. In Logical Empiricism materialism lived onwards in the form of Physicalism, which was about, that all sciences eventually can be reduced to classical physics – or eventually to "the intersubjective controllable language of things". Psychologism was one of the other ravaging reductionisms in the twentieth century. Freud and Jung thought separately, that they had the key to the understanding of diverse cultural phenomena because of the storeroom of the unconsciousness. Moreover there was Historism, which followers thought that they could generalize hermeneutics also to include the exact sciences. The latest craze in reductionism is Social Constructivism.

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.

What is reductionism? Science can't give answers to the problems of world views and views of values (metaphysics and ethics). Single branches of sciences can't out of hand answer questions about values or moral standards.

However this they nevertheless often do, but then it ends in reductionism. And there has not been a lack of trying to understand Man from one or the other single branch of science. As mentioned in the Introduction: They have for example claimed, that Man fully could be described and explained with the methods of natural science. This happens in various forms of Naturalism, Positivism and Behaviourism. Or they have thought, that psychology, sociology or history can give the total and superior understanding of, what a human being is. These viewpoints are described respectively as Psychologism, Sociologism and Historism.

These viewpoints are forms of reductionism; that is to say: they reduce or devaluate Man to a phenomenon of a single type. The problem is then to lead all other sides of Man back to this single type, for example to explain ethics, politics and mathematics as pure historical or psychological phenomena. Here the reductionisms always end in various forms of explaining away, which often is direct absurd.

The reductionisms observe Man from fragmented viewpoints, for example as organism, as physical-chemical system, as society being, as psyche, as producer and user of language and meaning. But what becomes of the Wholeness? What unites all this knowledge to a total image of Man?

The reductionisms view themselves as scientific approaches, but they are not. It is here the fundamental invalidity in the reductionistic viewpoints arises, since their basis not is building on philosophical argumentation, but on the claim, that they are founded in science. But science is as mentioned not able to answer problems of world views and values (instead of explaining them, they are often making fun of them). Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, which under cover of being science seek to answer questions of values or moral standards. No single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If the reductionisms should be taken seriously, then they shall contain a unifying perspective on all knowledge about Man and nature.

Our wonder over Man becomes philosophy, when it reaches the question of Man and nature as such. Philosophy throws out answers to the question, argues for the answers and investigates their consequences. This happens first of all by reflecting and meditating over the things, not in an experiential-scientific way.

Philosophy is in that way a deepening of our everyday understanding. It is a reflection over well-known subjects. Its answers lie in continuation of our immediate knowledge and understanding. Similar you can say, that philosophy is a deepening of the forms of understanding, which lie in for example science, art and religion.

Philosophy seeks for oneness and coherence. This means, that it both ask for the fundamental trait of the essence of Man and nature, and for how all other traits of Man and nature are connected therewith. The answer to, what the essence of Man and nature is, has to throw a light of transfiguration over everything we know about man and nature.

Philosophy asks the most universal question about Man and nature, the common or universal which all of us have part in, in spite of the fact that we can behave so different and be studied in so many various ways. Here it is about what, we can call the essence of Man and nature (the Inner Side of Man and nature), and the question is solved, not by experimenting, collecting systematical observations and from them draw up theories. It is only solved by reflecting and meditating over everything we already know about Man and nature, and by searching for oneness and coherence in it.

The sciences ask limited questions about Man and nature, or questions about specific sides of the human life and nature. Philosophy asks the most universal question about Man and nature. The sciences collect systematical experiences and throw out theories, that can be determined by new experiences. Philosophy uses alone the tool of reflection and meditation.

Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, because they seek to answer the question about Man and nature as such, but as philosophical viewpoints they are cognitional and ethical shipwrecks.

Unlike much science fiction, fantasy uses realistic settings. Middle-earth is our earth. It is not a never-never land, or even another planet. It is not a different place, only a different time. The setting of Tolkien's fantasies is literally real.

One of the main uses of fantasy, Tolkien says, in "On Fairy-Stories", is "recovery", the ability to see the natural world more clearly by dipping it in myth and strangeness. In other words, we need to return to the classical priority of contemplation over action. "Recovery" of a clear view of nature (the cosmos) is one of the primary purposes of fantasy, according to Tolkien:

*Fantasy is made out of the Primary World, but a good craftsman loves his material...By the forging of Gram cold iron was revealed; by the making of Pegasus horses were enobled...*

*It was in fairy-stories that I first divined the potency of words, and the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine (p. 59).*

There is a point Tolkien makes later in "On Fairy-Stories" that may seem to be a point about epistemology, or theory of knowledge (which we will return to later), but it is really a point about cosmology. It is the point that although fantasy is creative, it is also realistic; its truth conforms to the real world rather than (re) creating it. It is therefore a rational activity, in the ancient, deeper, more basic meaning of "rational" (knowing reality). (We tend to mean by "rational" only "logical".) Since fantasy is rational, and since the cosmos is really full, fantasy too is full. Fantasy is a flight to reality, or, a spiritual waking up to reality.

*The keener and the clearer is the reason, the better fantasy will it make. If men were ever in a state in which they did not want to know or could not perceive truth (facts or evidence), the Fantasy would languish until they were cured...*

*For creative Fantasy is founded upon the hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun; on a recognition of fact, but not a slavery to it...If men really could not distinguish between frogs and men, fairy-stories about frog-kings would not have arisen (p. 54-55).*

Here Tolkien actually is into something very important in ontology which invalidates both materialism and idealism: in order to establish unambiguous description (and thinking) one must be able to discriminate between subject and object, dream and reality, etc. In chapter 5, Epistemology, part 4: *The Core – Rediscovering Truth*, I will return to this with my concept of *The Core* in everyday language.

Kreeft says that one could say that of the five aspects of a story – plot, characters, setting, style, and theme – it is the setting that is the most important in *The Lord of the Rings*. The real “hero” of *The Lord of the Rings* is Middle-earth itself. There are many detailed descriptions of topography that Tolkien learned to love on his many walking tours with the Inklings. This is why the maps are so important. Tolkien says, “I wisely started with a map, and made the story fit...The other way about lands one in confusions...it is weary work to compose a map from a story” (*Letters*, no. 144, p. 177).

As the Elves are central in *The Silmarillion*, Hobbits are central in *The Lord of the Rings*: thus the greater importance of the natural setting in *The Lord of the Rings*. For Hobbits are far closer to nature than Elves or Men. They even live in the earth, in holes, a natural symbol for the depth of their earthiness.

Elves, though more transcendent to material nature than Men, are at the same time closer to it.

The Ents are the closest of all to nature. In fact, Tolkien makes nature itself live in the Ents. The Ents is also a good description of the above-mentioned spiritual “waking up”. In Tolkien’s world, *nothing* in nature is dead but all is alive, so much that modern readers will call this cosmos “magical”. Kreeft believes a better word is “biblical”. In Tolkien’s cosmology, he says, the earth as well as the heavens is not dumb but declares the glory of God.

The things in Tolkien’s cosmos are not only beautiful; they also have something like personalities. The division between things and persons is not alone as absolute there as is in our culture. Yet neither things nor persons and modern subjectivism demeans material things.

Ever since Descartes, says Kreeft, the Western mind has separated matter and spirit, body and soul, physical and spiritual, as two “clear” and distinct ideas” that have nothing in common; the above-mentioned instrumental view of nature. Matter takes up space and does not think; mind thinks and does not take up space. But before Descartes it was not so. The distinction was there, but not total. There was an in-between category, *life*, which Descartes eliminated. He thought of even an animal as

a complicated machine. No wonder it is Descartes who is the inspiration for the so-called brain-in-jar hypothesis, which also is the inspiration for the movie *The Matrix*, and the most extreme reductionist view we have today: The Simulation theory, which we will return to in the chapter on epistemology.

But Tolkien restores the ancient, pre-Cartesian cosmology in which things are not that neat. Even inorganic things like mountains are alive; the distinction between trees and Ents (thinking, treelike tree herders) is not absolute; and in general the whole world of things is more personlike, mindlike, spiritlike, than in the Cartesian machine-universe.

Kreeft says that there are at least three killers of this old cosmology in the modern mind. One of them, of course, is materialism. Another is Cartesian dualism, which sells out half of the world – everything made of matter – to materialism, reducing everything except mind and spirit to passivity and mechanism. The third is idealism (spiritualism), and the Gnostic New Age philosophy of “Create your own reality.” This idea sells out the whole world and reality, most extremely seen in the very popular simulation theory, which, as we shall see, also materialists are advocates for. Both materialism and idealism are attractive because they are simple, and don’t require much thinking. They are reductionisms.

Both materialism and idealism are self-refuting views. Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, because they seek to answer the question about Man and nature as such, but as philosophical viewpoints they are epistemological and ethical shipwrecks.

Reductionisms are philosophical, political, religious/occult theories, that seek legitimacy by claiming, that they are scientific theories, while the fact is, that they either not are testable/able to be falsified, or that they abuse the use of abductive reasoning.

Add to this that there are two versions of reductionism, which very broadly defined could be termed as materialism and idealism. This is important since it seems that these two versions are in war with each other (in atheist fundamentalism this war is clearly set between atheism and religion).

The first materialist version for example claims that Man fully can be described and explained with the methods of natural science. This happens in various forms of Naturalism, Biologism, Positivism and Behaviourism. It is clear that this first kind of reductionism (scientism and pseudoskepticism) are more accepted than the second openly anti-scientific version.

The second idealist version claims, that psychology, sociology or history can give the total and superior understanding of, what a human being is. These viewpoints are described respectively as Psychologism, Sociologism and Historism. It is particular this version which openly claims to be a supporter of anti-science, and accuses the other part of being reductionistic, and demand so-called alternative sciences. This is what we see in the more popular culture of New Age. The reductionist element comes in because they also call their own practices science, though *alternative sciences*. Therefore reductionism.

The first version is mostly the supporter of scientism and pseudoskepticism. Scientism is a term generally used to describe the cosmetic application of science in unwarranted situations not covered by the scientific method. Pseudoskepticism (or pseudoscepticism) is a term referring to a philosophical or scientific position which appears to be that of skepticism or scientific skepticism but which in reality fails to be so.

The sciences ask limited questions about Man, or questions about specific sides of the human life. Such questions are then solved by experimenting, collecting systematical observations and from them draw up theories. The sciences collect systematical experiences and throw out theories, that can be tested through new experiences, or serve as the best explanations.

So, one crucial principle in science is, that a certain theory has to be testable. Another crucial principle is the use of abductive reasoning (inference to the best explanation).

Is it testable whether God exists or not? No! Is it testable, that the human consciousness only consists in some physical-chemical reactions in the brain, or that it only is a social construction? No!

Is the best explanation for crop circles, that they have been made by extraterrestrials? Although it is undoubtedly true, that strange patterns are sometimes found in cornfields (crop circles) - it doesn't follow that they must have been made by extraterrestrials. There is a wide range of far more plausible alternative explanations of the phenomenon, such as that they have been made by pranksters.

Pseudoscience is philosophical, political, religious/occult theories, that seek legitimacy by claiming, that they are scientific theories, while the fact is, that they either not is testable, or that they abuse the use of abductive reasoning.

The reductionisms observe Man from fragmented viewpoints, for example as organism, as physical-chemical system, as society being, as psyche, as producer and

user of language and meaning. But what becomes of the Wholeness? What unites all this knowledge to a total image of Man and nature? The reductionisms' explanations of this always end up as philosophical shipwrecks. Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, which under cover of being science seek to answer the question of Man, or reality as such. But no single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If the reductionisms should be taken seriously, then they shall contain a unifying perspective on all knowledge about Man and nature.

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; eugenics; personality typing - and a lot of other political inferences from science that have had catastrophic consequences.

Where New Age pseudoscience typically is based on the claim that science has to integrated with occult and religious viewpoints, then the pseudoscience of reductionism typically is based on that science has to be integrated with (or is the same as) atheistic and/or political viewpoints.

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. Most clearly this is seen in the simulation theory.

Both New Age pseudoscience and the pseudoscience of reductionism are common in sharing some kind of scientism; that is: they overestimate the importance of science, for example by claiming:

- 1) that philosophy and religion need to be founded in science
- 2) that certain single branches of science can give an explanation of everything
- 3) that certain single branches of science are self-sufficient and that philosophy and religion are superfluous.

In New Age it happens in the demand of "alternative sciences." In reductionism it happens in the form of pseudoskepticism.

On historical grounds alone, Tolkien is quite correct; the appropriation of magic and its transformation into modern science is one of the most important events (and closely guarded secrets) of the past three centuries. And in contemporary terms, the domination of financial and technological magic over enchantment – often through exploiting it (something in which New Age, advertising and public relations are



masters) – is something we see confirmed everywhere in Middle-earth today, just as we continue to hear a great deal about all this Progress is not only good for us, but unavoidable in any case. As he wrote in a letter:

*So we come inevitable from Daedalus and Icarus to the Giant Bomber. It is not an advance in wisdom! This terrible truth, glimpsed long ago by Sam Butler, sticks out so plainly and is so horrifyingly exhibited in our time, with its even worse menace for the future, that it seems almost a world wide mental disease that only a tiny minority perceive it.*

We must of course discriminate between science and scientism (reductionism). Science as a human activity has perfectly honourable antecedents, and is not intrinsically or necessarily perverted by power-as-domination. Even today, some scientists are more oriented to the wonder of the natural world (i.e. enchantment) than its manipulation and exploitation (i.e. magic). Actually, this is discernible within Tolkien's work. In a letter, he observed that

*The Elves represent, as it were, the artistic, aesthetic and purely scientific aspects of the Humane nature raised to a higher level than is actually seen in Men. That is: they have a devoted love of the physical world, and a desire to observe and understand it for its own sake and as "other"...not as material for use or as a power-platform.*

The Noldor, or Loremasters, in particular, "were always on the side of 'science and technology,' as we should call it..." On the other hand, it was the Noldor who cooperated with Sauron in forging the Rings of Power, and were thus duped and betrayed by him.

Not is technology as such evil, although there is far too much self-interested nonsense about it being "neutral"; there is nothing morally neutral about a bomb compared, say, with a bicycle. Tolkien admits that "It would no doubt be possible to defend poor Lotho's introduction of more efficient mills; but not Sharkey and Sandyman's use of them" – and still less, in Treebeard's words, "orc-work, the wanton hewing...without even the bad excuse of feeding the fires..."

Patrick Curry thinks the same point is evident from the Dwarves, who were created by Aulë the Smith, and in their hands "still lives the skill in works of stone that none have surpassed." They are also constitutionally prone to greed for gold and precious stones, not to mention *mithril*. But when Gimli discovers the Caverns of Helm's Deep, he is adamant that "No dwarf could be unmoved by such loveliness. None of Durin's race would mine those caves for stones or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be there...we would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them."

Nor is science the whole problem, even today. *Nonetheless*, it is true, and vital to admit, that modern science – the ideology of the reductionism called scientism – is a very different matter. It has become almost inseparable from both power and profit, says Curry, and sometimes an object of worship in its own right. As such, it is now as much a problem in our Middle-earth as it is in Tolkien's literary creation.

Virtually every major character in *The Lord of the Rings* refuses to accept the Ring, knowing that no matter how morally strong, they could not resist its power. Significantly, only a Hobbit – the member of a humble and provincial, even parochial race, and one close to the Earth – becomes a Ringbearer. But Gollum, originally a hobbit, is more pitiable than evil because he is so palpably its victim – like a tribesman from the Stone Age encountering modern weapons, bulldozers and bureaucracy, who tries (although neither wanted or needed) to become their servant. In the end, of course, even Frodo fails the ultimate test. And if the Ring is taken, then the Shire will be no refuge. Tom Bombadil alone is completely unaffected by this supreme talisman of power. As Gandalf says, “the Ring has no power over him. He is his own master. But he cannot alter the Ring itself, nor break its power over others.” Nor does it appear that he alone could withstand the coming of Sauron repossessed of the Ring.

Although not Tolkien's most felicitous character, Tom Bombadil is clearly a *genius loci* who embodies “the blind grace resident in Nature,” and “more specifically...of the land itself.” He symbolizes, in Tolkien's own words, “the spirit of the (vanishing) Oxford and Berkshire countryside.” But the point about Bombadil in this context is that, as Galdor says, “Power to defy our Enemy is not in him, unless such power is in the earth itself. And yet we see that Sauron can torture and destroy the very hills.” That fact becomes brutally clear in Frodo and Sam's agonizing journey to Mordor. It is worth quoting at some length what they found before its door:

*Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light.*

*They had come to the desolation that lay before Mordor: the lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves that should endure when all their purposes were made void; a land defiled, diseased beyond all healing – unless the Great Sea should enter in and wash it with oblivion. “I feel sick,” said Sam. Frodo did not speak.*

Later, entering Morgul Valley, Frodo observed that “Earth, air and water all seem accursed.” And closer still to Mount Doom, they found “a huge mass of ash and slag and burned stone,” where “the air was full of fumes; breathing was painful and difficult...”

Curry asks: “Do we not see such blighted industrial wasteland today in Eastern Europe and Russia, and could we not easily find its equivalents elsewhere in ‘the West’: radioactive deserts; poisoned rivers and even seas; clearcut and slashed and burned acres that were once rainforest, richest in life anywhere on the planet; smoking, reeking cities where life, by contrast, is cheap?”

All this has a name, by the way. The Greek *oikos*, which gives us “eco,” means home or abode; the latin *caedere*, to kill; hence ecocide. (And the combination of Greek and Latin only confirms that no good can come of it.)

The two demonical movements of the One Ring are the movement into the ego-structures (the will to power), and the movement out towards the many in ideology.

Tom Shippey has observed that the Ring is (1) immensely powerful, (2) dangerous, even lethal, to all its possessors, and (3) will ultimately triumph if it is not destroyed. Thus “it is a dull mind which does not reflect, “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. And in addition to the distinctively modern nature of this understanding, Curry also shrewdly reminds us that the Ring is addictive in a way – let’s call it “lifestyle” – that we are all now familiar with. This interpretation can be further tightened up with no loss of meaning, indeed no allegorical special pleading or stretch of the imagination to see that *our* Ring is the malevolent amalgam of the unaccountable nation-state, capitalism in the form of transnational economic power, and scientism, or the monopoly of knowledge by modern technological science. Like Tolkien’s Ring, there are apparently no limits to its potential mastery of nature (certainly not those of mercy), and, once it is on the finger of its collective principal servants – that is, completely removed from any democratic accountability – no way to control it.

The Ring’s servants have no wish to control it, of course; rather, to feed it. Tolkien noted in 1945, “as the servants of the Machines are becoming a privileged class, the Machines are becoming a privileged class, the Machines are going to be enormously more powerful. What’s their next move?” There is precious little control as things are. Sporadic public protest and non-governmental organizations worry away at their edges and fight “the long defeat,” as Galadriel called it – but always under the shadow of “that vast fortress, armoury, prison, furnace of great power, Barad-dûr, the

Dark Tower, which suffers no rival, and laughs at flattery, biding its time, secure in its pride and its immeasurable strength.”

This is no least because, in a twist even Sauron never thought of, most people – even those who are already living in ways that constitute the solution to its terrible problems, and will suffer the most by its adoption – seem so seduced by the megamachine’s handmaidens in advertising, the media and the movies that they can hardly wait to sign up; addictive indeed.

Tolkien has frequently been accused of a simple-minded moral Manicheism, simply pitting good against evil. Whether in relation to individuals or races, this charge is wide out of the mark. One of the glories of Middle-earth is its ontological pluralism; the alliance against Mordor is only just cobbled together (thanks mainly to Gandalf) among people with drastically different cultures, languages, habits, and agenda. *The Lord of the Rings* celebrates such difference and pleads, as Shippey says, “for tolerance across an enormous gap of times and attitudes and ethical styles.”

Thus Edward Teller, “father” of the hydrogen bomb, speaks for many scientists, and their corporate backers, when he states flatly that “There is no case where ignorance should be preferred to knowledge...” That may well be true for science; it is by no means always true for humanity or the world. Let us recall Saruman’s thirst for knowledge at all costs – of the “magical,” including scientific, kind – was precisely what baited Sauron’s trap in which the wizard was caught. And recalling Tolkien’s distinction between magic and enchantment permits us to recognize modern profit-driven and state-protected science for what it is: not the disenchantment (or demystification, or rationality) that they pretend, but modernist magic: a powerful *counter*-enchantment, much of whose power stems from being a spell that denies that it is one: a secular religion, literally a bad faith. With better reason than he knows, Teller’s interviewer described him as “our great master of the black art of detachment.” As Adorno and Horkheimer recognized,

*In the enlightened world, mythology has entered into the profane. In its blank purity, the reality which has been cleansed of demons and their conceptual descendants assumes the numinous character which the ancient world attributed to demons...It is not merely that domination is paid for by the alienation of men from the objects dominated: with the objectification of spirit, the very relations of men – even those of the individual to himself – were bewitched.*

Curry says that modern magic/science was itself literally born of a dream: that of Descartes, a founding father of modernity (and patron saint of animal vivisection), on the night of 10 November 1610, of “the unification and illumination of the whole of

science, even the whole of knowledge, by one and the same method: the method of *reason*.” This dream eventually combined with the boundless ambitions of Francis Bacon, who advised torturing nature to extract her secrets and further “the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire,” boasting of “leading you to nature with her children to bind her to your service and make her your slave;” and of Galileo, who did so much further the technique of reducing all merely personal and therefore “secondary” experience to abstract “primary” mathematical quantities. As a result, as Horkheimer and Adorno put it, “What men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order to dominate it and other men. That is their only aim.” (This, of course, is Tolkien’s definition of magic.)

In so doing, they continue, “The destruction of gods and qualities alike is insited upon,” along with “the extirpation of animism.” But note that monotheistic faith collaborates in this programme: “Reason *and* religion deprecate and condemn the principle of magic enchantment.” Neither can long abide anything or anyone escaping the sway of what they need to be total and universal truth; exceptions become anathema.

It has been said, with many variations, that “Mordor is Wigan or Sheffield,” or Leeds, or Birmingham. But to concentrate too much on Tolkien’s anti-industrialism is to miss the larger meaning, says Patrick Curry, and continues: “Although he did not write the following passage, any reader familiar with Tolkien’s work will immediately recognize the terrible authenticity of this description of being inside Mordor”:

*Around us, everything is hostile. Above us the malevolent clouds chase each other to separate us from the sun; on all sides the squalor of the toiling steel...And on the scaffolding, on the trains being switched about, on the roads, in the pits, in the offices, men and more men, slaves and masters, the masters slaves themselves. Fear motivates the former, hatred the latter, all other forces are silent. All are enemies or rivals.*

*...This huge entanglement of iron, concrete, mud and smoke is the negation of beauty...Within its bounds not a blade of grass grows, the soil is impregnated with the poisoned seeds of coal and slaves – and the former are more alive than the latter.*

This is the essence of Mordor, and although Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings* before the death-camps were widely known of, he seems to have perceived something essential about the terminus of modernity’s merciless logic.

Auschwitz, as is clear from Primo Levi's account, was equally a brutal human or social desecration and a natural or ecological one. The two cannot, in good faith, be separated. Sauton's own campaigns recognize this fact. What first announces his presence, everywhere in Middle-earth, is the "disgracing the earth," as William Morris said, "with filth and squalor." What follows is the loss of their (remaining) inhabitants' ways of life and independence. And as with us, Curry says, the first and worst victims are always the weakest and most defenceless: a category that includes trees and animals, as well as children, women, the poor, and the indigenous.

Curry continues and says that Sauron's strategy is repeated by every avaricious government today: from the wholesale destruction of Tibet, forests and monasteries alike, by China; and Saddam Hussein's campaign against the Marsh Arabs, as much as by massive drainage as by weaponry; to Indonesia, where it is accompanied by a smokescreen of "rehousing" and "educating" the indigenous people before "developing" their forest homes, in collaboration with the World Bank. We should also note, Curry says, that the first of these is a communist crime and the last a capitalist. In other words, like the distinction between the destructive exploitation of nature and genocide against humans, this difference too is a secondary one. It is therefore not of much use in getting to grips with the problem which Tolkien addresses.

That is not surprising, says Curry. Marx had a profound admiration of and respect for capitalism, as is clear in his paeans to its power, and he supported Western imperialism. He had nothing but contempt for tradition and "rural idioncy," and along with fetishizing the economic and the "material" he limited value strictly to whatever had been "produced" (really, only ever transformed) by human labour; thus there is none whatsoever, according to his system, in nature as such. In the best nineteenth-century way, he also approved of, and wanted to extend, scientistic materialism and rationalism. Lenin changed nothing of all this, admitting only the necessity to give "historical laws" a helping hand with brutal vanguardism. Even leaving aside its historical track-record, then, exactly what kind of basis does Marxism still provide for a radical, let alone ecological, alternative to current capitalism? This is Curry's question.

When I'm talking about a coming Matrix Hybrid between Western Consumer Capitalism and Chinese Communism this isn't even a prophesy. We already see the beginning. The Slovenian continental philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, sees the same: "capitalism doesn't need democracy", he says in an interview. He says that the economical globalization increasingly will be combined with stronger and more authoritarian national states. That is our future, and we already see it with Trump, Erdogan and Putin, as well as what is happening in China and India; an authoritarian

capitalism. And he claims that the one who is the father of such a way of thinking is [Lee Kuan Yew](#) from Singapore. When Deng Xiaoping took the power in China in 1978, he went to the authoritarian Singapore and here he saw, how that system functioned. He then decided that it also should be like that in the the future of China, “and it works!” says Žižek. “But do you know what makes me pessimistic about that development? Slowly it happens – and this is very clear – that capitalism in lesser and lesser degree needs democracy.”

Curry continues and says that a regeneration of the land strengthens that of its people, and vice-versa. Strong and free societies values and protect their natural contexts (including sacred places), which return that trust by protecting and supporting them. Realizing this and acting on it, there is hope. And Tolkien does suggest that such renewal is possible, as it proved in the Shire after its devastasion by Sharkey. But hope demands clear sight of the scale of the problems we face. Taking his cue from Tolkien’s work, Curry concentrate on the decimation of the natural world. But the human cost, both physical and spiritual, is plainly implicit in his chronicle of the Third Age, and it should be understood as an integral part of the whole. John Fowles is indulging in no hyperbole when he says that “In the end what we most defoliate and deprive is ourselves.” I will return to these issues.

Truth is not compatible with scientism (reductionism). The truth, which philosophy seeks to achieve, is a truth that raises over human views, yes over the whole of the human existence. That something is true means in philosophical sense, that it is true independently of who claims it, and when it is claimed. And independently of, whether anybody at all has claimed it, thought it, believed it or knows it. Truths are therefore, in philosophical context, both time-independent and mind (thought) - independent.

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

It seems to be a common trait of the self-refuting philosophical views, that they pull the carpet away under themselves, because they seek to reduce fundamental concepts such as ”meaning,” ”beauty,” ”goodness,” ”truth,” and ”validity” to something factual, for example physical, biological, psychological, social or historical. Herewith they at the same time claim, that if these conditions had been different (because they are changeable), then all our concepts about meaning, beauty, goodness, truth and validity also had to be different. But therewith they deprive themselves the possibility for being regarded as meaningful, true or valid.

A self-refuting view can't be saved by saying, that it shall apply to all views except itself. For in that case you have to accept, that there exists at least one scientific and/or philosophical doctrine, which are independent of what you seek to reduce everything to, and this is precisely what the understanding itself claims, that there isn't.

In Tolkien's cosmology, as in all pre-modern cosmologies, everything is more *alive*, more *dreaming*, more *awake*. Cosmos is the Wholeness, and in the modern cosmology where everything is reduced to the part, the Wholeness is sleeping. In Tolkien's cosmology the Wholeness is dreaming and eventually awake. Where the modern cosmology reduces the life of a dog to the life of a complicated machine, Tolkien's cosmology expands the life of a mountain ("cruel Caradharas") to something like the life of an animal. Nothing is mere matter. Nothing is "mere" anything. Reductionism is repudiated. More than that: there is so much life in things that we would call it "magic".

Magic is potency, and power. But Kreeft points out that there are two very different kinds of magic – and here is one of the absolutely primary purposes of Tolkien's entire authorship. The two magics are not just different but opposed. In fact they are at war, and our civilization is in crisis because of the war between these two kinds of magic. One kind of magic, Enchantment, is our healing, and the other – the kind exemplified by the Ring – is our destruction. In my book *Karen Blixen – the Devil's Mistress* I have described this as two ways of using released collective energy:

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. This is one of the two evils of the One Ring (the other is ideology which I will return to in chapter 9, Political Philosophy, part 1: *Philosophy versus Ideology*).

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 the *Mythology of Authenticity* - 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.

In *Doctor Faustus* Thomas Mann describes, how the main character Adrian Leverkühn discovers and releases such collective powers and is using them to intensify his musical creativity to genius heights. He goes deliberately into a demonizing-process by making love with the whore Esmeralda, whereby he consciously catches syphilis, for then to use the inner pole-tension of this disease to heighten his creative capacity.

Afterwards the universal energy-mandala unfolds itself out through lines of genius musical works, where both those, who perform them, and those, who listen, are being caught by the magical circle.

Thomas Mann partially builds his figure on Nietzsche, and the whole of the novel is on a collective plane about, what the Germans did under The Second World War, where demonical polarized energy spread from Hitler and the secret SS-rituals.

In Adrian Leverkühn's dialogues with the Devil are clearly seen haughtiness and superman-feeling as the motives, which control the use of the collective creative energy.

This doesn't mean, though, that all great art is coming through because a creative person turns the collective energies in through the Ego-structures: Thomas Mann's musical image, which intuitively and poetical seeks to understand Hitler-Germany, is for example a contra-image to Bach's music, which toned God to honour and mankind to uplifting. To all the great works Bach added "Soli Deo Gloria".

If you get in contact with collective energies it is in fact a good idea to seek to express your abilities artistically, but in a way, that directs them towards the spiritual dimension. In my book on Karen Blixen I support her view that human nature is best seen in the image of an artist.

The closest Tolkien ever comes to defining Faerie is "magic": "Faërie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic – but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician" ("On Fairy-Stories", p. 10).

There are the two magics in a single sentence. The magic of Enchantment means, with Kreeft's words, entering the holy city of beauty, truth, and goodness and letting it conquer you. Ultimately, it means letting *God* conquer you, since beauty, truth, and goodness are divine attributes; they are what God is. This is what is meant by the communicative self-forgetful view of nature. But the magic of the "laborious, scientific magician" (that is, the instrumental reason, technology, or, rather, the philosophy that makes "Man's conquest of Nature" by technology the *summon bonum*) means playing God, like Sauron. It is

*A magic of external plans or devices (apparatus) instead of development of the inherent inner powers or talents...bulldozing the real world, or coercing other wills. The Machine is our more obvious modern form...I have not used "magic" consistently and indeed the Elven-queen Galadriel is obliged to remonstrate with the Hobbits on their confused use of the word both for the devices and operations of the Enemy, and for those of the Elves...the Elves are there [in my tales] to demonstrate the difference. Their "magic" is Art...And its object is Art not Power, sub-creation, not domination and tyrannous re-forming of Creation (Letters, no. 131, p. 146).*

Faerian magic is the opposite of reductionism: it is creativity. It makes the world richer, it glorifies the world for beauty, it amplifies nature into art. The other magic destroys nature, reduces the world to a machine for the sake of power.

And the central symbol of *The Lord of the Rings*, the Ring, is precisely this second magic.

Both magics have potency. Faerian magic has internal or spiritual potency, the thing the Chinese call *Chi*, the power over the free human spirit of the good, the true, and the beautiful. *Chi* is the right that makes its own might. The other magic, manifested in both technologism and totalitarianism, has external potency, power over bodies, coercive force. It is the might that makes its own right.

Kreeft says that the conflict between these two magics, these two relationships between might and right, is the central drama of the most famous work of philosophy ever written, Plato's *Republic*.

Here is the most direct sentence Tolkien ever wrote about the philosophy of *The Lord of the Rings*: "If I were to 'philosophize' this myth, or at least the Ring of Sauron, I should say it was a mythical way of representing the truth that *potency*...has to be externalized and so as it were passes, to a greater or less degree, out of one's direct control" (*Letters*, no. 211, p. 279). Surely this explains why we feel *weaker* and

smaller than our pre-modern ancestors even while our power over nature has vastly grown.

The two magics have a number of things in common or (when misused) evil. Technology becomes evil when it is turned from a means to an end. Fantasy becomes evil when it is turned into a create-your-own-reality philosophy (New Age). The ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, between objective and subjective reality, is the first mark of sanity, and the confusion of the two is the first and most basic mark of insanity. Neither materialism nor idealism have the ability to distinguish. In order to establish unambiguous description (and thinking) one must be able to discriminate between subject and object, dream and reality, etc. Again: I will return to this.

The two magics have something else in common: they have a common origin in the power of abstraction that makes possible the invention of the adjective, as Tolkien explains in his essay “On Fairy-Stories”:

“The human mind, endowed with the powers of generalization and abstraction, sees not only *green-grass*, discriminating it from other things (and finding it fair to look upon), but sees that it is *green* as well as being *grass*. But how powerful, how stimulating to the very faculty that produced it, was the invention of the adjective: no spell or incantation in Faërie is more present...The mind that thought of *light*, *heavy*, *grey*, *yellow*, *still*, *swift*, also conceived of magic that would make heavy things light and able to fly, turn grey lead into yellow gold, and the still rock into a swift water. If it could do the one, it could do the other; it inevitable did both. When we can take green from grass, blue from heaven, and red from blood, we have already an enchanter’s power – upon one plane; and the desire to wield that power in the world external to our minds awakes.” (“On Fairy-Stories”, p. 22).

But though the two magics are one in their origin, they are opposite in their end. Enchantment’s end is surrender, or submission, of the soul to the beauty of nature and art. This was *precisely* Karen Blixen’s philosophy. She also had a theory about a cosmos who has awoken from sleep to dream:

*“People who dream when they sleep at night know of a special kind of happiness which the world of the day holds not, a placid ecstasy, and ease of heart, that are like honey on the tongue. They also know that the real glory of dreams lies in their atmosphere of unlimited freedom. It is not the freedom of the dictator, who enforces his own will on the world, but the freedom of the artist, who has no will, who is free of will. The pleasure of the true dreamer does not lie in the substance of the dream, but in this: that there things happen without any interference from his side, and*

*altogether outside his control. Great landscapes create themselves, long splendid views, rich and delicate colours, roads, houses, which he has never seen or heard of...*" (from *Out of Africa*).

So, when Karen Blixen is talking about people as marionettes in the hands of God (nature) she is talking about the mystical experience. The good marionettes give up their will and surrender to the self-forgetful oneness with nature, and therefore the oneness with their own nature. They will be rewarded with an image of a stork (an universal image of the artwork of their life). They can see the Inner Side. The movement towards this is the Luciferian movement (which in Karen Blixen means a rebellion against any authority who tries to clip your artistic wings; that is: to block your nature as a human being). The bad marionettes fight against their nature by using their will. The movement towards this is, in Karen Blixen, the movement of the mediocre (false) Christian moral order.

Technology's end is the conquest of nature by power. And this can be seen in their opposite relationships to *time*.

Kreeft says that technological magic works immediately. It attempts to reduce the gap between desire and satisfaction, to eliminate the "shadow" that falls between the potency and the act (to quote T.S. Eliott's "The Hollow Men"). But in attacking the shadow it plunges us deeper into the shadow because time becomes more and more technologized. For the chief effect upon our lives of all those millions of time-saving devices with which technology has enriched our lives has been to destroy leisure rather than to enhance it. No one has any time anymore.

But Enchantment makes time irrelevant. The Hobbits lose track of time in Tom Bombadil's house, as we do when we read *The Lord of the Rings*, or when we make love, or surf, or look at the stars.

Bad enough is the attempt to conquer nature and time by this magic. Worse still is the attempt to conquer the bodies, minds, and wills of other persons. The reason this is worse is that technology amplifies potencies, and there is little or no evil potency in nature, but much in fallen men. Kreeft explains it like this: "Technology removes the quarantine set by weakness around the disease of sin."

## **B. Ontology**

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations. Traditionally listed as a part of the major branch of philosophy known as metaphysics, ontology

often deals with questions concerning what entities exist or may be said to exist and how such entities may be grouped, related within a hierarchy, and subdivided according to similarities and differences. An entity is something that exists as itself, as a subject or as an object, actually or potentially, concretely or abstractly, physically or not. It need not be of material existence. In particular, abstractions (for example Platonic ideas), and legal fictions are usually regarded as entities. In general, there is also no presumption that an entity is animate, or present. The word is abstract in intention. It may refer, for example, to Bucephalus, the horse of Alexander; to a stone; to a cardinal number; to a language; or to ghosts or other spirits.

In modern terms, the formal study of reality itself has been reduced to the domain of the physical sciences, while the study of personal and mental "reality" has been reduced to psychology. This has resulted in what I call the heredity and environment ideology. Materialism, for example, doesn't believe in the existence of the mental reality, and idealism doesn't believe in the existence of the material reality.

## 1. The Problem of Mind

In the following I will give an account of consciousness seen in relation to reductionism. For a full course of my own philosophy of consciousness, see my free Ebook [Philosophy of Mind](#).

Is Man only a product of heredity and environment? Has science really proven this assertion? No, it hasn't. Firstly science till today has not been able to give any explanation of, that we have a consciousness, that we are conscious about ourselves and are able to reflect and meditate over our own wishes, actions and doings. In natural science all explanations are quantitative; that is to say: they are given within the frames of, what can be measured, scaled and counted. It speaks from an outside-and-in perspective on Man; it speaks about the Outer Side of the world. I have always find it weird that people, like the philosopher Daniel Dennett, can deny the existence of consciousness, since it is such an evident daily experience. In his book - with the ambitious title *Consciousness Explained* – Dennett seeks to explain consciousness, partially through computer analogies, partially through neurology and psychology. So he speaks about consciousness from areas that has nothing whatever to do with our daily experiences.

Dennett's position might be called scientific materialism/naturalism. Many current and recent philosophers—e.g., Willard Van Orman Quine, Donald Davidson, and Jerry Fodor—operate within a broadly physicalist or materialist framework, producing rival accounts of how best to accommodate mind, including functionalism, anomalous monism, identity theory, and so on. They all

sound very clever, and uses a very difficult language, but the points of views, are in my view, forms of explaining away.

Scientific "Materialism" is often synonymous with, and has so far been described, as being a reductive materialism. In recent years, Paul and Patricia Churchland have advocated a radically contrasting position (at least, in regards to certain hypotheses); eliminativist materialism holds that some mental phenomena simply do not exist at all, and that talk of those mental phenomena reflects a totally spurious "folk psychology" and introspection illusion. That is, an eliminative materialist might believe that a concept like "belief" simply has no basis in fact—the way folk science speaks of demon-caused illnesses would be just one obvious example. That's just a few examples of philosophers decaying to use ridiculing language, when they not are able to think out any rational argument.

Much of Dennett's work since the 1990s has been concerned with fleshing out his previous ideas by addressing the same topics from an evolutionary standpoint, from what distinguishes human minds from animal minds (*Kinds of Minds*), to how free will is compatible with a naturalist view of the world ([Freedom Evolves](#)). Just try to say *Consciousness Evolves* instead, and you'll have New Age.

Dennett sees evolution by natural selection as an algorithmic process (though he spells out that algorithms as simple as long division often incorporate a significant degree of randomness). This idea is in conflict with the evolutionary philosophy of paleontologist [Stephen Jay Gould](#), who preferred to stress the "pluralism" of evolution (i.e., its dependence on many crucial factors, of which natural selection is only one).

Dennett's views on evolution are identified as being strongly [adaptationist](#), in line with his theory of the intentional stance, and the evolutionary views of Richard Dawkins.

In his book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, Dennett showed himself even more willing than Dawkins to defend adaptationism in print, devoting an entire chapter to a criticism of the ideas of Gould. This stems from Gould's long-running public debate with [E. O. Wilson](#) and other evolutionary biologists over human [sociobiology](#) and its descendant [evolutionary psychology](#), which Gould and Richard Lewontin opposed, but which Dennett advocated, together with Dawkins and [Steven Pinker](#).

Strong disagreements have been launched against Dennett from Gould and his supporters, who allege that Dennett overstated his claims and misrepresented Gould's to reinforce what Gould describes as Dennett's "Darwinian fundamentalism".

Dennett's book *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomena* is in the name of science trying to debunk religion and especially the idea of God. But Dennett's book, like his other books, are unnecessarily lengthy arguments for his relatively simple, and by no means exceptional, ideas of naturalism. Dennett's belief that science can provide an adequate understanding of religion is obviously not a scientifically proven or even provable claim. It is a dogma, a declaration of faith. No massive accumulation of sarcastic putdowns or intellectual gymnastics can conceal this fact from the critical reader. Furthermore: we already have seen how Mary Midgley has shown how far from Darwin this kind of atheist fundamentalism is.

When we speak about everything, that the word consciousness covers – thoughts, feelings, considerations, pains etc. – then it seems quite clear, that it is not something that is quantitative. When we are using an inside-and-out perspective (speaking from the Inner Side of the world) and describe our states of consciousness and our experiences of, what we think is beautiful, ugly, attractive, repelling etc., - then we use a completely other language than the quantitative language of natural science. So how should one be able to reduce everything to natural science? For some weird (unreasoned) reason this self-evident fact is impossible for certain materialists to understand. They are arrogantly convinced about their scientific truth, but can neither prove it, or argue reasonable for it.

As an example, let us begin, quite literally with the matter with which *The Lord of the Rings* deals. Regarded from the outside-and-in perspective (the Outer Side of the book) this book is a material body in space. It can also be understood as a vibrating energetic structure. The book's three-dimensional form, however, conceals a multi-dimensional inner world of *meaning* (the Inner Side of the book). We cannot enter this world by researching the fabric of space and time, matter and energy. We can only enter it by *reading* the book! Surprise, surprise, to materialists, who quite possible haven't read *The Lord of the Rings*. But they have read other books, and they can't deny that they needed to read them in order to reach the inner world of *meaning* (that is: the Inner Side of the books). We can only enter *The Lord of the Rings* by *reading* the book – letting our awareness flow into its inner soul-space – a space that derives from the unique soul qualities and constitute the spirit of another *being* – its author. The world of soul is a world of meaning. The world of spirit, a world of beings.

But to convince the modern materialists of the existence of an invisible world of soul and spirit, however, is like trying to convince someone who doesn't know what it means to read, that the invisible ink marks on the pages of a book conceal an *invisible*

*world of meaning* and are the work of an *invisible being* – one nowhere to be found in the matter or energy of the book.

The interesting is however, that the more science develops, the more you have to give up backgrounds, which once occurred evident to everyone. In nuclear physics and the quantum mechanics we have learned, that there exist processes, which is not cause determined, and which do not follow the old rule about, that everything has to be continuous. Brain-functions are in a wide extent quantum mechanical, and since the quantum mechanics breaks with the principle of causation and determinism, then the human brain is not fully a cause determined system. And then you can't up from the ground explain brain processes from genetical and environmental factors.

The fundamental principles of classical physics, namely the perception of space and time as absolute and the principles of causality, determinism and continuity, must therefore be completely given up with the breakthrough of modern physics at the beginning of this century. The only exception is the principle that energy and matter are constant, which also in modern natural science is considered to be fundamental.

So, quantum mechanics disproves materialism, but it doesn't prove idealism neither, as idealists seem to think. I have accounted for the abuse of this breakthrough from both postmodern and spiritual sides many places. I will refer to my articles [Quantum Mysticism and Its Web of Lies](#), and [Quantum Mechanics and The Philosophy of Niels Bohr](#).

Because you can't – as Niels Bohr points out – 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."* (Niels Bohr: *"Atomfysik og menneskelig erkendelse"*, Schultz' Forlag, København 1957, s. 53.)

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.

Surprisingly, Tolkien shares this idea. Remember: The two magics have a number of things in common or (when misused) evil. Technology becomes evil when it is turned from a means to an end (when it is turned into ideology). Fantasy becomes evil when it is turned into a create-your-own-reality philosophy (New Age especially, but on the whole the so-called self-production thesis). The ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, between objective and subjective reality, is the first mark of sanity, and the confusion of the two is the first and most basic mark of insanity. Neither materialism nor idealism have the ability to distinguish. In order to establish unambiguous description (and thinking) one must be able to discriminate between subject and object, dream and reality, etc. Middle-earth is a fantasy, but paradoxically enough it is a cosmos that is more real because it is more awake. Enchantment would not be possible if you couldn't discriminate between dream and reality. Enchantment is precisely enchanting because of the sense of something real; that is: something you haven't produced yourself.

My professor in philosophy, the late David Favrholt, 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. I will return to this topic in the chapter on Epistemology, but just shortly say that *The Core* involves, not an ontological dualism like Descartes', 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 logically, that both materialism (the scientific bias) and idealism (the New Age bias) are mistaken point of views.

And finally to the concept of consciousness itself. We have seen that Hara is the center of awareness. The Heart is the centre of consciousness. Both Hara and Heart have to do with space, or spaciousness, love, as we will see later.

In science it is inexplicable what an "I" or a "Self" is. I wake up in the morning, and I know, that I am the same as yesterday or ten years ago, in spite of the fact that my body since then has changed look and that the content of my thoughts in many ways has become something else. What is this "Me"?

It is not my body, because then I should each morning go out in the bathroom and look in the mirror, in order to find out who I am. Nor is it the content of my consciousness, my thoughts and my memories, because then I first had to evoke a line of memories each morning, before I knew who I am. The whole of the total science has no explanation of, what a "Self" is, or what personal identity is.

In this there also lies another factor, namely the question about the free will, the possibility of Man consciously to decide on his own present condition and within some limits to make a free choice.

Meanwhile I mean, that the concept of free will and free choice is unfortunate concepts. In my understanding the will is the will to power, and belongs to the Ego, which makes it's choices on background of the past, and which therefore is determined by both its personal and collective history. Therefore the Ego always strives towards being something else than what it is, it imitates others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and its actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. A more fortunate concept would in my understanding be the freedom that lies in the existential concept of being yourself; that is: where you live in accordance with your own essence and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. I would therefore prefer to use the concepts of freedom of action and freedom of decisiveness (I will return to the concept of free will in chapter 2, Philosophical Theology, part 2: *Divine Providence and Free Will*).

The assertion that Man is nothing else than a product of heredity and environment, has become an ideology, a part of the planlessness of our welfare society, where no one is responsible, where no one can help anything, where everything is to blame the genes or the society. However facing this reductionism you can place a more true understanding, which has science on its side: Man is a product of heredity and environment, yes, but also of your own consciousness about yourself.

I am born with some specific genes, which to a high degree put limits for, what I am able to and not able to. In some ways I have had good growing up conditions, in others bad. But I have since my childhood been conscious about myself and my surroundings, and have more or less freely been able to decide on something, rather than something else, within some limits. So therefore I am not only a product of heredity and environment, but also a person, which has become what I am, due to a line of decisions, which I have made through life.

It is a viewpoint between two extremes. On the one hand we have the assertion, that no one can help, that he is as he is. No one is able to change himself. My answer is: yes, you can. You can within some given limits work with yourself, and consciously

decide to reflect and meditate over your background, your past, your environment, the whole of your character. You can decide to start a spiritual practice, which you know in longer term will change your outlook and way of being. In a spiritual practice you can change yourself quite considerably.

On the other hand we have Sartre's assertion about, that a person's life is determined alone by all the choices, he makes; that is to say: by the evaluations, which the inner thinker makes by saying yes and no, justifying and condemning, accepting and denying. But this is an overstatement, which sounds a bit too much of "everyone is the architect of his own fortunes". Moreover, there is the problem with the Ego and its thought distortions.

It is therefore not true, that freedom lies in choosing to become what you want to. You can for example without guilt become beaten down by an assailant, so that you have to spend the rest of your life in a wheelchair. Here it is so so with being the architect of your own fortunes.

Truth lies in the middle of these extremes. Heredity and environment put some limits for, what we can do and not can do. But our self and our consciousness, which scientifically seen can't be explained alone from heredity and environment, makes us capable runningly to decide on, how we want to react in a lot of the situations, life puts us in. Therefore you can in some situations talk about a personal responsibility.

It is from this mysterious consciousness that all philosophical questions come: 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?

I have suggested, that a human being seems to have two aspects: an energy-aspect and a consciousness-aspect. Seen from the energy-aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature (both classical laws and quantum laws); your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations: compensatory karma. The psychic system is what I refer to when I talk about thoughts and mind.

Seen from the consciousness-aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the Wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses (also the quantum laws). The Wholeness is one and the same as reality. So, in my view, consciousness, Wholeness and reality is one and the same.

Please give this a moment for reflection. Awareness seems to be a quality of the now, and therefore a quality of life itself: nature, Universe. Many ancient Indian scripts say that the Universe is in meditation, or rather: the Universe *is* one great meditation! When you are in the Now, life, nature and universe expands. Awareness seems to have the qualities of openness and spaciousness. Unawareness closes these qualities. We can all experience this quite easily. Take a walk in the forest. Unawareness, or distractedness (focus on thinking and head), cause that we don't see the nature we are walking in. Awareness causes that we see it much more clearly. And by practicing meditation (awareness in the now), you begin to connect with this open dimension of your being. In fact, it introduces you to the unlimited spaciousness that Buddhists call Sûnyatâ (see my book [Sûnyatâ Sutras](#)). This spaciousness is also the source of love. Spaciousness is simply love. The openness and the spaciousness come from your heart, not your head. It is not neither mental nor material. It is, in fact, consciousness.

In other words: Matter (hereunder the body) and mind (hereunder thoughts, the unconscious, the psyche, subject, the content of consciousness) – *are something else than consciousness*.

If I should try to characterize this theory in traditional philosophy of mind, it would be a kind of double-aspect theory. The double-aspect theory is a type of mind-body monism. According to double-aspect theory, the mental and the material are different aspects or attributes of a unitary reality, which itself is neither mental nor material. The unitary reality is the form of consciousness, an aspect which is completely neglected in traditional Western philosophy, but very commonly known in Western mysticism and Eastern philosophy (Spinoza and Schopenhauer had a double-aspect theory, but didn't work with the form of consciousness). In Western philosophy they have only contemplated the content of consciousness, and not the form (though Kant was very close to it with his concept of [The Transcendental Apperception](#), the unity where the self and the world come together). They haven't looked into the consciousness itself, as you do in meditation, but only followed its direction towards an object; what you call the intentionality of consciousness. In fact, they claim that consciousness *always* must have intentionality. But this is only what I refer to as the mind. Intentionality is the power of the mind to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs.

Meditation stops the intentionality, and directs the mind into its source, namely consciousness itself, which is one and the same as reality and Wholeness. You could also say that meditation changes the consciousness from being one-directional to being bidirectional. Bidirectional consciousness means that the consciousness both is directed towards its form and its content. It is being open to the form of

consciousness, aware of both magnetic poles in the field of subject-object experience. I have also called this the Wholeness of the observer and the observed.

You can actually make a fascinating comparison between Kant and the Tibetan Dzogchen master [Longchenpa](#), because where Kant's philosophy stops with the transcendental apperception, Longchenpa's philosophy begins. Where Kant's philosophy goes in the direction of the content of consciousness, and describes the categories of experience, Longchenpa's philosophy goes in the direction of the form of consciousness, and describes the categories of enlightenment. Kant doesn't mention the enlightened state. Longchenpa doesn't mention the content of consciousness. Tibetan Buddhism in fact has a name for Kant's transcendental apperception; it is called [Rigpa](#), the knowing of the original wakefulness that is personal experience. So Kant and Longchenpa have the same starting point: the transcendental apperception, but go in two different directions. Together they could form the complete philosophy of the bidirectional consciousness. I have investigated this fascinating perspective in my blog post [The Mandala of Kant and Longchenpa](#).

I see materialism and idealism as complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same time necessarily must supplement each other. It is this which comes to expression in the necessity of an epistemological dualism in order to reach unambiguous thinking and description. But this is not an ontological dualism like Descartes'. The double-aspect theory avoids the mind-body dualism, which claims that the mind and body are completely distinct and separable. The dual-aspect monism has the very specific further feature, namely that different aspects may show a complementarity in a quantum physical sense. This implies that with regard to mental and physical states there may be incompatible descriptions of different parts that emerge from the Wholeness. This stands in close analogy to quantum physics, where complementary properties cannot be determined jointly with accuracy (Again: see my article [Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr](#)).

And the form of consciousness, the unitary reality, the Wholeness, is itself neither mental nor material. It is Tao (God), the undescrivable. If one should describe it, it could be described as divine because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains, is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless. If you are present in the Now, actively and involved from the awareness (the Soul), the innermost in yourself, and from the heartfulness - that is to say: totally, with the whole of yourself, and therefore in self-forgetful freedom and world absorption - then you will experience eternity and infinity. You will experience the true essence of nature, which is God.

Furthermore: the consciousness-aspect is also the area of progressive karma (divine providence): the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of the universe and Man. Progressive karma lies in the transcendental apperception, or rigpa: the transcendental unity of all experience. It is also called the great vision, from which the Universe is created.

I see the concept of a transcendental aspect, and the use of words such as God, the Divine, the Otherness, etc., as necessary concepts due to the threat of subjectivism and therefore ego-inflation.

We saw that the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now's lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower (the negation of the Wholeness), is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within the 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 - or seen as complementary as in quantum mechanics. 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.

Herewith we can talk about the laws of the Wholeness. These are known in all wisdom traditions: Tao, Dharma, Destiny, Karma, Hybris-nemesis, Original sin, Logos, the Will of God, and so on. They say as follows: *energy returns to it's starting point*. You may therefore say, that energy moves as a wheel. Thus it is these laws, which control all the different life-cycles.

The progressive karma, the dreaming tracks and the songlines, is the map of the Wholeness. It is the map which shows the consciousness it's direction back to its source, namely the Wholeness. This map can therefore only be experienced in meditation, in neutral observation and bidirectional consciousness. You can't experience it in a psychedelic trip, since the bidirectional consciousness only can be created through a long and vegetative meditative work. A work that can be compared with the work of changing the light beam of a projector in a movie theatre, and re-

directing it into the projector itself. Or like changing the direction of a river. A psychedelic trip will just enforce the one-directional mind. As the psychedelic therapists say: just flow with it. No! I say, don't just flow with it, work with re-directing a part of it into its own source! First here the glimpses of the Wholeness begins (see a full description of this difficult topic in my booklet [The Psychedelic Experience versus the Mystical Experience](#)).

## 2. Ontological Pluralism

So, I make a distinction between the metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality (the Wholeness; or the form of consciousness) - and the content of consciousness. The metaphysical identification of the ultimately realm of reality I call *metaphysical naturalism*, as we already have investigated.

The metaphysical identification of the content of consciousness (or the content of reality) I call metaphysical pluralism.

Metaphysical pluralism in philosophy is the multiplicity of metaphysical models of the structure and content of reality, both as it appears and as logic dictates that it might be, as is, for example, exhibited by the four related models in Plato's Republic and as developed in the contrast between idealism and materialism. The logic necessary in order to establish unambiguous descriptions of these models is clearly seen in the above-mentioned *Core* in everyday language which I will return to in the chapter on Epistemology.

Within these models is the more restricted sub-fields of ontological pluralism (that examines, and describes, what exists in each of these realms). Ontological pluralism deals with the methodology for establishing knowledge about these realms.

Before we go further into Tolkien I will just mention my pop culture file on [The X-Files](#) where I suggest that this philosophical method is pretty much Mulder's method as well (my pop culture files is a way of illustrating otherwise difficult philosophical ideas). The intention is to show how ontological pluralism can be used on the claim that "there is more things in heaven and earth (i.e., in reality) than are dreamed of in your philosophies (i.e., in thought)."

Mulder can seem like a materialist since many of the X-Files do have materialist explanations for, for example the Moth Men who evolved green skin camouflage for life in the Everglades in "Detour," and Big Blue, the lake monster in "Quagmire," and the aggressive parasite in "Ice," and the Neanderthal-like woman in "Jersey devil," and a man-like creature that comes out of hiding every thirty years to feed on

human livers in “Tooms,” and a teenager possessing a proboscis and an insatiable appetite for humans brains in “Hungry.”

While far-fetched, all these X-Files have explanations falling roughly within the parameters of evolutionary theory, a complete materialist theory. And let’s face it, the material world does have some pretty weird stuff that doesn’t qualify as immaterial or paranormal in any way. African frogs change sex spontaneously, elephants mourn their dead, time stops at the speed of light, and causality breaks down at the quantum mechanical level of reality (though this actually is a scientific grounded invalidation of materialism). The material world can seem like an X-File!

So, is Mulder a materialist? Well, not exactly. Because there are also plenty of examples of Mulder believing in things falling far outside materialist explanations. For example, in “Shapes,” Mulder investigates a case on a Native American reservation that resembles the very first X-File, a human who shape-shifts into an animal to attack other animals and humans.

An elder tribesman explains that the Manitou, an evil spirit, inhabits a person periodically to release its own savage energy causing the shape-shifting, and Mulder accepts this story. And in “Avatar” Mulder explains Agent Skinner’s visitation from a ghostly woman as a succubus who warns him of danger. Then in “Calasari” a still-born brother returns to haunt his living twin, and Mulder ends up asking the grandmother’s Romanian priest to perform rituals in order to subdue the spirit and free the child.

Mulder again uses immaterialist explanations in investigating a man who survives virtually countless near-death experiences simply because he is genuinely “lucky,” the one man on Earth with almost perfect luck (“The Goldberg Variations”). Mulder also accepts the power of religious snake-handling (“Signs and Wonders”), and voodoo (“Theef”), and even genies (“Je Souhaite”).

In these episodes Mulder makes no attempt to bring these theories “down to Earth” with a more materialist explanation. There simply are no materialist explanations for things like shape-shifting, luck, voodoo, genies, and ghosts, in terms of electrons and quarks. Yet, Mulder is happy to accept such immaterialist entities. So, Mulder can’t be a materialist if he uses idealist explanations.

Is Mulder an idealist then? While idealists do not typically take on the topics of ghosts and avatars, this is the metaphysical worldview that admits the reality of immaterial objects, like minds, ideas, and free will. But since Mulder uses both



materialist and immaterialist explanations, we have to look at a third option, a metaphysics that combines the two.

Some philosophers say that we don't have to decide between either materialism or idealism. Instead they argue for the before-mentioned ontological *pluralism* admitting that reality is made up of many different kinds of things. For example, there are particular beings, such as Bob Dylan and Socrates and Barack Obama, and there may also be things like the color red, the number two, and the world of *Alice in Wonderland* (see my pop culture file [Alice in Wonderland](#)), and weather systems and foreign policy and moral laws, and the way we eat a lobster.

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

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

The history of pluralism is long and includes Aristotle who famously claimed that "being is said in many ways" and gave ten categories of being, as well as Descartes who argued that mind and matter are two distinct substances, neither of which is prior.

Now doesn't this sound like the view Mulder holds? He doesn't try to fit the evidence into either a materialist or idealist metaphysics, but he's willing to follow the evidence and let it suggest what explanation might be called for. Many different metaphysical possibilities are open to Mulder because he is not concerned about how they all reduce to one ontological stuff.

Viewers are used to thinking of Scully as the scientist and Mulder as not so scientific. But these days ontological pluralism comes with support from science as well. Philosophers like Nancy Cartwright in *The Dappled World* and John Dupré in *The Disorder of Things*, both members of the Stanford School of the Philosophy of Science, known for its pluralistic approach to metaphysics and science, have argued for scientific and ontological pluralism. These philosophers probably aren't going to buy into the existence of ghosts and the transmigration of souls, like Mulder, but they

would probably agree with Mulder's insistence that the laws of physics don't apply as often as we would like to think.

After all, we appeal to many different successful sciences to explain our own complex reality. For example, we might appeal to social forces when talking about things like marriage and child rearing practices, and economic forces when talking about employment rates, and biological explanations when trying to understand reproductive patterns in insects and psychological explanations when trying to explain the mind of a serial killer. Reductionism is when you try to reduce everything to just one kind of reality. Both materialism and idealism are reductionisms (idealists are today often promoting their ideas as science, such as [Rupert Sheldrake](#), [Bruce Lipton](#), [Gregg Braden](#), [Robert Lanza](#), etc., etc.).

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

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

My own notion of the ultimate reality, the Wholeness, and the epistemological dualism we all must use in the same way in order to obtain unambiguous description of the different kinds of reality within the Wholeness, both suggests that truth is

universal and absolute, and that the absolute in the end is undescrivable. You can only describe something in relation to its negation. The Wholeness can't be put in opposition to anything, and is therefore undescrivable. It is the Tao.

This pluralistic and scientific ontology is precisely what Mulder holds, and it allows him to see things that others don't see. Very often a person's metaphysics more than evidence serves as her guide to choosing beliefs and theories to consider. This isn't a bad thing, unless her metaphysics is bad. For example, if someone is a materialist, she isn't going to entertain the possibilities of ghosts, telepathy, mind control, God, or angels. Her metaphysics prohibits her from even considering those things as possibilities. We have already looked at this. The metaphysics you have chosen (and you have chosen one, no matter whether you know it or not) completely decides how you live, experience and act in life.

Mulder's pluralist metaphysics allows him to entertain possibilities others do not, and this in turn allows him to do fantastic detective work, while Scully's too often reductionist and materialist philosophy shuts her off from different parts of reality for which there is good evidence. In other words, Scully's metaphysics often does the work of rejecting theories even before she considers the evidence.

But while Mulder's pluralistic metaphysics allows him to see possibilities, he has way more work to do in shifting through different possibilities. His more open metaphysics doesn't do the work of rejecting theories for him. And Mulder does reject plenty of theories, both mainstream scientific, and paranormal.

In "All Things" Mulder checks out a crop circle case in England only to learn that it is a hoax. In "Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose" Mulder rejects the phony celebrity psychic The Stupendous Yappi, but Mulder accepts this actual precognitive ability to see people's future deaths in the aptly-professioned life insurance salesman Clyde Bruckman (Peter Boyle). Mulder is also critical of Scully's sister Melissa (Melinda McGraw), who uses New Age techniques like crystals and theories about negative and positive energy in trying to communicate with Scully in her coma.

As Dupré argues, pluralism requires a set of virtues and good judgments rather than a simple, one-size-fits-all formula to decide which theories to accept. And this is just what Mulder has, namely, good judgment – amazingly good judgment. Mulder's metaphysics is so open that he has to do the work of looking at the facts rather than appealing to one neat worldview to "decide" for him. In other words, Mulder has to do the work of a real scientist.

From the “Pilot” episode onwards in *The X-Files*, we see Mulder’s pluralistic metaphysics clash with Scully’s unified metaphysics, and it is always Mulder’s metaphysics that can handle the cases. The apparent choice between materialism and idealism is really a false choice, and Mulder, like today’s pluralist philosophers of science, actually holds the position of ontological pluralism.

There really are many different kinds of beings in the world, not just in world of the *X-Files*, but also in our own world as well.

As mentioned: Tolkien himself tells us that he felt, when creating *The Lord of the Rings*, as we feel in reading it: that it was discovered, not invented, that it had always been there. Tolkien, as a Christian, was of course a supernaturalist. As we shall see when we treat the topic of religion, Tolkien kept the supernatural hidden in *The Lord of the Rings*; yet it is ubiquitous, and he himself explicitly told us so.

Tolkien claims that fantasy naturally treats the supernatural:

*[F]airy-stories as a whole have three faces: the Mystical towards the Supernatural, the Magical towards Nature, and the Mirror of scorn and pity towards Man* (“On Fairy-Stories”, p. 26).

Fantasy treats the supernatural not because it is fantastic but because it is real. The capacity to evoke wonder, which is the great power of fantasy, almost *requires* supernaturalism. As Kreeft says, then it is inconceivable that a worldly pragmatist like John Dewey or Karl Marx could write fantasy. Only a supernaturalistic metaphysics has room for it. It says that our world has edges, that it is not all there is, that there is more. In such a world you can never say, with the bored, jaded author of *Ecclesiastes*, “I have seen everything” (*Eccles* 1:14).

In Tolkien’s *Silmarillion* the world is flat (until its fall) and therefore has an edge. Kreeft says that a flat world is a physical symbol for a supernaturalistic metaphysics. It points to a “beyond” its edges, a “more”. But a round world is self-contained, and absolute relative. In *The Silmarillion* the world is changed from flat to round as a divine punishment. This is far from fantastic; it is symbolically quite accurate. For, in fact, the divine punishment was that our worldview, rather than our world, was changed from supernaturalism to naturalism.

Yet one edge, one absolute, remains even in our round, relative world, though not in time and space but in time. There is death, personal time’s absolute edge. I will return to that.

Supernaturalism's practical payoff is the hope of divine grace. Grace is needed because evil is powerful. We are far too weak to have much hope without it. Frodo is wise because he knows this. The whole of Middle-earth – souls as well as bodies – depends on his mission, and he knows he is not strong enough to fulfill it. Yet, because of an implicit trust in grace, he volunteers: "I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way" (LOTR, p. 264). Kreeft calls this a Marian moment. St. Luke showed us the same thing at the Annunciation. Mary's mission was strikingly similar to Frodo's. The salvation of the whole world depended on it. And the words of her acceptance of her mission were also similar to Frodo's: "Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

Neither Tolkien nor St. Luke tells us what invisible force in the soul motivated this visible choice. But there are only two possibilities: pride or humility. When we hear "I will take the ring", we may think we hear pride, but when we hear "though I do not know the way", we know we hear humility. Tolkien kept explicit religion out of *The Lord of the Rings*, but here is a powerful example of implicit religion. No one but an arrogant fool could do what Frodo did without throwing an anchor out in the deep of supernatural grace.

When students begin to study the history of philosophy, starting with the ancient Greeks, they are always fascinated with Plato, for two reasons, Kreeft explains. One is that Plato is not only the best writer in the history of philosophy. But the other reason is his most distinctive doctrine: Platonic Ideas or Platonic forms, essences, or archetypes. Platonic archetypes must not be confused with Jungian archetypes as they all the time are due to the reductionism of psychologism. The difference is crucial. Jungian archetypes are subjective realms while Platonic archetypes are objective realms; that is: they are external forces beyond the personal and collective consciousness. Jung's archetypes are in that way a reductionism of Plato's archetypes.

The theory discombobulates contemporary students because it shows them not only a new doctrine but also a new category, not only a new idea but also a new meaning of the word "idea". They feel like prisoners in the "cave" as they begin to emerge from their comfortable little world of shadows into an alarmingly larger world outside. It is a new metaphysics for them, a new answer to the question "What kind of things are real; what does 'real' mean?" They are waking up from the sleep in the cave, to the dream of the Wholeness.

Nearly everyone in our culture believes that concrete, individual, material things, like rocks and tigers, are real. (Idealists do not). Most also believe that there is also

another kind of reality, not made of matter: minds, souls, selves, spirits, egos. (Materialists do not).

So most people in our culture recognize two kinds of reality, two metaphysical categories: objective matter and subjective spirit, or mind. But Plato offers them a third (or fifth) category, which is objective (unlike minds): they are objects of thought. But they are not material, spatial, or even temporal objects. For instance, in addition to tigers (material objects) and our subjective minds with their ideas of tigers, there is also Tigerness, the essence of tigers. In addition to rocks there is Rockiness. In addition to good swords and good lawyers and good arguments, there is Goodness itself – not just our ideas of goodness, but the true, objective, eternal, universal, unchangeable essence of goodness itself, which is dimly reflected or shared (“participated in”) in different ways by good swords and good lawyers and good arguments, and by our ideas of them.

Platonic ideas are not things. But they are objectively real. They are Ideas but not *our* ideas, which change and err. They are the real truths that measure our ideas as erring or true. We usually think of ideas as dependent on minds, as acts of minds, so Platonic Ideas require a capital *I*; they are neither matter nor mind but a third category of reality. They are real ideals, objective standards.

For instance, when we compare two lines drawn by an artist and judge that one is straighter than the other, we are using a standard: the ideal line, the perfectly straight line. No one has ever seen that. Whatever we can see must reflect light, which requires a molecular structure, and that requires three-dimensional matter. But a line is one-dimensional. It is not a physical thing. But it is not a mere subjective idea in our minds either. As Kreeft says: “It judges our minds”. One mind can be wrong and another right about what a straight line is, or about whether line A or line B is straighter. Straightness, or the Idea of the straight line, is objective to our minds. It is the perfect standard both for our minds’ ideas, and for material things, both of which are only more or less straight. But straightness itself is not more or less straight.

All material things are in time and space. All subjective ideas are in time too, though they are not in space. It takes time to think as well as to breath. Platonic Ideas are neither in space nor in time. They are unchangeable, birthless, and deathless.

Kreeft asks: “If they exist, where are they? Obviously not anywhere in space, nor in our minds, but in what? Where is their metaphysical home?” I have called this metaphysical home the great vision, the unity of the universal images in time, and I arrived at the double-aspect theory of consciousness, which I claim is one and the same as the Wholeness, or the undescrivable reality itself.

Kreeft says that Plato never took the next step; he never said these perfect, unchangeable Ideas must exist in a perfect, unchangeable Mind. When Christianity entered Greek culture, it supplied the metaphysical house for Plato's Ideas: the mind of God, the Word of God, the Logos. And according to the central, essential claim of Christianity, the Word of God is also the Son of God, a divine Person who became incarnate as Jesus Christ, taking a finite, material, mortal human nature.

These Platonic Ideas vastly expand our vision of what is real by adding the world outside the sleeping cave, the Mind of God, the realm of Ideas, and also by transforming this material world into a world of *signs*, not just things. If Plato is right, everything we see is a shadow, copy, image, imitation, or sign of something unseen. We saw this in the beginning of the Metaphysics chapter: the shattered images of the great vision are signs and signals from Eternity.

I have used an expression from Zen Buddhism: my teaching is a finger pointing at the Moon, don't mistake the finger for the moon. The finger is the sign, and the angels can see what the finger points at, but we can't. Our science can't explore the world of Heavenly archetypes, only the world of material copies. But Kreeft says that philosophy can know that His world is a copy of another; philosophy can know that this world is a finger, a sign. In other words, we spiritual microorganisms are less than angels but more than scientists. We are philosophers.

Kreeft says, and I agree, that the human experience that helps us best understand Plato's Theory of Ideas is the experience of artistic creativity. Art is very different from science in that it creates worlds; it creates meaning and beauty and forms and structures and natures, while science discovers them. In science, the world is the standard for our ideas about it. If we believe the earth is flat, we are wrong. But in art, it is the reverse: the artist's ideas are the standard for the world he creates. For example, in Tolkien's world, Elves are tall and formidable; in Shakespeare's world, they are tiny and cute. In art, the world conforms to the creative idea; in science, the idea conforms to the world. Truth in science is the reverse of truth in art. If God created the universe, all science is reading God's art.

Heliocentrism, evolution, and relativity are true ideas only if they conform the scientist's mind to the objective physical world; but this world is truly heliocentric, evolutionary, and relative only if it conforms to the divine Idea (The Great Vision) and design for it. And everything does that except man. Only in man is there a gap between God's eternal design and temporal fact. According to Kreeft the word for this gap is "sin".

It is because we can look at the things in the universe in this Platonic way that we can rank them. For example, one lion can seem truer, more leonine, than another (say, a weak, scruffy, cowardly lion). We say, “He’s a true man”, or “She’s a real woman”, and that another is false, fake, or inauthentic.

Now, in a work of fiction, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, the characters and creatures and landscapes and histories can seem either “fake” (unbelievable, artificial, contrived, inauthentic) or “real” (believable, natural, convincing, authentic), not by conforming to the physical world (except in purely realistic or naturalistic fiction) but by conforming to Platonic Ideas. For instance, Macbeth’s three witches are truer, witchier witches than cartoon withches are; and Tolkien’s Elves are more real, more elvish than any other writer’s elves have ever been. We can’t help believing in them. Now, why is that? There are no physical Elves in this world (although most of the citizens of Iceland would disagree with that). So how do we know Tolkien’s Elves are more real? We must know the Platonic Idea of Elves, or Elvishness, to be able to use it to compare Tolkien with Shakespeare, for example, and find Shakespeare “elvishly challenged”.

Take kingship, Kreeft suggests. “Though they do not have kings in America, or want them, their unconscious mind both has them and wants them. They all know what a true king is, a real king, an archetypal king. He is not a mere politician or soldier. Something in Americans longs to give him their loyalty and fealty and service and obedience. He is lost but longed for and will some day return, like Arthur. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Arthur’s name is ‘Aragorn’. When we read *The Lord of the Rings*, he returns to his throne in our minds. He was always there; *The Lord of the Rings* only brings him back into our consciousness from the tomb of the unconscious, where he was sleeping.

“Take Hobbits. Why do they strike us as ‘real’? Where are they? In the mind God; and Tolkien knows the Hobbit corner of that mind better than anyone else. Hobbits are *not* allegories of English farmers, any more than Elves are allegories of Finnish minstrels, or Orcs of Nazi soldiers. They are real because they resemble not physical things or someone’s opinions, but Platonic Ideas.”

In *The Lord of the Rings* everything seems to be more itself, more Platonic. The earth is more earthy, nature is more natural, the history is more historical, the genealogies more genealogical, the tragedy more tragic, the joy more joyful, the caverns more cavernous, the forests more forestry, and the heroes more heroic. (That is not to say they are more one-dimensional, unflawed, and untempted.)



Indeed, the four forests mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* have more character, more identity than most human characters in most novels. You could not possibly confuse the Old Forest, Lothlorien, Fangorn, and Mirkwood (mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* but described in *The Hobbit*) with each other. If you found yourself in any one of them, you would instantly know which. When we read *The Lord of the Rings*, why do these forests seem “real” or “true”? Why do we believe in them? Not because they are like the forests we have walked through in this world, but because the forests we have walked through in this world were a little like them. Tolkien’s forests do not remind us of ours; ours remind us of them. I know this. I’m so privileged to live in Rold Forest in Denmark, and I often post pictures on Facebook from my walks through it. The comments often compare what I have photographed with *The Lord of the Rings*.

And this is true of nearly everything in *The Lord of the Rings*. That is one reason why so many inanimate things have names (e.g., swords or horns): because they have individual personalities. The winding Horn of Boromir, the great Horn of Helm, the shrill fire-alarm Horn of Buckland, and the horns the Hobbits use to rouse the Shire at the end are all unforgettable. We have heard their sounds in our hearts, even if we have never heard them in our ears.

“Take the sea”, Kreeft continues. “To the unimaginative, unpoetic reductionist, the ‘trouserer ape’, it is just trillions of tons of H<sub>2</sub>O laced with NaCl. But to the poet and the seer, in other words, the normal human being, it is more; it is more like an archetype, and it has inspired longing and desire and exaltation and sadness for millenia. The eye of the poet sees less clearly, but sees farther than the eye of the scientist”.

Kreeft:

*“Platonic Ideas in Tolkien’s literary examples move you more than my abstract philosophical explanation of Plato’s Ideas. This is the strategy of the storyteller: to creep past the “watchful dragons” that guard the conscious reason that excludes these things as unbelievable; to open the back door of the heart when the front door of the mind is locked; to appeal to the wiser, deeper, unconscious mind, and the universal images in time. A great mythmaker awakens the longing for these Platonic archetypes, which are buried deep in human knowledge, through using a magic language: the language of myth.”*

## 2. Philosophical Theology

Philosophical theology is both a branch and form of theology in which philosophical methods are used in developing or analyzing theological concepts.

“Theology” means thinking or reasoning (*logos*) about God (*theos*). Philosophical theology, or natural theology as distinct from religious theology or supernaturally revealed theology, does not presuppose faith in any religion or religious revelation. It is part of philosophy; its instrument is reason.

Metaphysics is that division of philosophy which deals with being as such, all being, being universally. Philosophical theology is that division of philosophy which deals with what reason can know the First Being, the Absolute Being, or the Most Perfect Being.

### **1) Christianity or Paganism?**

In most Eastern thought there is no distinction between metaphysics and theology because there is no distinction between God and all reality. That is the substance of Eastern enlightenment (in Indian theological philosophy though, they have the concept of Brahman, which we already have investigated). But usually God is not thought of as a distinct being who created the universe, but simply as being itself. *Everything* is God, or a manifestation of God, a part of God, or a dream of God. The technical term for this is “pantheism” (“pan” = “everything”).

Pantheism is the belief that reality is identical with divinity, or that all-things compose as all-encompassing, immanent god or that theism is all and all is theism.

Pantheist belief does not recognize a distinct personal anthropomorphic god and instead characterize a broad range of doctrines differing in forms of relationships between reality and divinity.

Pantheism was popularized in Western culture as a theology and philosophy based on the work of the 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza, particularly his book *Ethics*, published in 1677. The term "pantheism" was coined by Mathematician Joseph Raphson in 1697 and has since been used to describe the beliefs of a variety of people and organizations.

Pantheistic concepts date back thousands of years, and pantheistic elements have been identified in various religious traditions.

Many traditional and folk religions including African traditional religions and Native American religions can be seen as pantheistic, or a mixture of pantheism and other doctrines such as polytheism and animism. According to pantheists, there are elements of pantheism in some forms of Christianity.

Ideas resembling pantheism existed in East/South Asian religions before the 18th century (notably Sikhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Taoism). Although there is no evidence that these influenced Spinoza's work, there is such evidence regarding other contemporary philosophers, such as Leibniz, and later Voltaire. In the case of Hinduism, pantheistic views exist alongside panentheistic, polytheistic, monotheistic, and atheistic ones. In the case of Sikhism, stories attributed to Guru Nanak suggest that he believed God was everywhere in the physical world, and the Sikh tradition typically describes God as the preservative force within the physical world, present in all material forms, each created as a manifestation of God. However, Sikhs view God as the transcendent creator, "immanent in the phenomenal reality of the world in the same way in which an artist can be said to be present in his art". This implies a more panentheistic position.

Pantheism is popular in modern spirituality and new religious movements, such as Neopaganism and Theosophy. Two organizations that specify the word pantheism in their title formed in the last quarter of the 20th century. The Universal Pantheist Society, open to all varieties of pantheists and supportive of environmental causes, was founded in 1975. The World Pantheist Movement is headed by Paul Harrison, an environmentalist, writer and a former vice president of the Universal Pantheist Society, from which he resigned in 1996. The World Pantheist Movement was incorporated in 1999 to focus exclusively on promoting naturalistic pantheism - a strict metaphysical naturalistic version of pantheism, considered by some a form of religious naturalism. It has been described as an example of "dark green religion" with a focus on environmental ethics.

Paganism is a term first used in the fourth century by early Christianity for populations of the Roman Empire who practiced polytheism, either because they were increasingly rural and provincial relative to the Christian population or because they were not *milites Christi* (soldiers of Christ). Alternate terms in Christian texts for the same group were *hellene* and *gentile*.

Pagan and paganism were pejorative terms for the same polytheistic group, implying its inferiority. Paganism has broadly connoted the "religion of the peasantry", and for much of its history was a derogatory term. Both during and after the Middle Ages, paganism was a pejorative term that was applied to any non-Abrahamic or unfamiliar religion, and the term presumed a belief in false god(s).

There has been much scholarly debate as to the origin of the term paganism. In the 19th century, paganism was adopted as a self-descriptor by members of various artistic groups inspired by the ancient world. In the 20th century, it came to be applied as a self-description by practitioners of Modern Paganism or neopagan movements who incorporate beliefs or practices, such as nature worship, that were different from those in the main world religions.

Contemporary knowledge of old pagan religions comes from several sources, including anthropological field research records, the evidence of archaeological artifacts, and the historical accounts of ancient writers regarding cultures known to classical antiquity. Forms of these religions, influenced by various historical pagan beliefs of premodern Europe, exist today and are known as contemporary or modern paganism, also referred to as neopaganism.

While most pagan religions express a world view that is pantheistic, polytheistic or animistic, there are some monotheistic pagans. Animism is the religious belief that objects, places and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence. Potentially, animism perceives all things—animals, plants, rocks, rivers, weather systems, human handiwork and perhaps even words—as animated and alive.

As anybody until now must realize, both pantheism, paganism, polytheism and animism, are all present in *The Lord of the Rings*. They are a natural part of its ontological pluralism. But how does Christianity come in? Before I go into the question I will make some things clear about Christianity. In connection with [My Magic Workshop](#), and my Philosophy of Icons, I describe Buddha as a field, and Christ as an impulse. The expression is, just like my view of Lucifer Morningstar as a Guardian of the Threshold, inspired by Rudolf Steiner, but in my philosophy it is entirely redefined. I think Steiner had a point, though, with his teaching of both Buddha and Christ as important teachers in the history of man. I find it ridiculously narrow-minded, when Christians deny the truth in all other religions than Christianity. That's ideology. If God has created the universe, he also has created the different religious founders. All the divisions and disagreements between religions is not the work of God, but the work of the human mind. My philosophy implies a critique of Christianity in its ideological clothing. I have shown this in my book *Karen Blixen – The Devil's Mistress*. I will return to this critique.

Let's look at this problem of Christianity versus Paganism in the light of ontological pluralism. In his book *Defending Middle-earth* Patrick Curry is more into a pagan interpretation, where Peter Kreeft is in for the Christian interpretation, but both accept that both Christianity and Paganism are central in Tolkien's work. Curry,

however, has an approach that I find strange. He namely states that his book has derived aid and support from postmodernist theories, and calls himself a “radical eclectic.” How he can find that it is in harmony with *The Lord of the Rings* to be interpreted in a postmodernist way is beyond my comprehension (postmodernism can’t in any way accept a Christian element), and he doesn’t explain it. He admits that this probably also would have inspired mixed feelings in Tolkien himself. I’m quite sure that he here is confusing Tolkien’s ontological pluralism with relativism. Add to this that Tolkien himself has pointed out that *The Lord of the Rings* not only is a Christian book, it is a Catholic book. The reason why Curry can look at it with postmodernist sunglasses is probably it’s anti-modernist worldview.

Curry’s advantage though, is that his book is much more into ecological questions than Kreeft’s book is. But Curry’s book lacks the Christian interpretation, which without doubt is essential.

What of the “natural theology” of Middle-earth? It is nominally monotheistic. At the top is God, called “The One.” Below Him is a pantheon of gods and goddesses called the Valar. In the chapter on Philosophical Angelology, we will look at these as angels. As Tolkien admits, however, God “indeed remains remote, outside the World, and only directly accessible to the Valar or Rulers;” these “take the imaginative but not the theological place of ‘gods’”. But of course, *The Lord of the Rings* is an “imaginary”, not a theological text. And in it, the One only intervened in history once, in the momentous reshaping of the world in the Second Age. There is never the slightest suggestion that He would do so again, no matter how badly matters went in the War of the Ring.

The Valar, also described as “the Guardians of the World” and, significantly, “Powers”, are more present. They have at least visited Middle-earth, and one in particular – Elbereth – is the object of song, prayer and supplication in *The Lord of the Rings*. Furthermore, they are related to the ancient elements (fire, earth, air and water) in a characteristically pagan way. All this, says Curry, introduces a real element of pagan polytheism into the picture.

Other aspects of Tolkien’s work point to the same conclusion, he says. For example, there is much evidence of an active animism, a natural world that is literally alive. In *The Hobbit* everything is bumped up a level, so to speak: the Lonely Mountain has roots, while the roots of trees are “feet.” In *The Lord of the Rings*, the mountain Caradhras shows his displeasure by snowing heavily to block the Company’s way; the herb *athelas* make the air sparkle with joy; Sauron’s attack is reflected in great engulfing clouds, and the subsequent change in the winds prefigures the turn of the tide in the battle for Minas Tirith. This, and much else, is contained in one of

Tolkien's most marvelous passages, when the Captain of the Nazgûl confronts Gandalf before the ruined gates of Minas Tirith:

*In that moment, away behind in some courtyard of the City, a cock crowed. Shrill and clear he crowed, recking nothing of wizardry or war, welcoming only the morning that in the sky far above the shadows of death was coming with the dawn.*

*And as if in answer there came from far away another note. Horns, horns, horns... Great horns of the North wildly blowing, Rohan had come at last.*

Again, after the battle, "A great rain came out of the Sea, and it seemed that all things wept for Théoden and Éowyn, quenching the fires in the City with grey tears." The "as if" and "it seemed" here are plainly a sop to modern rationalists, and when Tolkien writes, "Tree and stone, blade and leaf were listening," he does *not* mean it metaphorically.

Equally, says Curry, the blasted and poisoned landscape around Mordor is as much evidence of Sauron's moral nullity as it is ecological commentary. For Tolkien, as for Ruskin, the signs of the sky and earth were literally the signs of the times: "Blanched sun, - blighted grass, - blinded man"; together constituted "a moral as well as meteorological phenomenon: it was blasphemy against nature..."

Polytheism and animism are, of course, "pagan" by definition; and the celebrations of 1420 T.A. were a veritable pagan feast (one could almost say "orgy"). On Midsummer eve – not just any old day of the year – "the sky was blue as sapphire and white stars opened in the East, but the West was still golden, and the air was cool and fragrant..." This is the setting for the symbolic marriage (and its subsequent consummation) of the King and his bride, Arwen Evenstar. It comes as no surprise that 1420 became famous for its weddings, and in an inverse "Wasteland" effect the land too was restored to fertility. As Tolkien puts it, in a passage also revealing his fine light touch:

*Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect measure, but there seemed something more: an air of richness and growth, and a gleam of a beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. All the children born or begotten in that year, and there were many, were fair to see and strong... The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream; and later they sat on the lawns under the plum-trees and ate, until they had made piles of stones like small pyramids or the heaped skulls of a conqueror, and then they moved on. And no one was ill, and everyone was pleased, except those who had to mow the grass.*

There are additional interesting complications in the religious and theological picture. Both Elves and Dwarves apparently believed in, or rather practiced, reincarnation (although not necessarily of the same kind). In an impressive testimony to his open-mindedness, Tolkien defended this in a reply to a Christian reader who felt he had “over-stepped the mark in metaphysical matters,” saying: “I do not see how even in the Primary World any theologian or philosopher, unless very much better informed about the relation of spirit and body than I believe anyone to be, could deny the *possibility* of re-incarnation as a mode of existence, prescribed for certain *kinds* of rational incarnate creatures.” And Tolkien was prepared to take other creative liberties with the received Christian wisdom; as Tom Shippey points out, Frodo leads himself into temptation but is delivered by evil. Divination, too, long a *bête noire* of the Church, figures too, in Galadriel’s scrying pool. In addition, these things often have other and far older lineages than just their relatively recent Christian versions.

For example, let us consider Gandalf a little more closely. Tolkien portrays him using many different angles: as Christ (the Resurrection as the reappearance of Gandalf the White), a guardian angel (which we shall see in the chapter on Philosophical Angeology), but also with a pagan angle: “a bearded stranger seeming in long cloak larger than life,” “an old wanderer glancing up from under a shadowy hood or floppy-brimmed hat...with a gleam of recognition out his one piercing eye,” whose chief skill was “as a wizard or sorcerer or *vates*,” in his “usual disguise of wide-brimmed hat, blue cloak, and tall staff.” He usually appeared as “a tall, vigorous man, about fifty years of age...clad in a suit of grey, with a blue hood, and...a wide blue mantle flecked with grey...on his finger or arm he wore [a] a marvelous ring...”

To anyone who knows the books, the description is unmistakable, says Curry. Yet these are not Tolkien’s words, and they were used to describe not Gandalf but Wodan (Odin in Norse), the chief god of the Old English pantheon. The same god sometimes competed with giants in tests of esoteric knowledge, incapsulated in riddles, and triumphed in the end by keeping his opponents “so engrossed in the game of question and answer that they were caught by the rays of the rising sun and turned to stone” – exactly the trick Gandalf used on the trolls in *The Hobbit*.

His transformation into Gandalf the White notwithstanding, “the Odinic wanderer,” as Tolkien once called him, is a profoundly pagan character, a mage and shaman, with parallels in every cultural memory: the Celtic Merlin and the classical Hermes Trismegistus, to name but two well-known ones. (The portrait of the latter on a paving-stone in Siena Cathedral could be of Gandalf himself.) And while Gandalf is neither *The Hobbit*’s nor *The Lord of the Rings*’ central character, equally they are unimaginable without him.

Curry continues and says that then there is the matter of Eärendel. An Old English poem in the *Exeter Book* includes these words: “Oh, Eärendel, brightest of angels, sent to men above Middle-earth...” (or alternatively, “sent from God to men”). Tolkien brought this passage to the attention of Clyde Kilby, describing them as “Cynewulf’s words from which ultimately sprang the whole of my mythology.” Kilby then asks rhetorically of Tolkien’s mythology, “can we any longer doubt its profound Christian associations?” Well, we must certainly admit “associations,” says Curry, but they are far from exclusive ones. For whereas Eärendel was originally simply “the old name of a star or planet,” Tolkien specifies it as the Morning and Evening Star, the brightest “star” in the heavens – namely, Venus.

The associations surrounding Elbereth, Tolkien’s fictional goddess of feminine compassion, point the same way, according to Curry. Her name translates as “Star-lady” (alternatively, *elentari* = “Queen of the Stars,” or *Varda* = “Lofty”). Though the millennia-old identification of the planet and the goddess, Elbereth’s antecedents as pagan Aphrodite-Venus are again just as precise and powerful as those of the Christian Virgin Mary, and considerable older. Indeed, they are those of Mary herself, honoured as the Queen of the Heavens, and already ancient when Lucretius (c. 99-55 BC) praised Venus, in words that any elf would have found perfectly acceptable – “Thou alone, O goddess, rulest over the totality of nature; without thee nothing comes to the heavenly shores of light, nothing is joyful, nothing lovable.”

This permeation extends from such vital elements of Tolkien’s literary myth through to the relatively trivial, it still enjoyable. Take the rather marginal wizard Radagast the Brown, for example, who has a special affinity with animals. It is hard to believe that he has nothing to do with Radegast, the pagan patron of the Beskyd Mountains in the Czech Republic, who appears in statues there in a horned helmet with a large bird sitting on him.

Curry emphasizes that none of this is intended to deny or denigrate the Christian elements in Tolkien’s work. In particular, as Patrick Grant has pointed out, “the concept of Christian heroism, as spiritual quality that depends on obedience rather than prowess or personal power,” is an integral part of *The Lord of the Rings* in the person of Frodo. “The spiritual interpretation of heroism,” he adds. “is the most significant Christian modification of the epic tradition...” Indeed, none of the strands Curry has identified should be taken as somehow trumping or cancelling out the others. He says that he is not suggesting, for example, that *The Lord of the Rings* is either “really” or “unconsciously” pagan; Tolkien himself was rightly dubious about reconstructed paganism, although he did have a lot of time for “pagan virtues” such as courage.



Adherence to any major world religion involves a vital awareness of something that isn't a thing, that is always more than us. It allows us to recognize that all knowledge is suffused and delimited by mystery, and all initiative by dependence.

Against this great (potential) good, however, says Curry, and I agree, must be balanced several problems with Tolkien's mythic Christian theism, which identifies the life of Christ as the *unique* point where history and myth coincide. (Please note that Curry isn't speaking theologically here, but rather of the way Christianity has been institutionalized and commonly interpreted: in short, its social and historical effects.)

One problem is not that the Christian message is too radical, but that it does not go far enough. A human life as the coincidence of mythic truth and historical reality is presented as restricted to one person who lived 2000 years ago and therefore a vicarious one at best for the rest of us. Now, this may be a theological misunderstanding, says Curry; but it is a very widespread and longstanding one. The only remedy may well be to declare such an experience, explicitly and fully, as open, in principle, to everyone of and for *themselves*.

Another and more serious problem follows on from this point. And that's the problem of religion becoming an ideology. The experience of another person's life in such a way is something irreducibly personal, and cannot authentically be imposed on others. Again, Curry is concerned with the way Christian doctrine has been and is commonly taken. If Christ – or anyone else, whether incarnation, prophet or God – is held to be the first, last and only exemplar of religious truth, then this particular version becomes not only true or useful or good (which may indeed be the case) but necessarily and universally so, to the ultimate exclusion of all other such stories, events and people. In that case, either most of the world (let alone be the non-human world) must be abandoned to error, or else a campaign of conversion is demanded to *enforce* “universal” truth. Exclusivity is bad enough, but the consequences of aggressive inclusivity have been unfailingly horrible. Ideology is one of the greatest evils of mankind. I will return to this in chapter 9, Political Philosophy, part 1: *Philosophy versus Ideology*.

What I think is so brilliant about *The Lord of the Rings* is that it allows ontological pluralism. Curry misunderstands this. He seems to confuse it with syncretism. Syncretism is the combining of different beliefs, while blending practices of various schools of thought. Syncretism involves the merging or assimilation of several originally discrete traditions, especially in the theology and mythology of religion, thus asserting an underlying unity and

allowing for an inclusive approach to other faiths. Syncretism also occurs commonly in expressions of arts and culture (known as eclecticism) as well as politics (syncretic politics).

Curry claims that this, in *The Lord of the Rings*, manifests an extraordinary ethio-religious richness and complexity which derives from the *blending* of Christian, pagan, and humanist ingredients. “It is all of these, and no single one of them”, Curry says, and continues:

“They can be separated analytically, of course, but not their joint and mutual effects – any more than can the different flavours that make up a soup. And when we turn from such internal considerations to how and why Tolkien wrote what he did, the point emerges clearly that the work’s syncretism, including (indeed requiring) the elimination of ‘practically all references to anything like religion’ (as we now understand it) was a conscious and deliberate decision, and a very wise one”.

This is a wrong interpretation, but I can follow his thoughts. Ontological pluralism is a new theory, and it solves the problem of exclusivity without ending in syncretism or relativism. And ontological pluralism invites to different interpretations. After all, I have my own interpretation as well.

For example, Rudolf Steiner’s teachings of Christ—and in particular what he calls the “Christ impulse”—are very inspiring to me. Christ, he says, is an objective universal force that exists independently of Christian churches and creeds (ideologies), working for all humanity. The impulse that Christ brought to Earth acts to advance all people, irrespective of religion, creed, or race.

The spiritual essence (the Soul), the Wholeness, or the continuum of eternity (God, or Brahman), can in my view be described either as a mobile impulse (Christ) or as a resting field (Buddha). This might have to do with that the East is characterized by meditation and passivity, and the West is characterized by prayer and action. Where Buddha carried compassion (Karuna) and light into the consciousness of mankind, Christ carried love and light on into the heart of mankind, and on the cross, all the way into the body and the matter. Jesus was nailed to the cross in hands and feet. The light from his love therewith flowed into the most remote corners of suffering and pain, and into man’s concrete life of action.

The New Age reduction of Eastern philosophy to Western Psychology has created, and are still in progress of creating, a demonical bottle-neck of blocked energy in the throat of mankind, a blockage of the passageway for divine energy down into the heart and hara of Mankind (love and existence). In Buddhism the training of both

heart and hara, love and existence are quite central, and Christianity could learn many things from this. But New Age is in progress with a colonization of all the original wisdom traditions, and with a final destruction of them. It gives therefore completely sense when I call it the movement of the Antichrist. In the chapter on Epistemology I will return to this with my interpretation of Sauron's Eye.

In Western thought, there is a distinction between metaphysics and theology because there is a distinction between being in general and God in particular. In Western paganism there are many gods, who are finite, imperfect beings, part of the sum total of being, while in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim theism, God is the distinct, transcendent Creator of all finite beings.

*The Lord of the Rings* is a book about pagan pre-Christian times written by a Christian. Both the gods of paganism and the God of Christianity are characters in the drama, while pantheism gives you a God who is neither a character nor dramatic. Both paganism and Christianity give you a distinction between God or the gods and other things, and therefore a distinction between metaphysics and theology. This is Kreeft's point of view, and I agree.

The answer to the critic who claims Tolkien never brings God into *The Lord of the Rings* is that He is never out of it. Kreeft says that every one of the philosophical questions he is examining in his book *The Philosophy of Tolkien* would have been answered differently if Tolkien had not believed in God. "Can you imagine Sartre or Camus or Beckett writing *The Lord of the Rings*?" Kreeft asks.

God is in *The Silmarillion* explicitly, right from sentence one, illustrated as the single Creator, Iluvitar (All-father). But how is He in *The Lord of the Rings*? Not a named character, but as the sun is sunlight. Those with eyes to see can detect His presence everywhere.

Take the Elves, and their songs and their gifts. They come from the Blessed Realm, transcendent to Middle-earth, and they "smell" of their origin, trailing clouds of glory. We do not see that origin but we see its effect in Middle-earth, even in natural things ("the heavens declare the glory of God") – for instance, the "light and high beauty" that Sam, stuck in the slag heap of Mordor, suddenly sees in that star whose beams pierce not just his eye but his soul (LOTR, p. 901).

Both atheism and orthodox Jewish, Christian, or Muslim theism are sharp and demanding, often distressing. But many people prefer something in the muddled middle, Kreeft says, some compromise that will avoid the demands of both traditional theism and atheism. Increasingly this generic religiosity, or "spirituality", is replacing

specific, revealed religion. Bookstores usually have sections on “spirituality” or “New Age” that are much larger than their sections on Christianity.

Kreeft says that no human author in history has ever successfully portrayed God as a dramatic character. Only the Bible did that; and even there, the Old Testament did it with necessary anthropomorphic inadequacies. But in the New Testament the problem of anthropomorphism is overcome in the most dramatic possible way: God becomes a man, and a man is the one thing impossible to anthropomorphize.

Tolkien does not portray God in *The Lord of the Rings* as he does in *The Silmarillion*; and he writes of times long before the Incarnation, so there is no portrayal of Christ. But there are Christ figures, as we shall see. In fact, there are Christ figures everywhere in literature and life. This could not surprise us, says Kreeft. “For Christ was not an emergency ideology, but a central point of the whole human story from the beginning in the mind of its Author. In fact, Christ *is* the Mind of the Author, the inner world of God, the Logos.” And so are Buddha, and other enlightened beings in my view. But *The Lord of the Rings* is a Catholic work, and the events can’t be understood without the specific Christian angle. That will say that the ontological pluralism is flourishing from one metaphysical monistic Wholeness: God. But God, as the Wholeness, is ultimately the indescribable, the ultimate *Otherness*. It can’t be reduced to ideology. Otherness can’t be reduced anything.

In my blog post [The Mandala of Kant and Longchenpa](#), the concept of enlightenment is described as The Flowing Light. Krishnamurti had daily experiences of this flowing light, which he called different names such as: presence, benediction, immensity, sacredness, or simply The Other or The Otherness. In his Notebook he, in an exceptional poetic way, described these experiences blended with descriptions of nature. He used the expression in order to emphasize that the flowing light is beyond description, beyond human conception.

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

From that perspective, Lévinas described the nature of the Other as "insomnia and wakefulness"; an ecstasy (an exteriority) towards the Other that forever remains beyond any attempt at fully capturing the Other, whose Otherness is infinite; even in the murder of an Other, their Otherness remains uncontrolled and not negated. The infinity of the Other allowed Lévinas to derive other aspects of philosophy and science as secondary to that ethic; thus:

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

## 2) Divine Providence and Free Will

A central reason for why it would be wrong not to emphasize the Christian angle in *The Lord of the Rings* is the important role of divine providence.

Two different ways God can act in earthly history are miracles and providence. There are no miracles in *The Lord of the Rings* (although there are at least two in *The Silmarillion*, at the beginning and the end). But there is a pervasive presence of providence.

God prefers to act by providence rather than miracles, because He loves the natures of all the things He created and wants to perfect them rather than bypass them. Kreeft says that he is like a wise, unselfish king Who exalts and empowers His servants rather than distrusting them and micro-managing His kingdom. “Grace perfects nature.” It is Sauron who is in love with brute force.

It is easy to identify miracles when we see them, whether worked by God or by evil spirits. But how do we identify divine providence and how is the concept of free will possible in that connection? Before I show how divine providence and free will works in *The Lord of the Rings* I will explain the concepts by examining the process of spiritual awakening seen in the light of both Eastern and Western thought.

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

Experiences of the collective aspects of these areas are experiences, which lie outside the Ego's area, or outside the dimension of the ordinary consciousness. Experiences from here are experiences such as kundalini, clairvoyance, astral travels, mythological visions, miracles, channeling, UFOs, memories from past lives, Near-Death Experiences, possession states. It is clear that *The Lord of the Rings* is a journey through such areas expressed in the language of myth. It is a journey (or maybe rather, a pilgrimage) through the dreaming state of the Wholeness, where the Inner Side somehow is beginning to wake up. You begin to sense the qualitative values of things.

The task of the Fellowship of the Ring is to inquire into the nature of these dimensions of consciousness. Wherein consists the structure of these experiences? Does there exist a map over these areas, which can lead you on the right path? Experiences of these areas namely belong to the journey from the sleep of the Wholeness, over the dreams of the Wholeness, to the awake moments of the Wholeness. And these phenomena are out of the horizon of the ordinary Ego-consciousness.

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

To be yourself is determined by the way you relate to everything. Whether you are attentive or inattentive. Being *without* character is to drive away the mind in inattention. To *have* character is to focus the mind in awareness, in the neutral attitude to the mind's content. Having character is therefore the core in being yourself. This core is at the same time the self-forgetfulness in the Now, love. The oneness of awareness and love is the essence in the experience of reality.

To exist from your inner thinker means that you seek to master life from a power you can dispose over. This power is the will, and the will is the motivating power in the thoughts. The inner thinker, or the thinking's past and future, the Janus Face, is the instance, which evaluates and chooses. The will is therefore energy, which is taken from the Now and invested in the past and the future. To exist from the past and the future is to be absent and inattentive in the Now. It is the experience of unreality. Here you are *not* yourself, although there is a peculiar tendency in the modern society to acclaim the life style of the will and of the choice. This is the state where you only

see the Outer Side of the world, you only sense what is quantitative. This is the separation of the observer and the observed; a discrepancy where emptiness and loss slide in between, creating reflections, displacement and darkness. Therewith is created unreality and absence, a condition where there is an inner spectator, calculator or doubter (the Ego), which places itself outside, either the individual, or the surroundings.

It is a condition where you experience yourself as locked inside, or locked off from, and where you feel homeless and without belongings. It is an activity of the will to power. The illusion and the self-deception in this activity are, that it is a kind of intellectual secureness or safety, which is created on the background of an escape from the anxiety, or from what you are, and this is precisely the cause of the separation between the observer and the observed, which increases the anxiety. It is a vicious circle.

To exist from your innermost means that you are *liberated* to be yourself. Then you live in an atmosphere of free and unstrained life-unfolding, of fullness and movement. Then you live from a richness in the Now, a power, which you have not produced yourself, a power, which you could call the Source of life. When you live from this power, then you are in the middle of the stream of life.

The powerfulness in the Now *is* life. This power is something carrying, something granted, something, which is greater than yourself. Something, which you can characterize as an absolute permanent Inner Side (God, or Brahman) in relation to the relativity of the impermanent Outer Side.

To be yourself, free and unforced, is only possible if you are in contact with the power of the Inner Side. The Inner Side is the instance, that leads you into the things in an opening and involving way. This power exists in the Now's relations to everything.

Life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active from awareness, the innermost in you, and from heart-fullness, which is the whole of yourself. Life itself is therefore the self-forgetful life.

The self-forgetful life is divine because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains, is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

If you are present in the Now, actively and involved from awareness, the innermost in yourself, and from heartfulness; that is to say: totally, with the whole of yourself, and therefore in self-forgetful openness and world absorption, then you will experience

eternity and infinity. You will experience the true essence of nature, which is the Inner Side of nature. Existence and essence is therefore one and the same. In my book [Sûnyatâ Sûtras](#) I have expressed it in this way:

*Only meditative-existential you can be in the Now.*

*The passive listening presence is meditation.*

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

*The human essence is therefore meditation.*

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

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

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

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

*Total existential presence in the Now is meditation.*

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

When your consciousness is identified with your personal time, then this essence (the Soul) will be hidden by thoughts and images, and then the awareness is sleeping, the innermost in you is sleeping. And therewith the Wholeness is sleeping. When the contents of the consciousness fall silent, the consciousness itself begins to light and awake.

In the spiritual development there exist some existential conditions - as well as some growing conditions and growth levels common to all mankind - which indicates a universal map of the inner pilgrimage towards awakening, which is known in all wisdomtraditions.

In Zen it is for example said about this 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. These three states can further more - when we talk about going through them in a spiritual development process - be said to reflect the structure of the so-called *Bildungsroman* (Novel of Formation). The *Bildungsroman* is a literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood, in which character change is extremely important.

The *Bildungsroman* is especially known from Romanticism. With concepts collected from Goldschmidt's "The Homeless" (1853-57) the development process of the *Bildungsroman* can be characterized in this way: *at home – the homeless – home*. Although great parts of the course of the *Bildungsroman*, are about *the homeless* phase, we know, that the person very probably shall arrive "home" again. A more or less pronounced model for all *Bildungsroman* of Romanticism is Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister" (1795-1829) – and which actually, in very symbol-satiated form, describes a spiritual development process. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is another example on a description of the spiritual development process.

When the Wholeness begins to dream – and this happens only, if you set yourself existentially into the process of awakening – then the Ego, or the inner thinker, experiences him or herself as a flower, which begins to open itself towards the collective time: the thoughts will be lit through, whereby their collective components – sound, symbol, color, structure – will be visible and make themselves current in the image of reality. The clearness from your dissolved and evaporated thoughts and content, will expand the consciousness out towards the borders, behind which the collective common human structures exist. Said in another way: you will begin to sense the Inner Side of the world.

This is the essence of spiritual awakening. Types of spiritual awakenings are: Ego-inflated awakening, Dark Night of the Soul Awakening, Chakra awakening, Sensitive/Psychic awakening, Shamanic awakening, Occult awakening, Religious awakening, Possession/entity awakening, Non-human origin awakening, and Kundalini awakening. Such types of awakening are often experienced as spiritual crises, since they often come unexpected and unprepared (see my article [Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Paranormal Phenomena](#)).

Spiritual awakening has to do with the sense of the qualitatively, and therefore it can't be scientific studied as something quantitatively. We have looked at this in connection with the problem of the mind. It is the ability to read the book of life, and not only looking at the cover. Spiritual awakening will eventually happen in a serious meditation and/or prayer practice. You will develop a passive listening presence, a

bidirectional consciousness, which both listens inwards to the Inner Side of yourself, and out towards the Outer Side of the world. What you will discover is that the Inner Side of yourself also is the Inner Side of the World (essence and existence is the same). Bidirectional consciousness therefore only exists in the relationship with everything. It is not introspection. I have termed this the *Wholeness of the Observer and the Observed*.

This Wholeness is what we refer to as the mystical experience. It consists in, that the observer is one with the observed, so that everything only is the movement in the state of experience. You are self-forgetful open for, and engaged in life itself, the observed. Your life has become real and present. The happy life is the real, so that the individual fully and entirely exists, and the important is present. Fully and entirely to exist means, that there isn't any dreamer, any spectator, any doubter within yourself. You *are* your activity. The real life is characterised by a devotion, which creates that coherence in life, where you are drawn into, and are melting into, a unified Wholeness, that contains middle, fullness and light. Your being is one with reality and truth.

Patanjali called the Wholeness of the Observer and the Observed Samadhi, the unity of consciousness with its object, or the complete fall of the consciousness into the higher itself, the unification with the absolute. In Zen Buddhism it is called Satori, and in Buddhist philosophy Nirvana.

The Wholeness of the Observer and the Observed can happen in glimpses, and it can be a permanent condition. The by glimpses condition, mystics, such as Teresa and Eckhart, called Illuminatio, in which the soul and God in a single moment is one. That permanent to be one with God they called Unio Mystica.

If you *understand* what the known is - that is to say: your perspective on yourself and the world, your self-image and world-image, and all the symbols, ideas, opinions and conceptions which are manifestations of these images – if you *understand* this, you will experience this unusual peace, which is not caused, which is not forced, the creative emptiness in which only reality is able to enter, the emptiness which Eckhart called The Virgin Mary State, the state in which God is able to give birth to the Son.

Spiritual awakening is the first step towards this, and it is therefore extremely important that this ability not is being misused and misdirected. Psychic awakening, for example, is one of the most misused and misdirected abilities in the New Age environment, where it has been commercialized in all kinds of educations of psychics and “psychic” entertainment. The intention is that a psychic ought to put up a business as a psychic. On such educations you are induced the whole New Age

ideology, and a variety of thought distortions, especially those of Truth by Authority and Cold Reading.

For example, remember that guy John Edward who had a show on the Sci-Fi Channel from 1999 to 2004 called *Crossing Over with John Edward*? He claimed to be a psychic who talked to the dead, but really what was going on was a combination of hot reading (he gathered information about some person, and that person didn't know that Edward knew the information) and cold reading (he used generalized questions, comments, and suggestions, read body language, and reinforced what a person said in a "fast-talking" way to make it look as if he was talking to the person's dead relative).

Such techniques (which in reality are thought distortions) are induced into both fake and real sensitives and psychics, and it is something of the most unethical, bordering to the cruel and evil, to tell people distorted things about death and life as if it were "truths" from beyond, and which therefore can't be questioned.

Passive listening presence is founded in our capacity to be and "bear with" others in Maryan pregnant silence, to hearken from the stillpoint of silence within the soul-womb of our Hara and give time for these inner impressions to gather and gestate within us in a dreamlike way. In this way we transform our listening into a type of inner seeing or clairvoyance – the "in-sight".

Often when people feel their heads or hearts are full and that they can no longer listen, they get tired and begin to fall asleep. Yet it is precisely when our ordinary listening tires and we get sleepy that we come to the threshold of a deeper level of listening linked to the Hara. If, instead of "switching off" when our heads are full, we allow ourselves instead to sink into a more meditative type of listening, we can experience a process which is something like "sleeping" into the words of others and "dreaming" their inner meaning with our passive listening presence. The images we behold may not be visually sharp or colourful, but they are substantial – for they are imbued with inner feeling and "in-tuition" (literally: "inner sight"). They are not images "in" the head, but impressions of the soul. They are not "in" us at all. Instead we are within them, feeling and understanding them from within. In this they are like images of our dreams, images which we can feel ourselves into as well as perceive from without.

We may not be able to articulate personal differences of meaning in the same way that we define common or agreed meanings of language. But if we listen, we can hear them wordlessly.

This is not something exclusively limited to psychic awakening, but is something commonly experienced. It is possible for us to hear meanings “in our souls” (from the Inner Side) that are not identical with word meanings, but are nevertheless conveyed through them. It is a sense of the *quality* of the word, not the *quantity* of the word. The quality belongs to the Inner Side. The quantity belongs to the Outer Side. “Scientific” explanation would have us believe that we do this purely through perceptual information – eye-signals and body language, for example. We have already looked at the absurdity in this with the example of only looking at a book’s cover without reading it. It is like saying that when lovers gaze into each other’s eyes and feel themselves to be gazing into each others souls what they are doing is examining each other’s pupils and eye movements and “interpreting” these as signals. Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) has made this into a pseudoscientific tragical comedy (see my article [Neuro-linguistic Programming \(NLP\) and Large Group Awareness Training \(LGAT\)](#)).

Common sense, or intuition, tells us otherwise. We know that as soon as we begin to optically inspect each other’s eyes there is no longer any real “eye contact”. Eye-contact is contact between two beings, both of whom mean something *through* their gaze and feel themselves meant through the gaze of the other. If I am looking at your eyes I am looking at a thing but not at a being – I am not looking at *you*. And if it is merely my *eye* that examines you the *I* am not looking at you – not meaning you with my gaze. Indeed, to look at a person in a way that makes genuine eye-contact requires us *not* to focus our vision on their eyes as such but on a point between and behind the eyes.

The radiance, light and darkness of someone’s gaze is not physical light, however brightly it may seem to shine and however much it brightens what it rests on. Ordinary science has no physics to explain the trans-physical *qualities* of this gaze-light, any more than it can explain the trans-physical *qualities* of movement communicated through gesture and dance, the trans-physical *qualities* of form and colour, communicated through painting, or the trans-physical *qualities* of sound communicated through music, song and speech. All these qualities are mirrors and echoes of the soul, of the Inner Side of the world, not outer things to be studied, read and interpreted.

We can treat a thing, the sea for example, as an object or as something with beingness and meaning – with “soul”. We can listen to it and hear “waves breaking”. Or we can hear waves speaking. We can look at the face of mother earth – or we can meet its gaze.

This is why true poetry is an exercise, not just of the linguistic imagination and verbal artistry but of the intuitive, passive listening presence. The passive listening presence is the basis, not only of poetry but of musical composition, of waking-life insights and of our capacity to recall our nightly dreams. Through it, we can transform our listening into a type of lucid waking dream (“clairvoyance”), into a type of lucid inner hearing (“clairaudience”) or into a type of inner knowing or “channeling”.

A movie which seems to be created over this theme, is James Cameron’s movie *Avatar*. Captivating movies are like dreams. They offer a break from our ordinary lives, a release from the stranglehold of mundane concerns, and a passport to fascinating worlds that exist only in imagination (or do they?) This is all certainly true of James Cameron’s spectacular 2009 film. Employing state-of-art digital effects, motion-capture photography, and other cutting-edge cinematic technologies, many developed just for this movie, Cameron and his team of artists, designers, and technicians created a lush world of breathtaking beauty, like nothing that had ever been seen on a widescreen before.

Hightening the dreamlike quality (astral quality) of the movie experience was Cameron’s revolutionary use of 3D technology and the presentation of *Avatar* on gigantic screens in IMAX theaters – which, much like Jake Sully’s avatar, enabled audiences to step outside of themselves and temporarily inhabit the jungles of Pandora. Immersed in this fantastic new world of floating mountains, hexapods, and bioluminescence, we shared Jake’s feeling of ever-deepening intimacy with Pandora, curling up alongside him in a Hometree hammock and navigating the skies on the back of a great toruk. The beauty of *Avatar* and Pandora left many moviegoers shuddering in pure awe. Some viewers even reported that they suffered bouts of depression as they went into Pandora withdrawal. After awakening from such a captivating and realistic dream, our everyday lives can seem grey and dreary by comparison. But, as Jake reminds us in the voiceover that accompanies the opening images of the movie, “sooner or later you have to wake up.”

More than a dreamlike escape, *Avatar* is also an allegory for events in the real world. Critics and commentators have been drawn into heated debates about the movie’s presentation of a wide range of cultural, social, political, and religious themes. *Avatar* is a feast for the eyes, but it also offers much food for thought on issues such as the health of our planet, imperialism, militarism, racism, corporate greed, property rights, the plight of indigenous peoples, and eco-friendly spirituality.

Just as Jake’s rendezvous with the Na’vi and his experience of the astonishingly rich panoply of strange biota found on Pandora awaken him to a new view of the world while simultaneously reshaping his loyalties and priorities, so too our experience of

*Avatar* can help us to see the real world more truly and perhaps even inspire us to change it for the better. “Everything is backwards now,” says Jake at a crucial point in the movie. “Like out there is the true world and in here is the dream.” “Out there” is the world of the Na’vi, with their deep reverence for life and their wisdom about how to live sustainably. “In here” is Hell’s Gate – the sterile, artificial world fabricated by greedy human beings who have forgotten how to live in harmony with nature. Clearly Cameron is encouraging us to see the environmentally destructive aspects of modern industrial civilization as products of a deluded worldview, as a bad dream from which we might be awakened.

Sorting out dreams from reality has long been a preoccupation of philosophers. But *Avatar* also provides fodder for reflection on the most contentious moral and political issues raised by the movie, addressing topics such as environmental ethics, colonialism, war, and the conduct of corporations, questions concerning the relationship between mind and body, personal identity, the possibility of truly knowing an alien civilization, empathy, aesthetics, science, technology, religious attitudes toward nature, and our experience of the world of movies. Could *tsaheylu* (the bond) really be possible? Is the mind something that can be transferred from one body to another? Are trees really “just goddam trees”? Or might there be more to the world than we can know through the methods of empirical science? In the Blackwell series on pop culture and philosophy, the authors on the book about *Avatar* are focusing on the Na’vi teachings on *Learning to See*.

This can’t happen in the self-circling distance to the Outer Side of the world. It can only happen when you in a self-forgetful way are being drawn into the Inner Side (which Pandora represents). And this can only happen in the relationship, in a communicative view of nature, which I will return to in the chapters on Philosophical Anthropology and Ethics. In the chapter 5, Epistemology, part 3: *The Peter Pan Project* I will return to *Avatar* and the Na’vi teachings on *Learning to See*, which I develop further into *Learning to see with Heart*, or seeing with the Soul.

[Myth and Moor](#) is a blog by [Terri Windling](#), and is described as “notes from a Dartmoor studio on folklore, fairy tales, fantasy, mythic arts and mythic living”. I believe that this blog in an exceptional way also shows the Inner Side of the world as just explained. Read for example her blog posts [Traveler’s Tales](#), [An Ode to Slowness](#), and [The Gentle Art of Tramping](#); her blogs on [maps](#), [Mazes and Labyrinths](#), [Time](#), [Walking](#) and [Into the Woods](#) series.

In *The Lord of the Rings* Treebeard and the ents most precisely symbolize this awakening of the Inner Side. In Hans Christian Andersen’s faerie-story [The Elder-](#)

[Tree Mother](#) a boy is drinking elder tea for his cold, and is asking an old storyteller, who is on a visit:

*"Tell me a story! Tell me a story!"*

*"I would if a story would come of itself. But that kind of thing is very particular. It only comes when it feels like it. Wait!" he said suddenly. "There is one! Look! There's one in the teapot now!"*

*And the little boy looked toward the teapot. He saw the lid slowly raise itself and fresh white elder flowers come forth from it. They shot long branches even out of the spout and spread them abroad in all directions, and they grew bigger and bigger until there was the most glorious elderbush - really a big tree! The branches even stretched to the little boy's bed and thrust the curtains aside - how fragrant its blossoms were! And right in the middle of the tree there sat a sweet-looking old woman in a very strange dress. It was green, as green as the leaves of the elder tree, and it was trimmed with big white elder blossoms; at first one couldn't tell if this dress was cloth or the living green and flowers of the tree.*

*"What is this woman's name?" asked the little boy.*

*"Well, the Romans and the Greeks," said the old man, "used to call her a 'Dryad,' but we don't understand that word. Out in New Town, where the sailors live, they have a better name for her. There she is called 'Elder Tree Mother,' and you must pay attention to her; listen to her, and look at that glorious elder tree!"*

In other words: In the process of awakening the thoughts become less personal, more common, more collective, deeper, more philosophical. And these, common deep thoughts of mankind, your consciousness can *see* (or hear, or sense, like the other types of psychic awakenings), by force of its increased clarity, as visions (primordial images, religious images, symbols, teachers, higher worlds, other dimensions etc.). Your consciousness then observes/senses a worldaspect of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. It observes a world of auric colours, archetypical symbols and yantric or other energetical structures. It begins to sense karmic phenomena (phenomena of original sin, personal sin, hubris nemesis, and divine providence).

Reality expands itself, all things seem different than before, people shine as transparent onions; plants and animals vibrates, cosmos is alive: mountains are no longer mountains, woods are no longer woods. This is the opening of the collective time, which lies on a so-called astral plane.

But in a spiritual practice it is the form of the dream-consciousness (the soul) it is about, not its content.

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 the spiritual practice, the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness' course towards its source (the Now, the deepest aspect of the Inner side). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance.

The collective time is namely a very dangerous intermediate 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 about it in *The Lord of the Rings*, Ursula Le Guin in *The Wizard of Earthsea*. 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, heroes and heroines, accommodated. The mystics had to experience the descent to hell with its belonging devils, fire and sulphur and torment and suffering. And temptations: If the temptation of the Devil was too difficult to resist, they had to confess their sins to heavenly hosts of angels and light-creatures.

The creativity, and the reality-creating ability, is in the 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. A spiritual crisis is an expression of, that you have followed the spiritual path out into the collective time, led by your Ego, and therefore without having done the philosophical preliminary work; that is to say: the realization-work and the ethical training. The Ego will then make you lose 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 phenomena, messages from supernatural beings, memories from past lives. These experiences will, because of 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 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. This is the temptation of the One Ring.

The problem, or the danger, does not consist in using creativity or auric abilities. I directly advice my guests in philosophical counseling to formulate their experiences creatively, and to become life artists, as we shall examine later; no, 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.

I don't think that are any other theory that explains the journey of The Fellowship of the Ring, and eventually Sam and Frodo's lonely journey, better than the monomyth about the Hero's Journey. In his book *The Hero's Journey* the mythologist, Joseph Campbell, the monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed.

Campbell's concept of monomyth (one myth) refers to the theory that sees all mythic narratives as variations of a single great story. The theory is based on the observation that a common pattern exists beneath the narrative elements of most great myths, regardless of their origin or time of creation.

The central pattern most studied by Campbell is often referred to as the hero's journey and was first described in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. An enthusiast of novelist James Joyce, Campbell borrowed the term "monomyth" from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Campbell also made heavy use of Carl Jung's theories on the structure of the human psyche, and he often used terms such as "anima/animus" and "ego consciousness".

As a strong believer in the psychic unity of mankind and its poetic expression through mythology, Campbell made use of the concept to express the idea that the whole of the human race can be seen as engaged in the effort of making the world "transparent to transcendence" by showing that underneath the world of phenomena lies an eternal source which is constantly pouring its energies into this world of time, suffering, and ultimately death. To achieve this task one needs to speak about things that existed before and beyond words, a seemingly impossible task, the solution to which lies in the metaphors found in myths. These metaphors are statements that point beyond themselves into the transcendent [the Inner Side of the world]. The Hero's Journey was the story of the man or woman who, through great suffering, reached an experience of the eternal source and returned with gifts powerful enough to set their society free.

As this story spread through space and evolved through time [as we already have investigated as the negationpower with the outgoing movement of time and the backmovement], it was broken down into various local forms (masks), depending on the social structures and environmental pressures that existed for the culture that interpreted it.

The basic structure, however, has remained relatively unchanged and can be classified using the various stages of a hero's adventure through the story, stages such as the Call to Adventure, Receiving Supernatural Aid, Meeting with the Goddess/Atonement with the Father and Return.

These stages, as well as the symbols one encounters throughout the story, provide the necessary metaphors to express the spiritual truths the story is trying to convey. Metaphor for Campbell, in contrast with comparisons which make use of the word like, pretend to a literal interpretation of what they are referring to, as in the sentence "Jesus is the Son of God" rather than "the relationship of man to God is like that of a son to a father". For example, according to Campbell, the Genesis myth from the Bible ought not be taken as a literal description of historical events happening in our current understanding of time and space, but as a metaphor for the rise of man's cognitive consciousness as it evolved from a prior animal state.

In the 2000 documentary *Joseph Campbell: A Hero's Journey*, he explains God in terms of a metaphor:

*"God is a metaphor for a mystery that absolutely transcends all human categories of thought, even the categories of being and non-being. Those are categories of thought. I mean it's as simple as that. So it depends on how much you want to think about it. Whether it's doing you any good. Whether it is putting you in touch with the mystery that's the ground of your own being. If it isn't, well, it's a lie. So half the people in the world are religious people who think that their metaphors are facts. Those are what we call theists. The other half are people who know that the metaphors are not facts. And so, they're lies. Those are the atheists."*

Campbell describes 17 stages of the monomyth. Not all monomyths necessarily contain all 17 stages explicitly; some myths may focus on only one of the stages, while others may deal with the stages in a somewhat different order. In the terminology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the stages are the individual mythemes which are "bundled" or assembled into the structure of the monomyth.

The 17 stages may be organized in a number of ways, including division into three "acts" or sections:

1. Departure (also Separation),
2. Initiation (sometimes subdivided into Descent and Initiation) and
3. Return.

Let's try to go through these stages and insert references from *The Lord of the Rings*. In the Departure part of the narrative, the hero or protagonist [Frodo] lives in the ordinary world [the Shire] and receives a call to go on an adventure. The hero is reluctant to follow the call, but is helped by a mentor figure [Gandalf].

The Initiation section begins with the hero then traversing the threshold to the unknown or "special world", where he faces tasks or trials, either alone or with the assistance of helpers [Sam and The Fellowship of The Ring].

The hero eventually reaches "the innermost cave" or the central crisis of his adventure [the Cracks of Doom], where he must undergo "the ordeal" where he overcomes the main obstacle or enemy, undergoing "apotheosis" and gaining his reward (a treasure or "elixir" – [the destruction of the Ring]).

The hero must then return to the ordinary world with his reward. He may be pursued by the guardians of the special world, or he may be reluctant to return, and may be rescued or forced to return by intervention from the outside [Gandalf and the Great Eagles, the messengers of Manwë].

In the Return section, the hero again traverses the threshold between the worlds, returning to the ordinary world with the treasure or elixir he gained, which he may now use for the benefit of his fellow man. The hero himself is transformed by the adventure and gains wisdom or spiritual power over both worlds: the Inner Side and the Outer Side.

So, the hero begins in a situation of normality from which some information is received that acts as a call to head off into the unknown.

What the Hero's Journey in length is describing is the intermediate world of the collective images; the stage where the Wholeness has begun to dream. It is so to speak the threshold between the Outer Side of the world and the Inner Side. In my teaching the most appropriate is to use the dreaming state of the Wholeness, to begin to practice the supporting exercises in my first book [Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader](#). Focus on yoga, the Relaxationmeditation and the Hara meditation, and only keep the other exercises in mind. The most important is the development of Hara, which is fundamental to all wisdom traditions and natural healing professions. Critical thinking is the Navigator, but Hara is the Compass (more about the Compass in chapter 5, Epistemology, part 6: *Hara – Rediscovering Existence*).

If you as a practitioner remember to use an opening in the Wholeness spiritual seen correct, then this can give your total development a considerably lift forward.

It is in other words very important that you do not move accent from awake everyday life (for example a good earth-bound job, ordinary people and family) to dreams and sleep, don't use drugs or one-sided development techniques which promise you great experiences and abilities.

You need 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 dreaming state of the Wholeness. However, if practice is appropriate, the spiritual consciousness (the Soul) will with time automatically open the dreaming Wholeness.

And if moments of actual awakening are coming, then everything is simple, intensive, present, in the right place: mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods, but without longings, without wishes and desires, without the past, without the future. The mountains are. The woods are. The consciousness is. The Now is. You are at home again, at home in genuine sense.

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 heart-fullness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence (the Soul), because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma (sin and divine providence) has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your spiritual essence (your Soul) in the Inner Side - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego's process in the Outer Side; that is: with your personal time and life-situation. Admittedly it is the Ego's actions out on the scene, which leaves karmic tracks. Karma is the unconscious consequences of the Ego's actions. Each time the Ego acts - and thereby changes the balance in the Wholeness (the Inner Side) - then the structures and power lines in your spiritual essence (which also lies in the Inner Side) changes, in the unconscious.

When your Soul is sleeping, karma is automatic. The Ego's pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the Wholeness, in your Soul, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma (original sin and personal sin). 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 karmic 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, your Soul. This dimension is not subject to the karmic structure, it *is* it, or it is over it. The Wholeness (God, Brahman) 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 Soul begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmic lawfulness and can therefore relate to them.

When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmic structures, which after all not only rule between the many lives of your Soul, 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 karmic automatism (the automatism of personal sin and original sin).

Let me repeat what I already have investigated in the Metaphysics chapter on Ontology: 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 laws (a human being is created in the image of God). A human being is an unfolding of the Inner Side.

Human beings are in that way, seen from the point of view of the ordinary ego-consciousness, inserted in two dimensions: 1) a continuum, which streams are subject to laws (the Outer Side); and 2) a discontinuum, for which leaps laws not seem to be effective (the Inner Side). The Wholeness, your spiritual essence, or Soul, 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 Soul, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the Soul the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

When your Soul begins to dream and the continuum of the Ego-consciousness breaks and expands in a discontinuum (into the superior continuum of the Wholeness – the Inner Side, or your Soul), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma (personal and original sin), a progressive karma (divine providence) will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma, an opening for special providence.

In theology, divine providence, or just providence, is God's intervention in the world. The term "Divine Providence" (usually capitalized) is also used as a title of God. A distinction is usually made between "general providence", which refers to God's continuous upholding the existence and natural order of the Universe, and "special

providence", which refers to God's extraordinary intervention in the life of people. Miracles generally fall in the latter category.

The process of your Soul, your process of awakening, will leave progressive karma and special providence 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 Soul (the Inner Side).

If your Soul 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, in the Inner Side, will be transferred as progressive karma and special providence. Your Soul will remember its dreams from life to life. And your Soul will remember and accumulate the glimpses of being awake, it might have experienced. These, the dreams and awake moments of your Soul, are the progressive karma and special providence.

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

Concerning the progressive karma and special providence it applies, that each new life, in a quintessence, repeats the crucial stations on the development path of the Soul. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma and special providence, 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 dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life (synchronicities), in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma and special providence. In the history of your Soul there is a map. This map shows the dreaming tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image. It lies in the Inner Side of the world.

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 dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of the pilgrim's life.

You can live a whole life with this key lying in your own actual, spiritual biography in the Inner Side. 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 dreaming tracks and the songlines in the progressive karma will be found: the treasure of special providence.

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. As mentioned in the Metaphysics chapter, then 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. It is the Music of the Spheres. Altogether filled with information about life. Together the great vision, an information-ocean of holographic nature. This vision is lying in the Inner Side of the world.

We have historical records about this vision. For example, there exists within Tibetan Buddhism a peculiar doctrine about the so-called Tertöns (tib. Gter-bston - the unearthers of the hidden books), people who are born with a special karmic 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 Inner Side, 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 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 (the Outer Side), yes, then they are open for all sorts of fantasies.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmic 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 (a glimpse of the surface of the Inner Side), and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training (they are highly anti-intellectual), no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore, they basically do not know what they are doing. They have replaced the Navigator with a Sophist, and have removed body and existence (Hara and the Compass) with philosophical idealism. They are souls 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. They have been fooled by the guardians of the threshold between the Outer Side and the Inner Side.

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 (original sin and personal sin) will by these experts and clients normally 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 and sin. 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 karmic and not in the least spiritual.

If a human being in genuine sense experiences compensatory karma, original sin and personal sin, then this will precisely cause a separation, a break in relation to the automatic identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actually realizes its karmic and sinful conditions, will *precisely*, by force of realization, *break* the automatic process.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmic 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, clairvoyance, visualization techniques, regression, dream-interpretation, 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, visualization, consultation etc., indefinitely. The spiritual development stops, it leaves the rails and ends up blind.

The genuine karmic structures (original and personal sin, as well as divine providence) do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now, or the Inner Side. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correct, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lives, 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 dreaming tracks and songlines in the pilgrim's 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 the pilgrim's Soul. 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 pilgrim's Ego to his or her Soul. When they have been discovered, the Ego knows the way to the pure awareness and love of its spiritual essence – the home of the Soul: the Inner Side.

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma and special providence. The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what clairvoyants may be able to see in the collective time, or fantasize about another person's karmic experiences and sins. Many of these experiences (for example about past lives) – 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 archetypal, 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, 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 "proofs" his assertion. There has been made many examinations of things of that kind. But regardless how fascinating it is, then it proofs nothing about past lives. And therefore, it is deceptive and dangerous to occupy oneself with.

Nobody can tell you about your karmic structures, about your personal or original sin, and not at all about your special providence (should another person know what God's special gift to you are?). But this is what New Age self-made spiritual authorities are doing all the time. We constantly see it in advertises, etc. But all people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmic, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive. Keep away from it!

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmic and sinful 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 of the Inner Side. Karma and sin in other ways are 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 pilgrims, who wish to learn, to go around the states, which have to do with the collective time, or at least, to shorten the passage through these areas. And if they are lost in them, to lead them back on the right track.

The commonest examples of special providence in our experience are remarkable "coincidences". Synchronicity is a concept, first introduced by Jung, which holds that events are "meaningful coincidences" if they occur with no causal relationship yet seem to be meaningfully related. During his career, Jung furnished several different definitions of it. Jung defined synchronicity as an "acausal connecting (togetherness)

principle," "meaningful coincidence", and "a causal parallelism." He introduced the concept as early as the 1920s but gave a full statement of it only in 1951 in an Eranos lecture.

In 1952 Jung published a paper "Synchronizität als ein Prinzip akausaler Zusammenhänge" (Synchronicity – An Acausal Connecting Principle) in a volume which also contained a related study by the physicist and Nobel laureate Wolfgang Pauli, who was sometimes critical of Jung's ideas. Jung's belief was that, just as events may be connected by causality, they may also be connected by meaning. Events connected by meaning need not have an explanation in terms of causality, which does not generally contradict the Axiom of Causality.

Jung used the concept in arguing for the existence of the paranormal. A believer in the paranormal, Arthur Koestler wrote extensively on synchronicity in his 1972 book [The Roots of Coincidence](#). The problem is that scientific based studies in synchronicity almost inevitable slips over in pseudoscience.

*The Lord of the Ring* is chock-full of divine providences. And that must be seen in the light of Tolkien's Christian faith. In fact, if there is any one particular religious doctrine that is at large as a continent in *The Lord of the Rings*, this is it. It is "like the sky, spread over everything". Kreeft says he could write an entire book on this theme alone.

The most remarkable examples surround evils, events that seem very bad when they occur, yet which turns out to have been for the best, just as Romans 8:28 asserts. For instance, Frodo rightly sees his finding of the Ring as the worst thing that has ever happened to him: "I was not made for perilous quests. I wish I had never seen the Ring. Why did it come to me?" (LOTR, p. 60). Yet Gandalf sees the providential good even in this evil, in fact, especially in this:

*"It was not Gollum, Frodo, but the Ring itself that decided things. The Ring left him...There was more than one power at work, Frodo. The Ring was trying to get back to its master...[but behind] that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case you also were meant to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought"* (LOTR, pp. 54-55).

Kreeft asks us to note, in this passage (1) how the the interplay between the intentions of Gollum, Bilbo, Frodo, Sauron, and the Ring itself are all instruments of the intensions of "something else at work"; (2) how the presence of this "something else" (divine providence) is sensed even when not named; (3) how much more effective it

is for Tolkien not to name it, not to tell but to show, to give us just the back side of the tapestry, not the cause but the effects, not the explanation but just the data; and (4) how “encouraging” this is, if this “something else” is good rather than evil.

Tolkien himself interprets the climax of the plot providentially: “Frodo had done what he could and spent himself completely (as an instrument of divine Providence) and had produced a situation in which the object of his quest could be achieved. His humility (with which he began) and his sufferings were justly rewarded by the highest honour; and his exercise of patience and mercy toward Gollum gained him Mercy: his failure (at the Cracks of Doom) was redressed” (*Letters*, no. 246, p. 326).

In *The Lord of the Rings* there are literally hundreds of providential “coincidences”. Yet they are not preachy, contrived, unbelievable, forced, or allegorical. They are not a jimmying of the plot, as in the pious potboilers of Frank Perretti or Tim LaHaye. And this narrative credibility, this naturalness, is itself a strong argument for the truth of the doctrine. It is “true to life”, as Kreeft says. This is one of the ways in which literature can persuade us more powerfully than logic.

Closely connected to the idea of providence is the puzzle of free will and its relation to fate, or destiny, or predestination. (“Destiny” seems the most generic term, “fate” having more specifically pagan and “predestination” more specifically Christian connotations.) It is one of the most obvious and most often-asked questions in philosophy.

*The Lord of the Rings* is dense with destiny. Though the events are surprises to the reader, as to the protagonists, they also form a pattern, and we eventually see that they all “had” to happen that way. None of the endings, happy or sad, are unconceiving, unnatural, or unbelievable (though they are unpredictable). Sauron *had* to fall. At least some of the Hobbits *had* to rise to the heroic occasion. Sacrifices *had* to be made. Battles *had* to be fought. And it was predictable that the unpredictable would happen.

On the other hand, the protagonists made hundreds of free choices, some large, some small; and even the small ones make large differences. For instance, just one page after Frodo leaves Bag End, singing his Road song, he hears a horse on the road. Apparently Gandalf is coming. But Frodo suddenly desires to hide. At this point Frodo does not know the danger of the Black Riders; but had he not hid, the Quest would have ended then and there. The Rider would have captured Frodo and the Ring, delivered both to Sauron, and Middle-earth would have become Hell on earth.

Nearly everyone believes in free will, at least until he meets arguments against it, either from social scientists who claim that all our choices can be explained by heredity plus environment, or from philosophers who begin with the false assumption that a human choice must be either (1) caused, and thus determined, and this necessitated, and thus unfree, or else (2) free and thus uncaused – but something uncaused is unintelligible. The answer to both is that “free causality” is not a self-contradiction but a uniquely human kind of causality.

Sometimes philosophers can help. Kreeft presents two philosophical arguments to explain how both of these ideas can be true without contradiction.

The first is the principle that divine grace, in dealing with anything in nature, does not suppress or bypass its nature but perfects it and works through it. (A human author does the same thing with his characters.) Therefore, divine predestination preserves human free will, because God invented it. As Aquinas says, man is free *because* God is all-powerful. For God not only gets everything done that He designs, but also gets everything done in the right way: subhuman things happen unfreely, and human things happen freely. Just as in a novel, the settings are not free and the characters are.

The second philosophical argument (from Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*) is that since God is not in time, destiny does not mean *predestination*, like pushing dominoes. This is the argument I myself is closest to.

Kreeft’s book on Tolkien can be used to explore the very close parallel between Tolkien and the British novelist, poet, academic, medievalist, literary critic, essayist, lay theologian, broadcaster, lecturer, and Christian apologist, C.S. Lewis. Most of the parallels are not due to direct influence, either way, but to a common familiarity with and respect for the same sources in the great tradition, that is, pre-modern Western literature, philosophy and religion. Kreeft says that Lewis summarizes the second philosophical arguments as clearly as anyone has done:

*God is not in Time...He has all eternity in which to listen to the split second of prayer put up by a pilot as his plane crashes in flames...*

*God is not hurried along in the Time-stream of this universe any more than an author is hurried along in the imaginary time of his own novel. He has infinite attention to spare for each one of us...You are as much alone with Him as if you were the only being He had ever created. When Christ died, He died for you individually just as much as if you had been the only man in the world...*

*[I]f God foresaw our acts, it would be very hard to understand how we could be free not to do them. But suppose God is outside and above the Time-line. In that case, what we call "tomorrow" is visible to Him in just the same way as what we call "today." All the days are "Now" for Him. He does not remember you doing them, because, though you have lost yesterday, He has not. He does not "foresee" you doing things tomorrow; He simply sees you doing them; because, though tomorrow is not yet there for you, it is for Him. You never suppose that your actions at this moment were any less free because God knows what you are doing. Well, He knows your tomorrow's actions in just the same way – because He is already in tomorrow and can simply watch you."*

Let's look at this argument in relation to what we already have investigated.

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 heart-fullness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, your Soul, because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma (sin and divine providence) has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your Soul (the Inner Side) - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego's process; that is: with your personal time and life-situation (the Outer Side). Admittedly it is the Ego's actions out on the scene, which leaves karmic tracks. Karma is the unconscious 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 Soul changes, in the unconscious. And the Wholeness of course also includes past and future.

When your Soul is sleeping, karma is automatically. The Ego's pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the Wholeness, in your Soul, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma (original sin and personal sin: destiny, fate or predestination). 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 karmic 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, your Soul. This dimension is not subject to the karmic

structure, it *is* it, or it is over it. The Wholeness (God, Brahman) 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. It is from here the free will comes.

When your Soul begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmic lawfulness and can therefore relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmic structures, which after all not only rule between the many lives of your Soul, 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 karmic automatism (the automatism of personal sin and original sin, destiny, fate or predestination).

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 (this is the area of past and future, destiny, fate and predestination). Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the Wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these laws (a human being is created in the image of God; it is unfolded from the Inner Side).

Human beings are in that way, seen from the point of view of the ordinary ego-consciousness, inserted in two dimensions: 1) a continuum, which streams are subject to laws (the Outer Side); and 2) a discontinuum, for which leaps laws not seem to be effective (the Inner Side). The Wholeness, your Soul, or 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 Soul, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the Soul the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

It is this double-aspect of a human being that solves the problem of free will in relation to fate, or destiny, or predestination. Fate, destiny, or predestination (compensatory karma) belongs to the energy-aspect of man. Freedom belongs to the consciousness aspect. That will say that man can use his free will to create new compensatory karma (fate, destiny or predestination) since this changes the balance



in the Wholeness (and therewith also past and future) – so that the structures and power lines in your soul changes, in the unconscious.

But you can also use your free will to begin a spiritual practice. When your Soul 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 Soul; the Inner Side), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma (personal and original sin), a progressive karma (divine providence) will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma, an opening for special providence.

All in all: The use of the word Soul is entirely an expression of that the spiritual essence of humans, the consciousness aspect of a human being, is akin to the Wholeness (God), and therefore transcendent in relation to the laws of the energy aspect. The Soul aspect becomes hidden when the consciousness identifies with the energy aspect.

To readers or critics who insist that *The Lord of the Rings* is not a religious book, and therefore the question of God's existence is irrelevant to it (which Patrick Curry seems to suggest), Tolkien himself replies that the main character of *The Lord of the Rings* is God, and the main issue is God's honor:

*In The Lord of the Rings the conflicts is not basically about "freedom," though that is naturally involved. It is about God, and His sole right to divine honour...Sauron desired to be a God-King...If he had been victorious he would have demanded divine honour from all rational creatures and absolute temporal power over the whole world (Letters, no. 183, pp. 243-44).*

So the most fundamental conflict in *The Lord of the Rings* is religious? "Of course!" Kreeft answers. "Why else is Sauron's desire to play God by using the Ring evil unless it is contrary to reality, that is, unless God is real and only God is God? It is a very simple and obvious point, and an absolutely central one to the story and to its central symbol, the Ring. Yet it will sound shocking to those who cannot admit loving anything "religious" but cannot help loving *The Lord of the Rings*."

According to Kreeft: "if the antireligious person loves this story, he must unconsciously love the Christian story, not because *The Lord of the Rings* is an allegory of Christianity but because its author's mind and philosophy are one with that of the Author of the Christian story."

### 3. Philosophical Angelology

The theological study of angels is known as "angelology", and philosophical angelology is angelology studied with the methods of philosophy; that is: with the use of logic and argumentation.

In Christianity, angels are agents of God, based on angels in Judaism. The most influential Christian angelic hierarchy was that put forward by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the 4th or 5th century in his book *De Coelesti Hierarchia* (On the Celestial Hierarchy).

During the Middle Ages, many schemes were proposed, some drawing on and expanding on Pseudo-Dionysius, others suggesting completely different classifications. According to medieval Christian theologians, the angels are organized into several orders, or "Angelic Choirs".

Pseudo-Dionysius (*On the Celestial Hierarchy*) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*) drew on passages from the New Testament, specifically Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16, to develop a schema of three Hierarchies, Spheres or Triads of angels, with each Hierarchy containing three Orders or Choirs.

In fine art, angels are usually depicted as having the shape of human beings of extraordinary beauty; they are often identified using the symbols of bird wings, halos, and light.

The term "angel" has also been expanded to various notions of spirits or figures found in other religious traditions. Nearly all pre-modern culture has believed that something like angels (superhuman spirits) exist and are prior to man both in rank and in time. We find them at the beginning of the real world and also at the beginning of Tolkien's fictional world in *The Silmarillion*. We also find them inspiring the beginning of Tolkien's writing of this fictional world, during World War I, when he was haunted by a single line in an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon poem by Cynewulf entitled "Crist". The line was: "Hail Earendil, brightest of Angels, over Middle-earth sent unto men." Tolkien wrote, "I felt a curious thrill as if something had stirred in me, half wakened from sleep. There was something very remote and strange and beautiful behind those words, if I could grasp it, far beyond the ancient English."

The word "angel" means "messenger". It tells the angels' job description, not their essence. As to their essence, the mainline Christian tradition says that angels are pure spirits, with no kind of bodies, while a secondary tradition says they have "spiritual bodies". Whichever of these is Tolkien's view, it is clear that the angels in *The Lord*

*of the Rings* (who are the Wizards, the Istari) did not get their bodies from nature, from sex, or from parents. They have no parents and no children.

In *The Silmarillion* the angels are named “the Ainur”. Those who enter the created world are called “the Valar”. The lesser ranks of the Valar are the Maiar. Some of the Maiar become Istari, or Wizards, like Gandalf. They are guardian angels, and they carry out divine providence by guiding and guarding man, just as in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Scriptures and traditions. In all three traditions, and in *The Silmarillion* He then uses the angels as instruments in creating the material world. This idea, while not a part the mainline Christian tradition, is not heretical. Kreeft says that it is a *theologoumenon* (a possible theological opinion) that is found in some of the Church Fathers. And it helps to solve a difficult aspect of the “problem of evil”, the problem of reconciling real evil with an all-good and all-powerful God. Moral evil can be traced to human sin, but where did physical evils come from? If God entrusted the shaping of the material world to angels, then since the fall of the angels came before the fall of man, they may have had a hand in the world’s “thorns and thistles”.

In *The Silmarillion*, the Ainur can put on human bodies as we put on clothes. This is also a *theologoumenon*. Certain biblical passages seem to imply it: the Nephilim in Genesis 6, the three angels eating Abraham’s food in Genesis 19, and Tobias being guided by the angel in disguise (Tobit 5-12).

In *The Silmarillion*, those Ainur who enter the world became the Valar, the Powers of the World, and remain with it until the world’s end. These, Tolkien says, “Men have often called Gods” (p. 25), thus offering a more-than-psychological explanation for ancient polytheism.

Angels can bilocate. They can live both in Heaven and on earth at the same time. The most important angel in *The Lord of the Rings*, next to Gandalf, is Elbereth, who also bilocates, for she saves Frodo at the Ford of Bruinen and again in Shelob’s lair, but she is also Varda, Lady of the Stars.

The angels are the main protagonists of the first two parts of *The Silmarillion*, and Hobbits are the main protagonists of *The Lord of the Rings*. The Wizards, including Gandalf and Saruman, are angels, of the lower order of Maiar; Sauron and also the Balrogs are fallen, evil Maiar (*Silmarillion*, p. 31); and Tom Bombadil and Goldberry are quite possible the Valar Aulë and Yavanna (*ibid.*, pp. 27-28, 39).

## 1) Angels and Symbols

Let's try to see the relationship between the angels and the human consciousness when seen in the light of the preceding chapters.

To begin a spiritual practice is to engage in a process of awakening. Let me repeat the important Zen message 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 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 states in which the Wholeness can be in are also described as personal, collective and universal time. Furthermore, it can be referred to as personal, collective and universal history. Time and history constitute the structure under one's thinking.

This structure is also called the astral plane, or the astral world. It is a plane of existence postulated both by classical (in 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, on the way to being born or after death. This world is 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 represent a compendium of mystical knowledge encoded in a non-physical plane of existence. These records are described as containing all knowledge of human experience and the history of the cosmos. They are holding a record of all events, actions, thoughts and feelings that have ever occurred or will ever occur.

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

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

The collective history of the astral plane is, as a matter of fact, creating a subject-field and an object-field. This is not reality since it is based on self-image and world-image, therefore an illusion, a poetic work of mankind, as pointed out both in Buddhist and Indian philosophy. The collective images appear as fragmented sequences in past and future.

The universal history of the astral plane is, contrary to the collective history, an expression of reality itself and it is the Akashic records when not influenced by human thought distortions. As such, it is not human made. In Yogacara Buddhism, they use the term *Alaya-Vijnana*, the common universal storeroom of consciousness, which doesn't consist of anything else than forms, the carrier of all latent possibilities and the store place for all accumulated tendencies. It is the foundation for the activity of the mind, and because it always is a changeable, dynamic, and, at the same time, continuous, homogeneous (oneness), it can't be understood by the thinking.

Nonetheless, the universal history is of linguistic kind, where language is no longer verbal, but expressed as superior, visionary syntheses and wholenesses, that work more in synchronism with the Now than in sequences in past and future. The thoughts of God.

Both the collective, and universal history, are images in time. The collective history is properly lying in the area between the Outer Side of the world and the Inner Side. The universal history is lying in the Inner Side, and is therefore one and the same as the Wholeness.

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

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

When energy and content arrive to the consciousness from the collective images, then this energy, and this content, will symbolize itself. This is because the collective images are in a condition of vague, diffuse, astral oneness. Therefore, what is coming from the collective images contains a much greater width and depth than the limited, relatively narrow and clear concepts and classes of the ordinary consciousness. The

vague, wide contents and energies from the collective images are therefore growing narrower in the meeting with the consciousness. Here, the symbol is the quintessence, this shortened, condensed form of expression of the vague, wide collective material.

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

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

Symbols from the collective images are known from the archetypes and primordial images of the dreams, as well as from fantasies, fairy-tales, myths etc. This is exemplified in the above-mentioned fairy-story *The Elder-Tree Mother*.

Symbols from the universal images are formed in the transition from the Wholeness of the Observer and the Observed, to the separation of the observer and the observed (in my book [A Portrait of a Lifeartist](#) the relation between the observer and the observed is a central issue).

What reality in itself contains, is real in this dimension, neither symbolic, nor linguistic; however, when reality becomes unreality in the separation of the observer and the observed, it narrows, loses clarity and light, is being muted to the split consciousness, and that – which in reality was truth – will transmute itself to symbols. That which is truth in reality and presence, is symbolic in unreality and absence. It is therefore very difficult for the universal images to communicate themselves to an ordinary absent consciousness. It requires, that you yourself do your part of the spiritual work.

In summary, there exist symbols both from the collective and universal images of time and they are manifestations of these images.

Symbols from the collective images are, as already mentioned, shortened, condensed modes of expression from a subordinate, vague, diffuse and imprecise astral time unit, which moves in fragmented sequences in past and future; or said differently: in cycles somewhere in the interface between the Outer Side and the Inner Side. This is

however not the same as directly experiencing the collective time's astral images and worlds without the intermediate state of the symbols. Here the consciousness has to be in an astral state.

Symbols (and energies) from the collective images are for example the cause of spiritual crises such as kundalini, para-psychic opening, Hero's journey, shamanic initiation, channeling, close encounters with UFOs, breakthrough of memories from past lives, near-death experiences, possession states, oneness-consciousness/peak experiences, and many phenomena in relation to alcohol and drugs. Spiritual crises are also types of spiritual awakening, and should therefore be used in a spiritual practice, and not end up in treatment or self-promoting New Age fashion.

Symbols from the universal images are of a completely different character. They reproduce a much clearer, more precise and superior astral Wholeness. It is from these symbols you can receive direct teachings about your spiritual development process. It is direct messages from the Inner Side. And the messengers are the angels.

When you have trained in meditation and dream yoga for many years, a so-called divine being can visit you through a symbol from the universal images: Christ, Buddha, masters, teachers, angels. Note that these of course also can come from the collective images – the difference is explained below.

Such a symbol is a quintessence of the information quantities contained in the Wholeness of a universal image. The divine being will in that way convey information to you from the universal image, which, together with the whole of the universal vision, constitutes the dreaming tracks in the artwork of your life. The divine being (or other symbols from the universal images) will in that way help you to compose, to synthesize and interlock, what your inner thinker in the waking state has divided. But it is very important to understand that this has nothing to do with the channeling phenomenon, which belongs to the collective images. In order to receive help from a divine being you must be in a very high epistemological and ethical state.

In the chapter on Metaphysics we looked at the movement of time (or history) as consisting of two universal movements: a creative outgoing movement (the future) and a destructive backmovement (the past). These two movements are reflected throughout the universe in a multiplicity of different lifecycles.

In the outgoing movement, the great vision (God's words, Dreamtime or *The Dreaming*) becomes, because of the negationpower, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision (the universal images in time). In this way, the past arises, and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested.

And then the destructive backmovement is created. Any spiritual practice must in that way follow the negation-principle, the destructive backmovement, or the movement into the past. Therefore life must be seen as a Quest, a pilgrimage.

But the misunderstanding is also close, because this can only happen in the Now. This is also the reason for Galadriel's two sides. Tolkien's Rivendell and Lórien are places you long for. Every kind of longing contains a glimpse of a longing after the universal vision and song of the Universe. But Galadriel, the Lady of Lórien, has a darker side to her. Galadriel had tried to make Lórien "a refuge and an island of peace and beauty, a memorial of ancient days," but she was now "filled with regret and misgiving, knowing that the golden dream was hastening to a grey awakening." What has so filled the strong and seemingly ageless Lady of the Wood so with regret?

Campbell's theory of the monomyth (The Hero's Journey) is in the same way exceedingly conservative and founded on a deep nostalgia: for him, the cure for modern problems is found by returning to earlier notions of spirituality and moral virtue. In promoting a "living mythology," Campbell harkens back to a lost "golden age" from which we have fallen, but to which we can return with effort and guidance of a "sage."

But the progressive karma, our special providence, is our inner light. And that is also the bright side of Galadriel, her rational and wise side. Tolkien teaches us to trust that inner light and be strong enough to leave old problems behind. This inner light is only to be found in the Now. That will say that when you begin a spiritual practice, meditation or wordless prayer, you'll be practising in the Now. And then your painbody will begin to open itself. The destructive backmovement has started. And this is paradoxically enough the same as a process of awakening.

## **2) Guardian Angels and the Painbody**

As Eckhart Tolle says, then 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. The mind creates a build-up of energy in the body. It's this energy, which is the feeling. It may be a lustfull feeling, or a feeling of unlust.

If you really want to learn your mind - or otherwise said, your thinking - to know, then the body always gives a true reflection of it. If there is conflict between the thought and the feeling, then the thought is a lie and the feeling is a truth. A negative feeling is a true reflection of a false thought. Note that a false thought not necessarily has to be "negative". Very often false thoughts have to do with "positive thoughts". Therefore false thoughts are best described as thought distortions.



It might be difficult to observe your thoughts, but they will always be reflected in the body in form of feelings. To observe a feeling is the same as observing a thought. The only difference is, that while a thought is up in the head, a feeling has a strong bodily component.

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. 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 (I will return to this in chapter 5, Epistemology, part 6: *Hara – Rediscovering Existence.*)

The painbody is what we speak about, when we say, that somebody can have a dark side, or a wild side, as in Robert Louis Stevensons novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, or Ursula le Guin's Earthsea cycle about the wizard Ged, and in Herman Hesse's peculiar novel *Steppenwolf*.

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.

The painbody is, together with your identification with the thoughts (the Ego), the two major obstacles in order to open your consciousness in towards the Source. The painbody lives of, that you are identified with it. When you are identified with the painbody, you are absent in the past. In this way the painbody gets your energy. And for that reason you also gives energy to your negative feelings.

The task is therefore to off-identify yourself with it. This happens by being it present in neutral observation. But how can you recognize it? The painbody shows itself as negative feelings. What is a negative feeling? It is a result of a contradiction created by the Ego. By saying yes and no, accepting and denying, choosing and leaving out, justifying and condemning - the Ego splits up the images of time. The split and contradiction-filled images of the Ego, show themselves in the body as formations of energy, creative tensions. It's these tensions, which provoke the negative feeling.

A negative feeling is in other words a feeling, which is poisonous for the body, and which hinders it in functioning balanced and harmonical. Fear, anxiety, anger, grudge, sadness, hate or strong disfavour, jealousy, envy – all are they up-tensed images, which disturb the energy-stream through the body, and thereby affect the heart, the immune defence, the digestion, the hormone production etc.

A common name for all negative feelings is dissatisfaction.

Whenever you have negative feelings, then be aware, that it is the painbody which now is active. Then it is about just being neutral observing. The negative feelings come from the contradictions and divisions, which are a result of the Ego's evaluations. In this way neutral observation neutralizes this contradiction and division. Then you don't give energy to the painbody. Moreover, you can change it's negative energy through spiritual practice.

Beside the individual person's painbody you can also speak about collective painbody's. A family can have a painbody, as well as groups and countries can have a painbody. You can also say, that places and areas can have a painbody, which means a shadow, a negative energyfield, which affects all within its reach.

Finally it has to be mentioned, that the state in the Source itself hardly can be called a feeling. It's rather a state of being, a being in the timeless Now – a being one with life itself, with the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

During the spiritual practice, and the neutral observation technique, the imaginary layers of your painbody will begin to emerge to the surface. The painbody will begin to open its layers like a lotus flower. Therefore it is tempting to be seduced into the massivity of New Age psychotherapies that claim to work with these areas.

The layers of the painbody are the images of time. I have categorized them into three: the personal, collective and universal images of time. You can also talk about them as

personal, collective or universal dreams, or you can talk about them as the personal, collective and universal history. Intertwined with these are many layers. Such layers have to do with: self; past lives; immediate family systems; ancestral patterns; world, global and cosmic patterns; ego death; understanding and releasing thoughtforms; personal and collective shadow; genetics and heredity; cosmic consciousness, etc.

Our view of reality is distorted by the images of time. Each layer we become aware of and work through is one image removed, one step closer to uncovering who we really are. By consciously knowing about and working through these layers we can release them and take steps further to fully awakening. For some, this process is going through each layer gradually – removing one image at a time. For others there is a sudden removal of several images at once. Each layer has its own traumas, emotions, wounding, and patterns that cover the awakened state. Each layer has its own beliefs and understandings that distort our reality and obscure who we truly are and what the world actually is. Let us awaken to who we are and the true nature of the world without all of the illusions, patterns, and traumas that confine and separate us.

The layers are released through neutral observation, simple to register them, understand their nature and consequences for your life, and hereafter letting them go, again and again, like clouds on a blue sky. In this way there is also connected different kinds of awakenings to the opening of these layers and therefore questions concerning Ego-inflated awakening, Dark Night of the Soul Awakening, Chakra awakening, Psychic awakening, Shamanic awakening, Occult awakening, Religious awakening, Possession/entity awakening, Non-human origin awakening, and, as will be central in this article, Kundalini awakening. Such awakenings will often be experienced as a spiritual crisis.

Included in these types of awakenings are also questions concerning experiences such as physical sensations, spontaneous movements and vocalizations, chills, spiritual depression and cognition issues, chronic fatigue and fluctuations of energy, digestive issues and diet, headaches, eye symptoms, dream and sleep, lucid dreaming and astral projection, emotional fluctuations, alteration of belief systems, release of behaviors, time, drug and alcohol abuse, numbing, initiations, mental illness vs. spiritual awakening.

The different types of awakenings are connected to openings of the collective time. The collective time is also called the astral plane, or the astral world. This is, as mentioned, a very dangerous intermediate area, if you not are very trained in realization and compassion. The collective time is the area where different kinds of paranormal (philosophical/religious) phenomena are beginning to occur in your

daily life. It is especially the lack of understanding this area, that is due to my critique of the many incompetent spiritual teachers you see today in the New Age movement. If you don't understand what to do, when these phenomena arise, it can end in a spiritual crisis. Though you might have paranormal abilities, then you, spiritual seen, might not necessarily be sufficiently awake on these areas, and therefore competent enough to guide other people spiritual.

So, 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 collective history also forms 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.

That is also the reason why you, through therapy, 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 experiential 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.

This is the reason why I advice people to find a religion when starting their spiritual practice. And with a religion I mean one that have a long tradition for spiritual practice. Unlike the established religions then these traditional spiritual practices presuppose no religious doctrine, ideology, myth or conception. They put their emphasis on realization and inner transformation; shortly said: on awakening. But they used their religion as frame of references. And that's very important (see my article [The Value of Having a Religion Within a Spiritual Practice](#)). The value of the traditional is the experiential background where practices has been tested, adjusted and corrected for many hundreds of years.

And the masters within these spiritual practices are precisely using a philosophical way of counseling, rather than a traditional religious counseling (see my article [Philosophical Counseling as an Alternative to Psychotherapy](#)).

In order to heal Man from the ground you need to go into a spiritual practice. The concepts of original sin and negative karma indicate, that the dark, ancient inertia projects beyond the personal history (growing up conditions, traumatic bindings, painful experiences etc.) and far down into the collective inherited 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 lies in the evolution itself, in the genes, in the collective subconscious, in the collective history.

Therefore, when therapy requires a change, then the instinctive survival-preparedness in us reacts and protests. Man has survived on willfulness and a consciousness-structure, of which mental and psychic sign is Egocentredness. The bigger the Ego, the bigger survival chance.

Seen from a spiritual perspective, this instinctive survival strategy (the Ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma. You can't, by therapeutic strategies, free the consciousness from its attachment to this inertia. Therefore you cannot dissolve or convert the original sin through therapy (or positive thinking). Only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness, angels) can basically help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order for a human being to be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. Subsequently, the true spiritual practice within the religions serves as part of this preparation.

So, when you in this way do your part of the work, then you will discover that the enlightened consciousness (God, Christ, Buddha, angels), 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. All this is intimately connected with an acceptance of our dark side, our original sin and negative karma. The forgiveness, the cleansing, can be experienced as a special providence, a spirit help, a help from a guardian angel.

The "angels" or malakhim, i.e. the "plain" angels are the lowest order of the angels, and the most recognized. They are the ones most concerned with the affairs of living things. Within the category of the angels, there are many different kinds, with different functions. The angels are sent as messengers to humanity. Personal guardian angels come from this class.

The leader of the Fellowship and of the opposition against Sauron is a guardian angel. Tolkien says of Gandalf:

*He was and incarnate "angel" ...sent to Middle-earth, as the great crisis of Sauron loomed on the horizon. By "incarnate" I mean they were embodied in physical bodies capable of pain, and weariness, and of afflicting the spirit with physical fear, and of being "killed" ...Why they should take such a form is...precisely to limit and*

*hinder their exhibition of "power" on the physical plane, and so that they should do what they were primarily sent for: train, advise, instruct, arouse the hearts and minds of those threatened by Sauron to a resistance with their own strengths, and not just to do the job for them (Letters, no. 156, p. 202).*

We have already seen that it is only the individual himself that can discover his progressive karma, or divine providence; the help from the guardian angel. There are two processes going on: the help from the source, and the individual's own preparation. These two processes mutually fertilize each other.

Kreeft says: "Before September 11, 2001, most of us saw America as the Hobbits saw the Shire",

*As a district of well-ordered business; and there in that pleasant corner of the world they plied their well-ordered business of living; and they heeded less and less the world outside where dark things moved, until they came to think that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk. They forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it (LOTR, p. 5).*

Tolkien believed that we too have guardians, and they are not the CIA or FBI. We are guarded not by guardian agents but by guardian angels.

Personal guardian angels are not of a separate order but rather come from the order of Angels. It is a common belief that they are assigned to every human being, Christian or not. It is unknown whether they guard multiple humans during their existence or just one, but the latter is a more typical opinion.

According to Saint Jerome, the concept of guardian angels is in the "mind of the Church". He stated: "how great the dignity of the soul, since each one has from his birth an angel commissioned to guard it".

According to Aquinas, "On this road man is threatened by many dangers both from within and without, and therefore as guardians are appointed for men who have to pass by an unsafe road, so an angel is assigned to each man as long as he is a wayfarer."

By means of an angel, God is said to introduce images and suggestions leading a person to do what is right.

Pope Francis concluded with a series of questions so that each one can examine his/her own conscience: “How is my relationship with my guardian angel? Do I listen to him? Do I bid him good day in the morning? Do I tell him: ‘guard me while I sleep?’ Do I speak with him? Do I ask his advice? ...Each one of us can do so in order to evaluate “the relationship with this angel that the Lord has sent to guard me and to accompany me on the path, and who always beholds the face of the Father who is in heaven”.

So, it is good to know a little about them – but not too much. For, as Pippin says, “‘We can’t live long on the heights.’ ‘No’, said Merry. ‘I can’t. Not yet, at any rate. But a least, Pippin, we can now see them, and honour them...and not a gaffer could tend his garden in what he calls peace but for them, whether he knows about them or not. I am glad I know about them a little’” (LOTR, p. 852). And so we are.

### 3) Angel Song

In 1939, as Europe braced for the worst, J.R.R. Tolkien completed the first half of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, emphasizing how terrible riders in black could terrorize even the peaceful oasis of Frodo’s beloved Shire. The Ringwraiths of Middle-earth added a touch of evil not present in Tolkien’s previous novel, *The Hobbit*. In *The Fellowship*, the Black Riders are messengers of a greater evil brewing in Mordor. However, within the parallel perils of Europe in the twentieth century and Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age, Tolkien elegantly writes of safe havens where even in the darkest times, songs of love are sung under starlit skies. Nestled in the perfumed mountains of Rivendell and the ancient forest of Lórien, many of the elves of old knows what to hold on to, and what to let go of.

It is not unexpected that Frodo should be healed (though never cured) and reunited with Gandalf and Bilbo at the house of Elrond in Rivendell. Readers of *The Hobbit* already are familiar with the charms of The Last Homely House, the westernmost outpost of the elves. “That house was, as Bilbo had long ago reported, ‘a perfect house, whether you like food or sleep or story-telling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all.’ Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness.” In Rivendell the Nine Riders of the enemy are turned back, Isildur’s sword is re-forged and given to Aragorn, and the Fellowship of men, dwarves, hobbits and elves is formed. Despite, or because of such hard work, there is joyous singing, day and night.

The elves of Rivendell are famous for their singing. In the Christian story of creation, the New Testament tells us that in the beginning, there was the Word. In Tolkien’s spin, we are told that in the beginning, there was the Song. Before writing *The*

*Hobbit*, Tolkien laid out the origins of Middle-earth and how the happy elves found a home there. Though *The Silmarillion* was first published in 1977, four years after Tolkien's death, it contains the history behind Middle-earth that Tolkien had been working on for much of his adult life. As it begins, the creator of the world, Ilúvatar, made the Ainur, or Holy Ones, and gave them the power of song. The voices of the Ainur, like innumerable choirs and musical instruments,

*Began to fashion the theme of Ilúvatar to a great music; and a sound arose of endless interchanging melodies woven in harmony that passed beyond hearing into the depths and into the heights, and the places of the dwelling of Ilúvatar were filled to overflowing, and the music and the echo of the music went into the Void, and it was not void.*

Both elves and men (Quendi and Atani) were created as important players of the world's symphony. But though the race of men will do great things, Ilúvatar proclaims, it is the elves who "shall be the fairests of all earthly creatures, and they shall have and conceive and bring forth more beauty than all my Children; and they shall have the greater bliss in this world."

The highest of the "guardian angels" in *The Lord of the Rings* is Elbereth. At the most critical juncture in the Quest, Sam is inspired to invoke her by name, "speaking in tongues" (language is always the clearest indicator of importance in Tolkien):

A Elbereth Gilthoniel  
O menel palan-diriel,  
Le nallon sí di-nguruthos!  
A tiro nin, Fanuilos (LOTR, p. 712)

This translates as: "O, Elbereth Starkindler from heaven gazing-afar, to thee I cry now in the shadow of death. O look towards me, Everwhite."

Indeed, Tolkien writes, "I am a Christian (which can be deduced from my stories), and in fact a Roman Catholic. The latter 'fact' perhaps cannot be deduced; though one critic (by letter) asserted that the invocations of Elbereth, and the character of Galadriel...were clearly related to Catholic devotion to Mary" (*Letters*, no. 288).

Tolkien introduces Elbereth in *The Silmarillion* as "Varda, Lady of the Stars, who knows all the regions of Ea. Too great is her beauty to be declared in the words of Men, or of Elves; for the light of Iluvatar lives still in her face. In light is her power and her joy" (*Silmarillion*, p. 27). He also says of Galadriel: "I think it is true that I owe much of this character to Christian and Catholic teaching and imagination of



Mary” (*Letters*, no. 220, p. 407). And he writes to Fr. Robert Murray, S.J., “I think I know exactly what you mean by the order of Grace; and of course by your references to Our Lady, upon which all my own small perception of beauty both in majesty and simplicity is founded” (*Letters*, no. 142, p. 172).

One reason Tolkien did not bring the Valar (angels) more directly into *The Lord of the Rings* is that they would have “lowered” the Elves, made them less distinguishable from Men, less awesome, less like angels. For Elves are semiangelic beings in *The Lord of the Rings*, both in themselves and to us. In themselves because they are semi-immortal; to us because when we look at them we look *in the direction* of the angels, just as when a finger is pointing at the moon.

Elves are not, like the Ainur, pure spirits that can assume bodies as we assume clothing. Nor are they mortals like us. Their bodies are immortal as long as the matter of the world lasts, and if their bodies are killed in Middle-earth, their spirits return to the Halls of Mandos and are given new bodies by reincarnation.

Tolkien writes, “The Elves represent...the artistic, aesthetic, and purely scientific aspects of the Humane Nature raised to a higher level than is actually seen in Men” (*Letters*, no. 181, p. 236). The movie has them fight alongside Men (and Dwarf) at Helm’s Deep – a legitimate extension of the friendship between Legolas and Gimli – to show the alliance of all the good species and the involvement of all in the spiritual warfare that is the main theme of history.

One reason both Elves and Dwarves are so common in pre-modern literature is that they represent, roughly, the spiritual and the physical, soul and body, angel-like and animal-like halves of human nature. In *The Lord of the Rings*, however, the contrast is more between Elves and Hobbits, who are neither artists nor scientists, but humble, earthly, “bourgeois”, creature-comfort-loving homebodies. An author succeeds if we recognize parts of ourselves in each character; but Tolkien aims higher: we recognize parts of ourselves in each *species*.

Elves and fairies are not quite synonymous, but they are overlapping; and when Tolkien writes the most insightful essay ever written about fairy tales, he is writing about Elves. Indeed, he makes the connection explicitly:

*“Faërian Drama” – those plays which according to abundant records the elves have often presented to men – can produce Fantasy with a realism and immediacy beyond the compass of any human mechanism. As a result their usual effect (upon a man) is to go beyond Secondary Belief [literary belief]. If you are present at a Faërien drama you yourself are, or think that you are, bodily inside its Secondary World [as the four*

*Hobbits felt at Tom Bombadil's house in The Fellowship of the Ring, chap. 7]...To the elvish craft, Enchantment, Fantasy aspires, and when it is successful of all forms of human art most nearly approaches* ("On Fairy-Stories", pp. 51-53).

Kreeft says that this is the clue that solves the great Tolkien puzzle. The puzzle is why, of all humans who ever took pen to paper, Tolkien has produced by far the most convincing, desirable, beautiful, believable, and awesome Elves. And the answer is that he must have been an Elf. Kreeft is quite serious when he says so. Or at least he had Elf blood somewhere in his ancestry. For if any work of literature in the history of the world is a "Faërian drama", it is *The Lord of the Rings*.

#### **4. Philosophical Anthropology**

Philosophical anthropology, sometimes called anthropological philosophy, is a discipline dealing with questions of metaphysics and phenomenology of the human person, and interpersonal relationships. The Greeks, who invented philosophy (or at least, philosophy as a discipline) as well as half of all the other worthwhile human things in the world, clearly recognized that in this world so full of wonders, the most wonderful by far was man. Compare the famous speech to that effect in *Oedipus Rex* with the twenty-eighth chapter of Job, and you will see the source of these two great ancient civilizations, Greece and Israel.

"Know thyself" was the maxim adopted by Socrates. If the philosopher does not know himself, he does not know who it is that knows all other things he knows.

Obviously, knowing the self is the first, most immediate kind of knowing. Yet it is also the hardest, because it is the most prone to self-deception by self-interest and rationalization, because we are too close to see ourselves clearly, and because we alone are subjects, knowers; how can we make that same reality an object, a thing known? Yet we must.

My book *A Portrait of a Lifeartist* is a book on philosophical anthropology. In the beginning of the book I set up six fundamental steps on the Life Artist's journey (pilgrimage) towards the source of life. All six steps are reflected in an investigation of the Life Artist as respectively a historical being, a rational being, a desirous being, a natural being, and a communicative being. In that way the six steps, in each aspect of the Life Artist's being, come to appear in a new light, though the core is changeless. In this way the teaching, which originates from them, can be seen as a kind of diamond with different facets, though the same things often are repeated.

Aristotle meant, that what differentiates Man from the rest of the animals, is reason. He defined Man as a rational animal.

Up through the Western history of philosophy we have meant, that reason was the most crucial thing in Man. Our thinking about state and society are based on the idea about, that Man is an enlightened and rational being. The democracy is standing or falling with, that the individual is able to understand and decide on political problems.

But what are then reason and rationality? They are at any rate an utterance of the mind; they are connected with, how clearly the mind can see without distortions. The question about reason is therefore connected with the question about what the mind actually is, including our ability to think and analyse. Add to this the problem with dualism; the problem with mind and thoughts as separate from body and surroundings.

In philosophy as an art of life you don't seek to construct any philosophy on the background of these questions; any answers or conclusions. The question about reason is rather sought clarified by investigating why the mind not is able to see clearly. The answer is sought in the problem about the mind's loss of reason, and what you in practice can do in order to change this. Reason is connected to my concept of the *Navigator*.

Reason has, from ancient time, been stressed as the most essential and important in Man. But modern points of views have tried to turn it upside down. Because maybe all reason only are rationalizations of desires and subconscious impulses.

The sharpest critic of the tradition is probably Nietzsche. He couldn't become tired of sneering at reason and all the illusions about the Good, the True and the Beautiful, which the philosophers, with the reason, had created. While the European view of human nature through millenniums had claimed reason as the hallmark of Man, Nietzsche turns the image upside down. He wants to convert all values.

And after Nietzsche, Freud has been busy following the attack on reason up. Freud believes, like Nietzsche, that human reason is a weak and secondary part of the human nature. It is desires, and subconscious motives of different kind, that determine our actions, and reason is only seat for rationalizations and illusions.

Desires have, as Nietzsche made aware, to do with the striving of Man, to do with the will to power and becoming; something, which more is characterized by a Dionysian desire, than by an Apollonian rationality. Desires also have, as Freud made aware, to

do with the question of the conscious in relation to the subconscious, including the question about the meaning of dreams. But, I would add, desires have also with passion to do, the deep and incisive feeling of something, where you don't seek to achieve anything, because the feeling in itself contains fulfilment. A feeling, which not is possible without that there also is reason, clarity and awareness included in it. This could be connected to the heart and the hara (the *Compass*).

In the thought about that reason only is rationalizations of desires and subconscious impulses, is also lying a disposition to another discussion, because with desires, senses and the whole of his organism, Man is a part of nature.

Naturalism stands for any view, which considers nature, or the natural, as the most common basis for explanations and evaluations. A naturalistic view of human nature is this conception: Man is a piece of nature.

Naturalistic views can be traced back to the oldest Greek philosophy, but all newer forms of naturalism are characterized by modern natural sciences. Naturalism therefore very often advocates the conception, that all phenomena in the world can be studied through natural science. However it is important to be aware, that naturalism in itself isn't a scientific point of view, but a philosophical point of view. No single branch of science gives anything else than a limited perspective on Man or reality. If you are claiming anything else, you end in reductionism; that is: where you reduce Man and reality to only being a result of a single influence. You accentuate one influence at the same time as you understate all others, and therewith you get a problem with creating unity and coherence in your theory. Both Man and reality are all too complex to be written down to one influence.

In the view of nature in natural science, nature is reduced to atomic particles, empty space, fields, electromagnetic waves and particles etc., etc. Characteristic is, that nature is explained, and is described, in a way, which is a world away from our immediate sense experiences.

The support of a natural scientific view of nature has almost always led the supporters forward to combine it with an instrumental (technological) view of nature. We have already examined this in connection with nature. But it is also a prevailing view of Man. This conception of nature is seeing it as pure material, or alone as a means for the unfolding of Man.

The instrumental view of Man rests on a sharp division between Man and everything else; that is to say: between inner and outer nature. Man is by force of his inner nature

radical different from, and is standing over, the outer nature. This is, among other things, due to, that he, with reason and science, is in the position to master nature.

By the way, this thought characterizes almost all traditional Western philosophy, where that to philosophize is due to thinking alone, even though the theories within this tradition in other crucial points are highly contradictory. You find it in Christianity, in Descartes' view of Man as a self-dependant being, in the Enlightenment philosophers, in Romanticism's view of Man as a historical being, in Kierkegaard, Karl Marx and Auguste Comte, who respectively founded existentialism, Marxism and positivism.

We saw that, in opposition to this, and under impression of the discussion about the damage, which we have caused nature, there has in the later years been worked out conceptions, which claims, that nature has a value in itself. It is not only a means, but ought to be respected for its beauty and richness. It is by the way a point of view, which also is well known from older times. In lack of better you could call it a communicative view of nature *and* Man, since it is implying, that Man in some sense have a community with nature.

And as the above shows, then these two views of nature are inseparable connected with a view of, what a human being is. The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has sought to create a synthesis of the many viewpoints. He claims, that the development of reason, as well as the division, and the alienation, in the modern world, and the many out-specializations of areas of knowledge, have led to, that there in today's society rules a radical opposition between two kinds of reason: the instrumental reason and the communicative reason.

The instrumental, or technical, reason, is about how to find given means to given goals. It is for instance a necessary goal for Man to get his necessities of life satisfied by cultivating nature. The means is technology, which today builds on the extensive knowledge of natural science. To cut a long story short: thanks to the instrumental reason we get control over nature. In technical competence we have gone far. The whole of that part of our lives has developed into extensive systems, such as the economy, the bureaucracy, the market and the market forces.

The communicative reason and competence is the reason we use in all relationships, where it is about coming to an understanding with each other. It presupposes that we know our life-world. Among other things Habermas understands the life-world as the horizon of linguistic ability, cultural knowledge and individual skills, which is necessary in order to understand both the family jargon, as well as the tone between children, and in all the many communities. By the way Habermas argues for, that the

difference between instrumental and communicative reason is given with fundamental structures in language, with different types of speech acts.

The core in Habermas' critique of culture is that the instrumental reason has conquered terrain from the communicative reason. The systems (the market and the bureaucracy) have colonized the lifeworld. This means, among other things, that political and philosophical questions are being made into technical questions, as when an election campaign is about details in the economical planning, as well as it leads to, that we treat each other as means, or as items, which have come on a wrong course (the treatment society).

The instrumental reason is controlling and gets control. In accordance with Habermas there is nothing wrong with this in technical respect. The problem arises, when this attitude come to characterize ordinary relationships between humans and areas, where values should be crucial; that is: in philosophical respect. It is also this attitude, which has caused, that we, with reference to human problems, always shall hear what the specialists think, for instance economists, sociologists, historians, psychologists, biologists, etc. etc.

The philosopher, as philosophical counselor, has in short vanished (or they speak themselves the language of the specialists), and therewith also the art of life, which could create unity and coherence in life. Many will perhaps object against this, since the New Age movement advocates a new kind of wholeness-thinking. But, as we already have examined several times, there are a number of misunderstandings in this. Philosophy is by definition wholeness-thinking. You can therefore say, that the New Age movement is an abortive attempt to re-create philosophy as an art of life. The attempt goes wrong already in the lack of ability to understand itself as precisely philosophy. Personally I think, that this is due to the many uneducated people we see within this environment, who have got all their knowledge by reading self-help books, or other New Age books.

This main failure is, as mentioned, due to, that the New Age movement in extreme way is characterized by the instrumental reason, and the treatment society, despite, that it should be a showdown with this. That which should have been art of life becomes reduced to treatment, especially psychotherapy, and New Age magazines are abundantly characterized by alternative treatment offers, rather than offers on counseling in art of life. The movement lives by, that all people are seen as victims, or simply, ill.

Another failure, where the wholeness-thinking is lost, is due to the psychologizing of philosophy, where it, in contradiction to its own claims, shuts itself away from the Wholeness, or the Otherness, and locks itself inside the individual psyche.

That was Habermas. With the concept of the Otherness, we have another communicative thinker, namely the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Central in Buber's thinking is the thought about two fundamental relationships: I-THOU and I-IT. He has investigated this in his wonderful poetic book *I and Thou*.

The I-Thou relationship is characterised by freedom, co-operation and a deep feeling of personal involvement. The I confronts its Thou, not as something, which can be studied, be measured or manipulated, but as a unique presence, which is answering the I in its individuality. This corresponds to the communicative view of Man and nature.

The I-It relationship is characterised by a tendency to treat something as an impersonal object controlled by causal, social or economical powers. This corresponds to the instrumental view of Man and nature.

Buber refuses the idea about that humans are isolated, autonomous beings, who act from abstract rules. Instead the reality exists *between* humans as they discover and change each other. Reality is shortly said dialogical in its nature. Buber describes God as the eternal THOU, the Thou, who never can be an IT. In that way you can reach God, not with a derivation or a conclusion (some images of life), but with a readiness to answer the concrete reality of the divine presence.

In accordance with Buber, then Man, in this way, can relate to life in two radical different ways: either as a subject who experiences something, namely an object, an It, which he is standing outside. Or as a person who is in the relationship with another person, a Thou. It is the last, which is fundamental.

The "I" first becomes an "I" in this relationship with a "Thou". There exists no "I" in and with itself. The basic purpose in the human existence is the actual relationship. The spirit, the human reality, is not in the "I" (as New Age and personal development claim), but between I and Thou. First in this *between* is Man's way of being constituted. The relationship with the Thou is in this way the mirror in which the "I" can discover itself. The relationship is a philosophical sparring partner.

In accordance with Buber, then the whole of the human existence goes off in the tension between challenge and reaction, which dialogical seen can be seen as questions and answers. Man becomes spoken to by the eternal Thou, God, through

challenges and what happens to him. But through his reactions and actions he is conversely able to answer this question of the challenge; that is to say: to take the responsibility for his destiny, to answer individually.

So in any challenge you can - if you open yourself for it, and, in complete silence listen to the call of the Thou - hear the eternal Thou ask: "Where are you in thy life?" And by observing your reaction - that is to say: see your destiny in the eyes and discover yourself - you can answer: "Here I am in my life, this is what I am!"

Buber has herewith shown an important philosophical exercise, namely that to see the relationship with the surrounding world as a philosophical sparring partner. Precisely like this functioned also Socrates' method of philosophical dialogue, the so-called Socratic Pedagogy, where Socrates, through his questions, became a mirror in which his dialogue partners could discover themselves through their answers.

Another Jewish philosopher, which we already have mentioned due to his similarities with Krishnamurti's philosophy, is Emmanuel Levinas. He worked, with inspiration from Buber, also with such a communicative thinking. He calls the unique presence in life *The Otherness* (God). The Otherness manifests itself as The Other, or as The Thou. Man can't be understood isolated, but always in a relation with, or in a meeting with "The Other". In the other's face, in thy neighbour's appearance, you meet an unfounded (metaphysical understood) demand about responsibility, which you can't ignore, but of course very well try to drive out.

In Levinas' philosophy it is impossible to remain a spectator to the world. Man, and also language, is constituted by the indispensable connection with the Otherness - (as we remember, then also Niels Bohr said, that it is not us, who are putting reality in order, it is reality which is putting us in order). - The Otherness manifests itself in the other's face. The face calls for you. Your reaction to the face is an answer, and it shows who you are. So it requires the responsibility, that you listen to this call.

Levinas criticizes the traditional effort of philosophy in building up philosophical systems, because precisely the Otherness (the new) opposes the system (the old). That, which is really something else, or different, is in accordance with Levinas The Other, whom you are standing face-to-face with, the other person. This relationship is the foundation of ethics, and not a system. So just like in Buber there also in Levinas is a disposition to a philosophical life-practice.

## **1) Death and Immortality**



The most eyecatching aspect of Man as a natural being is, that we have a body, and that we with the body are a part of the rest of nature. With his body Man is a subject to the laws of nature. This you see in old age where the body goes in decay, goes in dissolution, often under tragic circumstances.

We are subjects, knowers; how can we make that same reality an object, a thing known? Yet we must. What knowledge may not be able to do, nature does. Death puts life into question. Death forces us to think, prods us to become wise, as nothing else does. Kreeft says that the most quoted quotation of the most quoted man (besides Shakespeare) in English literature, [Doctor Johnson](#), reads: “When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.”

Of all physical evils, death is the worst, the final one, the sum of them all, the loss of all earthly goods. But as Kreeft says: “Yet it also is the *best* thing for us if it is the door to Heaven”. Abolishing death by artificial immortality would make us all into rotten eggs. We are designed to hatch. And if our culture’s new *summum bonum*, the “conquest of nature”, is pushed to its apotheosis of the conquest of death, we will see stunning parallels between Sauron and ourselves. There is a natural connection between this point about death and the previous one about the two magics and the spiritual danger of technology. Death is nature’s trump card. Until death is conquered, nature is not conquered. And that is the point we have cracked now. We are on the brink of the last frontier, as Kreeft says, our Crack of Doom.

Readers are almost always surprised when they learn that Tolkien himself considered the fundamental theme of *The Lord of the Rings* to be death and immortality: “I do not think that even Power and Domination is the real center of my story...The real theme for me is about something much more permanent and difficult: Death and Immortality” (*Letters*, no. 186, p. 246).

Richard Purtill comments wisely on this surprise:

*This statement by the author of the story must be taken seriously, but it is surprising, and at first we are inclined to resist accepting it. Very few of the characters die in the story. There is little talk of death or immortality, and there is certainly no description of or description on a life after death. Once we start thinking along these lines, however, we can see that there is perhaps more emphasis on death than we thought at first: The Barrow-wights, the Dead Aragorn leads from the Paths of the Dead, the dead Elves and Men Frodo and Sam see in the Dead Marshes, and even the Black Riders are all reminders of death. Boromir, Denethor, Théoden, and Gollum all die in scenes important to the plot; Gandalf and Frodo both seem to have died at key points in the action. Furthermore, some of the important images in the story could be*

*taken as death images: the blasted land of Mordor, the destruction of the Ring, the passage over the Western Sea.*

*About immortality, however, Tolkien at first seems to have almost nothing to say...But...Tolkien is a writer who achieves many of his most important effects by indirection, and what is most important to him is often not stated but underlies the whole story. As he says of religion “the religion element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism”.*

If the reader at first does not realize the centrality of death to the story, and then later, upon reflection, does, Tolkien himself seems to have gone through the same two stages of awareness. He writes that “it is only in the reading the work myself...that I become aware of the dominance of the theme of Death” (*Letters*, no. 208, p. 267). Aware not only of false immortality, “the hideous peril of confusing true ‘immortality’ with limitless serial longevity”.

Like the two magics, the two immortalities are opposites. With false immortality, as life’s quantity approaches infinity its quality approaches zero. Gandalf explains, “A mortal, Frodo, who keeps one of the Great Rings does not die, but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues until at last every minute is a weariness...He fades...Sooner or later the dark power will devour him” (*LOTR*, p. 46). In another letter, Tolkien explicitly connects this point with the one of the two magics: “to attempt by device or ‘magic’ to recover longevity is thus a supreme folly and wickedness for ‘mortals.’ Longevity or counterfeit ‘immortality’...is the chief bait of Sauron – it leads the small to a Gollum, and the great to a Ringwraith” (*Letters*, no. 212, p. 286).

However, Tolkien does not condemn the desire for true immortality, and immortality consonant with our nature and our destiny as designed by a wise divine providence, as distinct from the depraved desire for a false and unnatural immortality under our own foolish control. In “On Fairy-Stories” he says that the highest purpose of fantasy, or the fairy tale, is the satisfaction of deep desires, and most especially the desire for immortality, “the oldest and deepest desire, the Great Escape: the Escape from Death...Almost I would venture to assert that all complete fairy-stories must have it...The *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function” (pp. 67-68).

The “good catastrophe” is clear in “Leaf by Niggle”, a fairy tale about death. Niggle’s train journey is so obviously one of death that it is impossible not to see the story as an allegory. And the eucatastrophe is clearly true immortality, or Heaven, attained through self-giving, self-aggregation, and purgation – in fact, not a bad

description of the “moral lesson” of *The Lord of the Rings*. This moral truth is not as simple, as clear, or as allegorical in *The Lord of the Rings* as it is in “Leaf by Niggle”, but that does not mean that it is not present.

Kreeft says that two opposite kinds of death are required to attain two opposite kinds of immortality. The false immortality requires the death of conscience. The real immortality requires the death of egotism. We can see this most clearly on the Hobbit level, in the contrast between Frodo and Gollum. Both physically die: Gollum at the Crack of Doom, Frodo by taking ship at the Grey Havens. But Gollum has died to his conscience, his soul, for the sake of his ego’s craving for the Ring. Frodo has renounced possession of the Ring, and thus of his ego (for that is the Ring’s power over him; that is why it has no power over Tom Bombadil). At the Crack of Doom it is not Frodo who falls into the fire of hell but Gollum, the incarnation of Frodo’s false self, the ego that craves the false immortality of power over everything, even death.

Kreeft says that we could call this theme “good versus bad death”, death of the self (ego) versus death of the soul. Kreeft claims that it is also a central theme of one of the greatest books of the nineteenth century: *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoyevsky insisted that John 12:24 (“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”) be placed before his story, and he quoted it twice within the story. The point is not simply “Don’t be egoistical, be unselfish.” It is much more mysterious and wonderful than that. It is that he who voluntarily loses his life, gives up life, for others, *will save it*, and he who chooses to cling to his life, for others will lose it. When we try to be the lords of our own life, the life we cling to as our own is a miserable shadow of the true life that the true Lord wants to give us. But that life is so large and inconceivable that we cannot receive it unless our hands and minds are open, unless we give up our toys, our egos, our Rings.

Clearly this is the strange, surprising, even scandalous Christian vision of immortality: the road to immortality is the death of the ego. The pre-Christian classical world could conceive immortality only in an Olympian way, as an eternalizing of our natural human life and desires, not qualitatively transformed but only quantitatively amplified by unlimited longevity and power. Kreeft says that our culture still lives by three dreams of immortality from paganism, only one of which is consonant with Christianity. One dream is the ancient longing to become gods by moral heroism, like Oedipus. Another is the longing to become like gods by cleverness, like Odysseus. (The modern version of cleverness is science and technology). The third is the Christian promise of immortality by the drowning of baptism, by being born again in blood and water from the Cross.

Sigmund Freud was a famous and influential critic of the Christian dream, but even he admits the failure of the pagan one. In *Civilization and Discontents*, he lays out this puzzle: (1) all men desire happiness; (2) all gods are only dreams born of wishful thinking; (3) modern man has left his gods behind because he has become a god himself, having fulfilled in his own person, and by his own scientific cleverness and technological power, the ancient dreams that gave birth to the fairy-tale fantasies of religion; yet (4) modern man is not happier than ancient man. In fact, he is probably unhappier. And Freud does not know why.

Kreeft says that Tolkien's heroes are crypto-Christians. They do not know, believe, mention, wonder about, or allegorize Christian doctrine. But they exemplify exactly what life would be like if the Christian claims are true, especially its central paradox about immortality through death and resurrection of the self, self-realization through self-sacrifice. Frodo gives himself up for the Shire, and for Middle-earth, but accepting the burden of the Ring and not lusting after it. It is this death, this self-abnegation, that is precisely the central point about death that Tolkien is making. It is not just Frodo's courage and suffering, the inner torment of Frodo's soul ascending Mount Doom; that is part of pagan wisdom too. It is not just Frodo's incurable sadness and his inability to enjoy the Shire that he is left with afterward; that too is part of the pagan tragic wisdom. Nor is it just the sad necessity for Frodo to take ship from Middle-earth forever at the end: that too is simply the pagan wisdom of "know-thyself" mortality. Those are all images of what Kierkegaard calls "the knight of infinite resignation" rather than "the knight of faith". Rather, in *The Lord of the Rings* we find the uniquely Christian kind of death, as our incorporation into *that*. For Tolkien believes that "the greatest examples of the action of the spirit and of reason are in *abnegation*" (*Letters*, no. 186, p. 246). If this is not so, Jesus Christ was not the greatest man who ever lived but a failure and a fool. And so are all His followers, especially the saints.

The depraved desire for a false and unnatural immortality under our own foolish control is the Ego. The ego is the One Ring. And the Ego has to do with identity. Is the Ego our true identity?

## **2) Identity and identification**

The question *Who am I?*, is old in philosophy, and in philosophy as an art of life it is perhaps the most central. The returning meditation technique for the Indian philosopher Ramana Maharshi, was all the time to ask himself the question "*Who am I?*" to everything that happened him.

In traditional Western philosophy they have more been occupied by the question about, what it is that does, that you, through all changes, are the same. They have identified identity with the Ego, or the self, which it also is called.

(Here it is on its place to emphasize, that I don't discriminate between the Ego and the self, in the way, which others do. The ego is for example intimately connected with the painbody, and is therefore also an ontological entity, not only a psychological phenomena. Popular concepts, such as personal development and self-development, is therefore to me about the same, namely about the development and unfolding of the Ego).

And they have seeked the permanent in the Ego/the self. The whole of the Ego's activity is namely precisely about seeking permanence, about maintaining itself through all changes. This is the root of false immortality.

In Descartes' thinking is lying - in good compliance with tradition - the answer, that I am a thinking thing: *I think, therefore I am*. I am in other words an immaterial reality or substance, a constant self, contrary to the changeable material reality. And everything I can establish of properties in myself - for instance all the different kinds of consciousness in, that I think, feel, want, sense etc. - are properties in this substance.

However the philosopher David Hume takes this view up to consideration, and he rejects it. We all use the word "I" and think, that it has an importance, that we have a conception about the self. But if we look deeper into it, it is an illusion. Because which impression, which sensation, should the idea about the self be derived from? Hume claims, that if he uses his introspective method, then all he finds in himself, is a constant stream of impressions and conceptions. Nowhere exists an impression of an immaterial substance, of a constant self. This is based on an outside-an-in perspective which only are looking after quantitative element. Hume simply doesn't look after the most evident fact of all: the inside-an-out perspective, the qualitative experience from inside and out.

This leads us to the next question: Is there at all anything eternal and unchangeable in us: an inborn nature, a soul, or some gene, which are not touched by the changing circumstances? Do we have a permanent (immortal) identity? You could perhaps to this say, that that to identify yourself with something, apparently is a permanent element of the brain's function. That it is a permanent element will say, that it is something unavoidably and lasting. But is it true?

Any state of thoughts (or images) can assuredly be changed. Only the brain's strong, persistent demand for physical safety for the organism, is something inherent. The brain has constructed symbols in order to protect the Ego; that is what the whole of the thoughtprocess is all about. The Ego is a symbol, a manifestation of a self-image, not a reality. Here the Buddhists would agree with Hume, even though the self-image, according to Buddhism, is an expression of something much deeper than Hume came to realize.

After the thought has created the symbol, the Ego, the perspective – then the thought is identifying itself with this, its image, its conclusion, with the formula, and protects it. From there origins all unreality and absence. It is to have your identity in an absence, an existential fall, something unnatural, and not something natural.

The feeling of the permanent consists in the condensed reactions; that is: the body, the feeling, the perception, the desires, and the consciousness. The feeling arises as a result of a challenge, and then you give it a name, which will say that you identify yourself with it. This, that we give it a name, restores the feeling in our images of life, the past pattern, which repeats itself again and again; which maintains the reactions and condenses them. Consequently an aspect of Man as a natural being.

If you don't give the feeling a name - which will say, that you don't identify yourself with it and maintain it through evaluations - then the feeling is new, and it will disappear by itself. If it gets a name, it will gain strength, it will become permanent, and then we have the whole of the thoughtprocess.

The namegiving happens through evaluations: to say yes and no, to justify and condemn, to comment, compare, accept and deny. Conversely it means, that when you only observe events or feelings neutral, then you don't give them any name. You will then be able to see how they come and go, blossom and wither away, without that they become maintained in the memory.

The memory consists of multifold experiences, which have been named, identified, and it is this process, which creates the Ego, the inner spectator, theorist, doubter. The Ego is tied to time and its images.

The difficulty for humans is lying in, that they identify themselves with their problems, and that the identification prevents the stream of thoughts and feelings. So with identification is here meant: assumption or denial, condemnation or comparison - which distorts the understanding.

But identification also creates anxiety. The anxiety is persistent as long as you escape from what you are. That you are altogether identified with something, with a person or with an idea, doesn't mean, that you have discovered a final refuge, because this anxiety always lives in the background. It appears in dreams, when the identification temporarily has stopped; and there is always such a break in the identification process, unless you are out of balance.

What you as a Life Artist must study, understand and neutralize, is the Ego's time-binding characteristic, which identifies itself with the memories: the false immortality. Strong demands, especially the lustful, is about achieving something for the Ego, and it is the memories, which gives "me and my" an identified continuation. The thinking, which always is in motion, always streaming, becomes, when it identifies itself with me and my, time-binding, and gives identified continuation to memory, to the Ego. It is this memory - which always grows and increases - you must give up in self-abnegation.

It is this memory – which is the cause of imitation, of thoughts, that are travelling from the known to the known, from perspective to perspective – which in that way hinders the realization of truth, the creation, which unfolds itself in the middle of the stream of life, the spring of the unknown, the actual unmoved mover - because it in its self-centred becoming something, places itself outside.

Your world-image is inseparably connected with your self-image. The self-image manifests itself as a certain perspective, so that everything you are seeing, is your own perspective. The world-image is a projection of yourself, only you divide yourself from it, in the formation of the Ego.

What Man identifies himself with, is always the self-projected, whether it is the highest, the state, or the family. The identification is, regardless on what plane it takes place, a process of the Ego. Identification with the greater is still a projection of the small, and reverse. What you identify yourself with, when you identify yourself with the greater, is the idea. The idea is the Ego identified with for instance God or the state. But such an identified action only creates more discord, larger confusion, distress and misery.

The musician identifies his ego with what he thinks is beautiful music, and the religious identifies his ego with what he thinks is the great. They are all skilled within their special small fields, but often the rest of the extensive area of life passes them by.

The reason is that you seek philosophical safety - that is: meaning and foundation of life - alone in the idea about what you are concerned with, without having the whole of your way of life and being with you in it. But to be willing to have philosophical safety only in an idea, is to deny the physical safety. Why?

If you for instance want to be philosophical safe as a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, with all the traditions, the supernatural conceptions and ideas, you identify yourself with the larger group, which feels as a great security. You therefore worship the flag, the nation, the tribe, and divide yourself from the rest of the world. And it is clearly that this division develops physical insecurity. When you worship the nation, the customs, the religious dogmas, the superstition - you limit yourself historical within these categories, and then you must of course deny all other people physical safety.

Man is in need of physical safety. But this is made impossible in the very moment he seeks philosophical safety in an idea. This is a fact, not an opinion. When you seek safety through your family, your wife, your children, your home, and the implicated ideas about all this - me and my family, the family ideals - you must be opposed to the rest of the world, you must differentiate from other families, be against everyone else in the world. This is a naked fact. You don't need to be special aware in order to discover all the conflicts in relation to other families. And just try to see how many conflicts your own family is creating if you try to get out of the role, which this family has induced you with.

This is important to understand, because we are so used to observe life in fragments. And as long as this division in fragments continues, we will also have the demand about the fulfilment of the Ego; the Ego, which wants to unfold, to achieve something, compete, be ambitious. It is this fragmentation of life that makes us both individualistic and collectivistic, self-centered at the same time as we are in need of identifying ourselves with something greater, while we remains separated. It is this deep division in the consciousness, in the whole build-up, and nature, of our beings, which leads to a division of our activities, our thinking and feelings. In this way we divide life, and what we call to live and to die.

Therefore our actions always rest on an idea, a principle, a belief, a conclusion, and therefore on hope or despair, because the thinking has sucked life out of the present, of our way of life. If you have an idea, an ideal, you adjust yourself after this ideal; you distance yourself from your own action, relate surprised or evaluating to it. Your actions become absent from the world, or you become yourself absent from the action. This disproportion between the ideal and the action is time, the past's and the future's displacement and reflections.



You say: "Some day I will become this ideal". You think, that by identifying yourself with the ideal, then the ideal one fine day will act and there won't be any division between the action and the ideal. But what is it, that in reality happens, when you have this ideal, and the action, which tries to approach the ideal? What happens in this break of time? There is an inner contradiction, which leads to hypocrisy. You are angry and the ideal says: "You must not be angry". Therefore you suppress, control, adjust yourself, in an attempt to approach the ideal, and therefore you all the time are in a condition of conflict, you are pretending. The idealist is a person, who is pretending. In this division there is also conflict.

You can identify yourself with the poor or the rich, with a house, a family, a country, or the whole of the planet – it is one of the tricks Man uses in order to simulate unity. Identity begins with the Ego, the Egocentric person. Then the feeling of identity can expand to family and society, a sociocentric identity. And the identity can expand to embrace the planet – a planetarian identity.

Identification with something is one of the most hypocritical conditions. To identify yourself with a group in the name of unity, and still remain alone, is one of the favorite tricks of Man, in order to deceive loneliness. Or you identify yourself with your belief in such extreme degree, that you are this belief. And that is a neurotic condition.

Man identifies himself with the greater in order to get a feeling of safety, unity or power. This greater covers a wide and indefinite area, for instance could a broad spectrum of common human activities and organizations be called the greater: families, parties, state formations, wars, work communities, concerts, clans, tribes and sects, mass psychological phenomena, religious parishioners, fashion streams, group souls.

Such enormous common human undertakings are collective energy- or life processes, in which there are great powers in action in the form of the collective images in time.

These powers are often used with quite specific intensions, precisely because that the collective world-image - the energies in the object-field - is inseparably connected with the self-image, the subject-field. The forces can then be turned into the Ego, the images can be used in order to open creative channels, create super egos, create political leaders and popular seducers such as Hitler and Stalin. This is a demonical element. And the archetypical popular seducer is of course Lucifer, who fascinated Milton, Romanticism, Baudelaire, etc. He haunts in figure of Prospero in

Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as Mefistoteles in Goethe's *Faust*, or as Conchis in John Fowles' *The Magus*. All this is the power of the One Ring.

As a Life Artist you must push this desire aside, the desire after identifying yourself with a person or an idea or a thing. This doesn't lead to harmony, unity or love. The question then becomes: can you break out of this frame? How this shall take place in philosophy as an art of life, can't be answered with a method, the answer rather consists in a voyage of discovery, which perhaps can open the door; just like Faust, who unwraps himself from Mefistoteles' word-web, by making a journey through it, without knowing where it brings him. And, like Frodo.

To have your identity in an absence is to have your identity in your country, your furniture, your images, your ambitions, your respectability, your race, your peculiarities and prejudices, your obsessions. Through all this Man wants to discover truth, God, reality. And because Man doesn't know how he shall disentangle from all this, he invents something, an outside power, or he gives life a special meaning. But this is precisely unreality and false immortality.

When you as a Life Artist therefore understand the nature of the thought – not on a linguistical plane, but actually is the thought present in passive listening – and you have a prejudice, then you observe it and feel it. You will then see, that your faith-conceptions, your images of life, are prejudices. That you identify yourself with your country is a prejudice.

Mankind have so many opinions, so many prejudices; what it is about for the Life Artist is to observe only one of them completely, with the whole of your Soul, with heart and mind and in love – to be interested in it without seeking to achieve anything with it, observing it without saying yes and no. And then you will see how it is to live without prejudices of any kind. It is only a mind, which is without prejudices and without discord, that can see what truth is.

That identity has with Man as a natural being to do, is due to, that identity is closely connected with the fact, that we as natural beings shall die. When we speak about life we usually mean life as a continuation-process, where there happens an identification. When we say life, we often mean I and my house, I and my wife, I and my bank account, I and the experiences I have collected. To live is therefore a process whereby something is continued in memory, conscious as unconscious, with the multifold struggles of the process, all the quarrels, episodes, experiences. It is all this we call life. Opposite is standing death, which means, that all this is being brought to an end. Therefore we create an opposition, life and death. Life is the known, the

perspective we have created on the background of the images of time. Death is the unknown, the landscape that can't be mapped.

Identity as some images of life, as experience, belief and knowledge, as a striving after becoming something, a will to power, a will to control, master, frame, no matter on what level, is hard to understand and bring up in the light. We only know continuity, we have no knowledge about non-continuity. We know the experiences, the memories about the continuity of the events, but the condition where there no continuity is, we don't know. We call it death, the unknown, the secretiveness etc., and by giving it a name, we hope to be able to maintain it, which again is the desire after continuity, the permanent.

We are afraid of ending up, physical ending up and becoming separated from the things we have owned, worked for, experienced – our wife or husband, the house, the furniture, the tiny garden, the books, and the poems we have written or hoped to be able to write. We are afraid of letting go of all this, because we have identified ourselves with the furniture, the paintings we own, and if you have a talent for playing violin, then you have identified yourself with the violin. We have identified ourselves with these things in a degree, that it is all we have, nothing more. It is our foundation of life, and therefore this identification process is something philosophical.

As a Life Artist you must look at the problem in this way: you have identified yourself with the house – and also with the shutters, the bedroom, the furniture, which you in years carefully have polished – this is all you are. If it altogether is taken away from you, you are nothing. And this is what you fear – nothing to be: the nihilistic moment.

Is it not highly peculiar, that you in forty years go to the office and work, and when you stop working, you get a heart failure and die? You have identified yourself with the office, the card index, the computer, the director, or the clerk, or whatever your profession is; that is all you are, and nothing more. And you have a lot of ideas about God, goodness, truth, and about how the society should be arranged – that is all. Your thinking is not included in your being, and in your way of life. It is a pure intellectual safety. Therefore there is in this relationship sadness.

And it is, as a Life Artist, a big sadness to realize that that is what you are. But not to realize it is the greatest sadness. And then death becomes terrible, as Tolstoj has depicted it in *Ivan Iljitsch' Death*. Ivan Iljitsch is lying in the deathbed and can't let go of life because of mortal dread. He screams three days and nights through. Not until he realizes, that the life he'd lived, hadn't been an actual life, yes, that he in fact

never has lived at all, not until then he can let go of life, and reconcile himself with death.

What it is about, is to see this, and find out what it means to die.

So what is death? How can you find out without that it only is a belief you adopt? Is it possible to be death present in passive listening, not another's death, but your own death? It demands that you don't identify yourself with something, what of course is very difficult. Most of us identify ourselves with our furniture, with our house, with our wife or husband, with our government, with our country, with the image we have of ourselves, and we identify ourselves with something greater – the world-image, which perhaps is a tribal feeling that expands to embrace the nation; or you identify yourself with a special property, a special image.

Not to identify yourself with your furniture, with your knowledge and experiences, with your technical skill and your technological knowledge as scientist or engineer, to bring all identification to an end, is, as the saints say, a kind of death. It is immortality through death and resurrection of the self, self-realization through self-sacrifice. Frodo gives himself up for the Shire, and for Middle-earth, by accepting the burden of the Ring and not lusting after it. It is this death, this self-abnegation, that is precisely the central point about death that Tolkien is making.

If you do that, you will discover what it will say: no bitterness, no hopelessness, no desperation, but a heart that opens itself for a wonderful feeling, and a mind which is completely free so that it can observe without distortion. Only in this condition can Man seriously live in presence and reality, without that there is any opposition between life and death.

The way you conceive, is what you are. If you are calculating and evaluating, you have your identity in an absence, your identity has moved outside your surroundings, or outside yourself, in some sense you have the essential outside yourself, because you relate evaluating to it. You are a spectator, a theorist, a doubter, or a dreamer, in relation to your own life. There is sliding emptiness and loss, reflections and darkness, in between the observer and the observed.

But if there no inner spectator, doubter or calculator is, then you put the contradiction between the observer and the observed completely out of the game, and with that you also abolish any kind of will to power; you abolish the One Ring. However, this does not mean, that you just accept the problems, or identify yourself with them. Both acceptance and identification are in themselves evaluations, and will to power.

Let's take a Taoist monk, who is sitting and is meditating on a tree, which is the most objective thing. He sees it completely, with the heart and the mind, and that will say: without that there is an inner calculator, without any displacement between the observer and the observed. He is one with the observed.

But this doesn't mean, that he identify himself with the tree, he doesn't become the tree, which would be all too absurd. But that he is the tree present in passive listening, means that he is seeing and feeling it, without that there is any displacement, reflections, or outdistances, between him and the tree; the division which is created by the Ego, the inner spectator, with his knowledge, with his thinking, with his preconceived opinion about the tree, with his anger, jealousy, desperation or hope.

When the monk is the tree present, then he sees it as in a mirror without saying yes and no, and feels it incisively without seeking to achieve anything with it. He is self-forgetful open for it, and engaged by it. The tree fills him out in a presence of something, which not is hidden. It is a presence of something obvious, something he has a clear understanding of. It is a presence of something straightforward, a presence in naturalness. In this presence he has his identity. To have your identity in a presence is to exist for real. Reality is a being, which is middle, is fill up, which is lying in light. And in this presence he sees the whole of the tree. He sees the universal tree.

In the same way you can grasp human problems. Insight in our problems only arises when we are the whole of the process of consciousness present in passive listening; that will say: when we are aware of ourselves without saying yes and maintaining, and without pushing away and saying no; without commenting, choosing what is right or wrong, prioritising or sorting, but are allowing the problem to be precisely as it is.

When you are yourself present, you will see, that through this passivity – which not is indolence, which not is sleep, but the utmost awakeness – the problem gets a quite other meaning, or said differently: you no longer identify yourself with the problem through presumption or denial, judgment or comparison, but let go of it. And therefore the problem can begin to reveal its content. If you can do this constantly, continuously, all human problems could be solved, not only superficial, but completely.

But the difficulty is precisely, that most of us are unable to listen in passive presence, unable to let the problem talk for itself, without that we immediately interpret it and thereby distance ourselves from it, and become it absent in evaluations.

We don't know how we unprejudiced can observe a problem. We want to deduce a result of the problem, we want an answer, we have set us a goal when we seek to solve it; and we try to interpret the problem from our joy or pain; or we already have an answer to how the problem can be treated. In this way we begin to tackle with the problem, which always is new, and treat it from an old pattern, our images of life. And in that way we are the problem absent, we are outside it as theorists, and then you have the opposition between the observer and the observed. And this is to have your identity in an absence.

### 3) The Will to Power

The One Ring is the will to power. The will to power is desire. You can say, that there are three main forms of desire: sensuality, worldliness and personal immortality: 1) Sensuality is the satisfaction of the senses. 2) Worldliness is the desire after progress and wealth. 3) Personal immortality is the personal power and fame.

This painful conflict between good and evil, hope and fear, love and hate, the observer and the observed, has arisen from our striving after achieving something, acquiring something, becoming something. And this striving gives itself expression in sensuality, in worldliness, or in aspiration after personal fame and immortality. So, we create the conflict through our aspiration.

This is one of the most remarkable themes in philosophical anthropology, and one that flabbergasts and discombobulates many people, rather like Plato's Theory of Ideas in metaphysics. The point is that the self is not a given, an object, whose essential nature is unchangeable. Triangles can never be non-triangular, and rocks are always guaranteed to be rocky, grass grassy, and dogs doggy – but humans can be inhuman. We alone can fail to achieve our nature. Our nature is a task to achieve, not a fact to receive.

The existentialist philosophers have emphasized this theme the most, and some (notable Sartre) have attached to it questionable corollaries: that we have no essence, or meaning, that life therefore is meaningless, that we must create our own values, that we are gods, and that all conformity and receptivity are threatening and dehumanizing to our freedom. But the point does not require any of those corollaries. It is quite traditional and is as old as Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*:

*Whatever is must also be [ontologically] good. And it follows from this that whatever loses its goodness ceases to be. Thus wicked men cease to be what they were... To give oneself to evil... is to lose one's human nature. Just as virtue can raise a person*

*above human nature, so vice lowers those whom it has seduced from the condition of men beneath human nature. For this reason, anyone whom you find transformed by vice cannot be counted a man [or a Hobbit: Gollum is an ex-Hobbit, a failed Hobbit, as the orcs are ex-elves, and the Ringwraiths are ex-men, or un-men]...The man who is driven by avarice...is like a wolf; the restless, angry man who spends his life in quarrels you will compare to a dog. The treacherous conspirator who steals by fraud may be likened to a fox; the man who is ruled by intemperate anger is thought to have the soul of a lion. The fearful and timid man who trembles without reason is like a deer; the lazy, stupid fellow is like an ass. The volatile, inconstant man who continually changes direction is like a bird; the man who is sunk in foul lust is trapped in the pleasures of a filthy sow. In this way, anyone who abandons virtues ceases to be a man, since he cannot share in the divine nature, and instead becomes a beast.*

We cannot help desiring to be other than we are because we do not yet have our true being; we can gain it or lose it. Our very being is trembling, not stable. We can lose our selves. Nothing else can. The scary about the Mythology of Authenticity is that it directly helps people to lose their selves. The 666 Conspiracy. I will return to this in the chapter on Philosophy of History.

This innate desire, this reaching beyond ourselves, can lead us to our true selves and to God, our Author. But it can also lead down darker paths of desire: idolatry and fetishism. When the object we desire is God, or that which God is (truth, goodness, and beauty), the object is not possessable. And paradoxically, only then are we fulfilled, when we do *not* possess the object we desire but it possesses us. But when we make anything other than God our object of desire, when our goal is possessable, we are undone. This dark path began in Eden. Once we laid hands on the fruit we desired, the horrible effect took place immediately: it laid its hands on us. The self was “unselfed” – not filled but emptied, not enhanced but devastated. The object grew into a god, and we shrank into slaves. We exchanged places: we became the objects, the its, and it became the subject, the Ego. We found our identity in what was less than ourselves, in what we could possess. We were possessed by our possession, or by our possessiveness. We who began as the Adam (Man) became the golem, the “Un-man”.

Frodo and Sam illustrate one half of this paradox, Gollum the other. Frodo and Sam attain and save their selves because they give themselves away for others, for the world. And not for some abstract cause but for each other and for the Shire. In contrast, Gollum is obsessed with his “cause”: possessing the Ring. His selfishness is no self-devouring that he almost has no self left. He talks to himself more than to others; he often makes no distinction between himself and his “Precious”; he is

confused about who he is. He speaks of himself in the third person. (“Don’t let them hurt us, Precious!”) It is the Ring that is now the Precious, and Gollum has lost his preciousness, his value. He has become its slave, and it has become his master. In fact it has become the self, the person, the subject, the actor, and Gollum has become its passive object, its IT. He has placed his soul inside the fetish (as Sauron did when he made the Ring), so that without it his soul is literally torn into two. He is nothing without the Ring. He cannot distinguish himself from the Ring. He *is* the Ring. The person become a thing. He has lost his soul.

When Sauron forged the Ring, he put into it some of his power, and therefore some of his identity, since power is what he identified with, or found his identity in. Thus for him, as for Gollum, to lose the Ring is to lose his self. And one who has lost his self, who has only emptiness and ashes for his self, will always demand to reduce all other selves to emptiness and ashes. This is why Sauron must reduce all Middle-earth to ashes: to *his* ashes, to himself.

And this is what we do whenever we “identify with” our *stuff*.

Sauron is uncomfortable familiar. He is only an exaggeration, a caricature, an enlargement of ourselves or, rather, of one possibility for ourselves. Down that road we find the Lieutenant of the Black Gate of Barad-dur: “His name is remembered in no tale; for he himself had forgotten it, and he said: ‘I am the Mouth of Sauron’” (LOTR, p. 870).

Just as there are two opposite magics in *The Lord of the Rings*, there are two opposite longings, or deep desires. There is, of course the desire to possess the Ring; and that corresponds to the magic of power, and technology. More subtly and sweetly, there is also another desire, a longing whose object cannot be defined, much less possessed. This longing sweeps through *The Lord of the Rings* like a wind over the sea. In fact, the sea is one of its symbols, especially for Legolas (see LOTR, p. 935), as it was for Tolkien and many island-dwelling Englishmen. We talked about this longing already in the beginning of the chapter on Metaphysics: the longing after the Great Vision.

Tolkien himself was haunted by a recurrent dream of the sea. He speaks of

*My Atlantis-haunting. This legend or myth or dim memory of some ancient history has always troubled me. In sleep I had the dreadful dream of the ineluctable Wave, either coming out of the quite sea, or coming in towering over the green islands. It still occurs occasionally, though now exorsized by writing about it. It always ends by surrender, and I awake gasping out of the deep water (Letters, no. 257, p. 347).*



Any mystic or any surfer would understand that. Of course it is not literally the sea, or the wave, but the thing they symbolize. And that is obviously God, and Heaven or Paradise, or union with God. It is no accident that when Lewis writes about an unfallen planetary Eden, it is an ocean planet of floating islands that must be ridden like waves.

Let us look closer at the two kinds of longings, which we could call the will to power and passion.

In his book *The Good Life* 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 personal development movement. 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. But 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 lives 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; what we earlier have examined in the section about the will to power. This is the desire for the One Ring: the will to power.

To understand and be free from self-assertion, and to do something, which you really love to do – regardless what it is, how small or how little remarkable it is – awakens a spirit of greatness, which never is seeking others' approval or reward, and which do a thing for its own sake, and therefore possesses strength and ability not to lie under for mediocre influences. That is the other desire, namely passion.

Because it is not self-assertion when you do something you love to do. When you write and paint – not because you want prestige, but because you love to write and paint – it is assuredly not self-assertion. Self-assertion occurs when you compare yourself with other writers or artists, when you want to distance them. This would be the will to power, and the will to power is self-assertion. But it is not self-assertion, when you do something, because you really love to do it. This is passion. And passion is love.

Will to power and passion is in this way two different things. The will to power is feeded by the thought, is stimulated by the thought, it grows and becomes a reality in the thinking, until it is bursting in its own violent forms of fulfilment. Passion is something entirely different; passion is not a thought-product, nor the memory about a past incident. Its dynamic is not due to a lack of fulfilment, and it has nothing to do with boredom. It has something to do with joy of life and self-forgetfulness, which not are lust.

In lust (which can't be compared with philosophical refined pleasure) there always is an ingenious form of striving – there is sought, hunted, requested, fought – so that you can preserve it, achieve it. In passion there is not the slightest lack of fulfilment, and therefore there can neither be disappointment or pain. Passion is freedom from the Ego, the centre for all lack of fulfilment. Passion requires nothing, because it is.

Passion is the strict simplicity of self-forgetfulness, in which there is no ego, that places itself outside life. Therefore passion is the innermost essence of life. It is that which is moving, creating and living. But when the thought introduces all the problems – to acquire, have and preserve – then passion ceases. Without passion there can't be created, and everything goes in dissolution. Precisely what happens in society today.

#### **4) Existential guilt and the True Calling of Life**

Why have human beings lost this passion? Have human beings lost it because they use too much energy on self-assertion - because their eternal self-evaluations are sucking life out of the present, transforming the self-image into reality and the reality into emptiness? This vampire-like life, where the life-urge, or the vitality, slowly is reduced, crumbled, dissolved, and where ennui and boredom make the whole of the world of Man, and Man himself, empty, waste and dark.

Stagnation is in its actual form blocking, fixation, paralysing. Stagnation is a lack of ability to, or possibility for, being fully alive. Life ends, is stopping up, of irrelevant reasons. Stagnation leads to obduracy, drying, lifelessness. There comes something grey, sad, colourless, monotonous, over the individual person's life. The same is applying for the individual person's world. Stagnation is connected with, that also the world, or parts of it, becomes grey, sad or monotonous: the invasion of Mordor. Lifelessness in the individual person corresponds with a life-lessness in his world. Habits and tedious repetitions take over life. The life rhythm decays to stereotypy. The individual person is fixated in specific patterns.

Another utterance of stagnation is officiousness, restlessness, busy-ness. So these are not a positive alternative to stagnation, but an outside movement, which covers over a lack of inner, of actual movement. Boredom has been connected with lots of problems in the modern society.

We use ourselves over ability by doing things, which basically don't interest us. And at the same time we have still not found out, what we seriously are interested in: our true calling in life. We haven't discovered what our real interest is, and we feel a fundamental disappointment, bitterness, or perhaps rather guilt: the feeling of not

having accomplished our possibilities, the feeling of lack of life-unfolding and unlived life, and the annoyances over this.

It is necessary that you as a Life Artist ask yourself the question about what you are interested in. Not what you *ought* to be interested in, but what really absorbs you. More and more people become interested in finding out. And it is really important that you, with yourself, find out, in which direction your interest goes.

So far you perhaps have tried different things, you have devoted your energy and intelligence to these, but they haven't given you any deep satisfaction, like in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of The Day*, where the ageing butler Stevens realizes, that his loyalty to Lord Darlington has implied, that he himself never really has lived fully. Or you have perhaps burned yourself up by doing things, which didn't had your profound interest, or your real interest is still lying in torpor, and is waiting to be awakened. So which of the two possibilities is then the true?

Many people today have a need of discovering what the truth is concerning this question. If you have burned yourself up, the problem requires a special attitude; but if your fire still is sleeping, then it is important that it becomes awakened. And as a Life Artist it is important that you *yourself* discover the truth, rather than letting another tell you what is true. The truth about what you are, is its own action. If you are burnt-out then it is a question of healing, about recovering, lying fallow in creative sense, like the Virgin Mary State, which Meister Eckhart was talking about. This creative state of fallow follows when you have cultivated and reseeded, it is non-action, which leads to complete action later.

If your real interest not yet has become awakened, and if the prompting to find out is present, then you will find out, not by constantly seeking after an answer, but to be inquiring, clear and warm in your prompting. Then you will see, that when you are awake, there is a sharpened attention in which you receive any hint from the hidden interest, and that dreams also play a part. In other words: the prompting gets the mechanism of discovery to function.

You shall not *seek* your real interest; the real interest will emerge by itself, because you are in a passive listening presence. If you consciously try to find out what your real interest is, there is a danger that you just choose one, weigh it up against another, calculate and judge. This process is only a cultivation of resistance; you use your powers on speculations about whether you have chosen correctly etc. But when there is passive listening, and not a positive effort to find, then the movement of the interest steps into this presence.

If one should suggest a technique, then try to think about the interest as something that can't give you any success, money or power. This technique disarms the Ego in the same way as the monastic vows: poverty, chastity and obedience.

The French philosopher Bergson's philosophy of life is a part of a large-scale world-image, in which all forms of life have their origin in an *élan vital*, a life-upswing, an eternal breeding power. In Bergson, life in all forms is that, which strives up-wards, outwards, still forward – in a fight against the material, against the inertia, which spoils life. That is: a dualism between dynamics and stiffness, or between movement and stagnation.

The Danish life-philosopher Ludvig Feilberg also talks about two forms of life-unfolding. The first is characterized by the possibility-raising life, where you are in a creative condition, characterized by self-forgetfulness, movement and freedom. The other is characterized by the possibility-reducing life, where you are not creative, but controlling, self-evaluating, split and closed.

We know movement and change from the outside world. Existential movement is connected with Man, with identity and personality. It arises in the individual person's relationships with the surrounding world. Movement has to do with human growth and development; it is to be integrated in something, which happens, not in whatever, but in something which folds the essence of Man out, contrary to stagnation and paralysation. It is to have your identity with you in a movement, which fills you, enriches you, favours you, promotes you. Movement is to *be* involved. It is an ontological phenomenon, a characteristic of being, not a phenomenon of consciousness.

Or you can say, that the happy movement is characterized by, that awareness and being go together. Existential movement gives life colour, or it is life in its colour-richness (Middle-earth). It is lifegiving, or it is the identity in its life-given form. Movement creates light in the identity, gets it to light up. There is in it an energy, which is spreading as a live-likeness in the identity. It is the flowering of the essence of Man. The movement is so to speak a radiance of life. It is the thinking, which has been made transparent in being: self-forgetful thinking.

To begin to sense your true interest is a deep vitalizing, an *élan vital*, a new possibility-raising life, a transformation of the inert and possibility-reducing life.

The society is today characterized by a life-philosophical vacuum, a meaning-vacuum. Admittedly we all have a life-philosophy, yes, it is swarming with life-philosophies, but it is philosophies as images of life, not as conduct of life, it is as

theory, not as practice. We have a lot of different ideas, conceptions, world-images, and are in extreme degree analyzing and evaluating. We put incredibly large emphasis on the positive in having a lot of views about everything, and we become more and more self-opinionated and obdurate. We confuse intellectual safety with meaning and coherence. In that way the thinking isolates itself in relation to conduct of life. We achieve intellectual safety at the expense of a meaningful conduct of life. The thinking is emptying the conduct of life for life and presence, and are filling it with boredom and absence.

Today we have no meaning-giving life-practice, no philosophical life-teaching, that has with our conduct of life to do, no philosophical life-practice, which can fill up our conduct of life with life-feeling, reality and presence. We think life and have all possible ideas about it, but it is very difficult for us to live with it in joy and fulfillment. This discrepancy between the thought and the conduct of life has created a kind of meta-pathology: existential problems such as unreality, ennui, boredom, guilt and anxiety.

There is therefore a need of that philosophical life-teaching and practice, which is offered in philosophical counseling. There is a need of philosophers who partly are university educated, partly have a philosophical life-practice; that is to say: philosophers who - like Socrates, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the philosophers in the East - are and live what they think and teach, true teachers, whose thinking is made transparent in being, and who consequently live what they teach.

The function of the mind is to investigate and learn. To learn in philosophical sense doesn't only mean to cultivate the memory, or to accumulate knowledge, but to learn to think clearly and rational without illusions, to start with facts and not with beliefs and ideals. When the thought originates from the conclusion, you learn nothing. Merely to get information or knowledge is not to learn in philosophical sense. To learn in philosophical sense includes love of understanding, and love of doing a thing for its own guilt.

It is the philosophical counselor's job to help the guest to a philosophical life-practice, which again means to help the guest to discover his true calling in life. What does "a true calling" mean? Something you love to do; something, which is natural for you.

What is then the purpose with education? As the Danish philosopher Finn Thorbjørn Hansen says in his book *The Philosophical Life* then the pedagogy in the twentieth century mainly has been dominated by psychology and sociology. That is to say: we have made specialized views of human nature to a starting point for education and

upbringing, and therefore we have put emphasis on specific influences to Man. But Man is much more complex, and to emphasize one influence at the same time as you understate others, has created a lack of balance; it has led to much more confusion and decay. Man is a complete process. In pedagogy there must therefore be an understanding of the Wholeness, and not just a part of it, regardless how important this part sometimes can be. Finn Thorbjørn Hansen says, that we are on the way into "the age of self-formation", and that there is a need for re-creating a thinking and a practice that consider philosophy to be the central discipline of pedagogy.

The purpose of education is to help Man to human growth, so that he can be free from self-assertion, and can find his true calling. And that means, as Finn Thorbjørn Hansen says, that pedagogy becomes a philosophical matter, that pedagogy becomes founded in the pedagogy of art of life.

The self-assertive has never discovered his true calling, because if he had he would not be self-assertive. It is therefore the true teacher's duty to help humans to achieve insight, to be free from anxiety, so that they can find their true calling, their own way of life, the way whereon they really want to live and earn their living.

But in society it is of course not so, because pedagogy is political controlled, therefore the purpose with education is not to create humans, but machines, which can be accommodated to the society, which the politicians want. And the politicians will do everything they can in order to prevent that pedagogy becomes founded in the pedagogy of art of life. Because humans who really have discovered their true calling, will be philosophical rebels, and do what they can completely to break down rotten society-systems; that is to say: models of society that are based on a particular image, or ideology, whether it is of political or religious nature. Such humans will do what they with their essence love to do, either they are gardeners, painters or engineers.

And to do what you really love to do, is not to be self-assertive. To accomplish something wonderful, to do it completely, truly and in compliance with what, you deepest think and feel – is not self-assertive, and in such an act there is no anxiety.

You might have a talent as an author, poet, artist. Which potential you might have, if what you do, is something you really love to do, it is not self-assertion that runs you, but love. And in love there is no self-assertion.

Therefore it is very important, that humans, both younger and older humans, receive the correct help, so that their own reason can be awakened, and so that they can find their true calling. Then you will love what you do life through, and this means, that

there no self-assertion is, no competition, no struggle to achieve prestige or a high position; and then you will maybe be able to create a new world. In this new world will all the ugly the elder generation has created, cease to exist – their wars, their injury, their competition, their intolerant gods, their rituals, which all are meaningless - their strong government power, their violence, etc.

That to be interested in something, is not the same as self-assertion. We can add to the word "self-assertion" multifold meanings. In art of life self-assertion is based on becoming something, and therefore anxiety. But if a boy for instance is interested in becoming an engineer, because he is inclined towards raising beautiful buildings, to create wonderful bridges, to build excellent roads, then this is because he loves that act; and that is not self-assertion. It is an expression of what he is, and therefore there is no anxiety. In love there is no anxiety.

Self-assertion and interest are two different things. If you really are interested in painting, then you love to paint, you don't compete with others in order to become the best, or the most famous, painter. You simply love to paint. Perhaps there is another person who is a better painter than you, but you don't compare yourself with this other. When you paint, you love what you do, and in you this is enough. You are one with what you are, you are fully and completely existing, and the important is present and real.

What you as a Life Artist need, is a reason and a feeling which can provoke a philosophical revolution in your life, so that there no longer are any self-contradictory actions, but a whole, coherent movement. The only revolution is a philosophical revolution; that is: where you rediscover your own true philosophy. Any other revolution is the introduction of an ideology.

In order to, that such a change can occur in your life, there must be both awareness and passion. In order to be able to do something worthwhile at all, you must have this clear awareness and strong passion. In order to be able to understand the act in which there isn't any division, or inner discord, you must have this awareness and passion. Intellectual concepts, or formulars, can't change your way of life; this can only the actual act of *understanding* what you are, and to that is needed both awareness and passion.

Can you as a Life Artist observe yourself, what you are, the violence, the self-assertion etc., with the utmost care; that will say: in passive listening presence? You can only do this if your clarity, your energy, your interest and deepest passion fall together in the moment where you are exposed. In that moment you must have a heart, which is a burning passion after understanding what you are, and you must



have a mind, which doesn't distort what it observes. These things must take place immediately in the moment of unveiling; what means, that you are sensitive enough, and free enough, to have this living energy, intensity and clarity, which fall together in the passive listening presence.

So in order to be able to see the truth you must also be able to feel, you must be endowed by passion after discovering, and having a great energy. When you observe a cloud and the light in this cloud, then there is beauty. Beauty is passion. In order to, that you can see the beauty in a cloud, or the beauty in the light on a tree, there must be passion, there must be intensity. In this intensity - this passion - there is no sympathy or antipathy at all, and therefore not the feelings, which follow these. The intensity is not personal, not yours or mine. When there is lust there is yours or mine. But the mind, which is passively aware, allows life and energy to flow back from the past and the future, into presence and reality. The energy and the life, which are invested in sorrows and bindings, plans and problems, are flowing in, filling the Now, increasing the intensity and the consciousness in the Now.

This opens by itself the heart; being and reality fall together, your life is real, you are self-forgetful wrapped up in beauty; there is no theorist or dreamer within you. You are your activity in the beauty; it is a presence of something, which not is hidden, something obvious, something, you have a clear understanding of. And in this way reason and feeling fall together.

There are literary hundreds of lines in *The Lord of the Rings* that express this longing for something lost, something Edenic. The past haunts the present like an undersea creature that constantly troubles the surface of the water. It is much more than mere nostalgia for "the good old days". It is also more than traditionalism's practical payoff of getting things that are useful for yourself by remembering what was useful for your ancestors. Rather, the past *as such* has a fascination. And this is not because of its content; for if we could return, we would not be fulfilled, we would not find Eden.

It is its very unattainability that makes the past such a powerful symbol of something that is unattainable not because it is past but because it is future, or, rather, transcendent to all history. What is achieved by the "haunting of history" in *The Lord of the Rings* is not nostalgia, but *Sehnsucht*: a longing for the transcendent, the "more".

Already in the second chapter we see it in Frodo:

*Often he wandered by himself, and to the amazement of sensible folk he was sometimes seen far from home walking in the hills and woods under the starlight. Merry and Pippin suspected that he visited the Elves at times, as Bilbo had done...He found himself wondering at times, especially in the autumn, about the wild lands, and strange visions of mountains that he had never seen came into his dreams. He...began to feel restless, and the old paths seemed too well-trodden. He looked at maps, and wondered what lay beyond their edges: maps made in the Shire showed mostly white spaces beyond its borders (LOTR, pp. 41-42).*

It is not clear what is being desired here, but it is “something more”.

The “more” is qualitative, not quantitative. It is a desire for a step up the hierarchy of being, for communion with more exalted beings. It is, in fact, a desire for communion with Elves: “Sam...believed he had once seen an Elf in the wood, and still hoped to see more one day. Of all the legends that he had heard in his early days such fragments of tales and half-remembered stories about the Elves as the hobbits knew, had always moved him most deeply” (LOTR, p. 44).

It is also a desire somehow to transcend ordinary time; this is done in elvish places: Rivendell and Lothlorien (often referred to as Lórien). Bilbo says of Rivendell, “Time doesn’t seem to pass here: it just is. A remarkable place altogether” (LOTR, p. 225). And in Lothlorien,

*Frodo felt that he was in a timeless land that did not fade or change or fall into forgetfulness. When he had gone and passed again into the outer world, still Frodo the wanderer from the Shire would walk there. Frodo stood still, hearing far off great seas upon beaches that had long ago been washed away, and sea-birds crying whose race had perished from the earth (LOTR, p. 342).*

And we too – we readers who have walked into *The Lord of the Rings* as Frodo has walked into Lothlorien – we feel like Sam when he first meets the Elves in the Shire forests: “Sam walked along at Frodo’s side, as if in a dream, with an expression on his face half of fear and half of astonished joy” (LOTR, p. 80).

The sea, the stars, and the Elves seem to be the most powerful catalysts for this desire, or images of this mysterious object. They are the messages from Eternity. The three are connected in the figure of Earendil, the mariner “from Otherworld beyond the Sea”, who “came unto the timeless halls where shining fall the countless years” (LOTR, p. 228-29) and is now revered as “Earendil, the Evening Star, most beloved of the elves” (LOTR, p. 355). It was this name, this single word in an eighth-century

Anglo-Saxon poem “Crist”, that first moved Tolkien to create his myth from which *The Lord of the Rings* grew.

The Elves themselves feel the sea longing. Legolas confesses that “deep in the hearts of all my kindred lies the sea-longing, which it is perilous to stir. Alas! For the gulls. No peace shal I have again under beech or under elm” (LOTR, p. 855).

Kreeft says that the sea is a nearly universal symbol of death. Thus Frodo, like King Arthur, or like the Viking hero, leaves Middle-earth forever *by ship*. There seems to be a fairly obvious connection between this sea love and the desire for something that can be attained only after death.

Kreeft asks: “Did Tolkien deliberately intend that *The Lord of the Rings* should have this *effect* on us? Of course he did. For in “On Fairy-Stories” he explicitly points to this arousal of desire as fantasy’s primary end”.

But desire for what? In “On Fairy-Stories” Kreeft says that Tolkien mentions four aspects of this desire that fairy tales both stimulate and satisfy: fantasy, recovery, escape, and consolation. In one word: it is Paradise. We live in a fallen, broken world. And we remember and long for another. That is why “this world is not enough”, why we have our “lover’s quarrel with the world”. To use Pascal’s image, we are like disinherited princes: if we did not remember our kingly other-worldly glory, why would we be so dissatisfied with this beautiful world? But we are, even (especially!) when it is at its best: in sunsets and stars and storms and symphonies. As Kreeft says:

*Only the Incarnation brings Heaven back to earth. Only Christ fulfils this universal longing. Very subtly, yet very deeply, The Lord of the Rings really points to Christ. That is why its central symbol is the Ring: it is the exact opposite of the Cross.*

In the next chapter we will look at how the New Thought bible A Course in Miracles probably is the most extreme real-life example of the Ring seen in opposition to the Cross.

## 5. Epistemology

Epistemology is that division of philosophy which studies knowledge, not the objects of knowledge, or the content of knowledge, but knowledge itself, how we know, and whether we can attain truth, and if so how. There are many words for “knowledge” in Greek; “epistemology” comes from *episteme*, which means “certain knowledge”.

Epistemology is important because it makes a great difference what kind of knowledge we can trust, if any. Can *any* knowledge be trusted, or must we begin and end with skepticism? Descartes only began with skepticism, as a method (his “universal methodic doubt”); a skeptic ends with it as his final verdict on human knowledge.

Kreeft begins his own chapter on epistemology with an important information. If there is some kind of reliable knowledge, and we do not have to be skeptics, the next question is how we attain it: by reason (rationalism) or sensation (empiricism), or both (realism) or neither (mysticism)? In European philosophy there is a strong tradition for only accepting only two ways of attaining knowledge: sensation and reason. Yet there is also an opposition to this tradition. Medieval philosophers, and many Catholic philosophers in the present day, speak about revelation as a third way of attaining knowledge. Some of our time’s existentialists speak about a kind of being-cognition, which neither is due to sensation or reason. And finally, a couple of European mystics, as for instance Plotin, Meister Eckhart and William Blake, have spoken about a mystical cognition of God and higher powers, which is reaching far beyond the areas of sensation and reason. Eastern philosophy has always worked with such a cognition as the final goal of the philosophers’ efforts: it is called Nirvana, Samadhi, Tao, Satori, etc.

Is knowledge immediate and intuitive, or by proof and argument, whether deductive or inductive? Perhaps the most practical in epistemology is: What sources of knowledge can we trust? Ancient traditions? Intuition? People? Which ones? How do we recognize trustworthy people? Do we have a *third eye*, in addition to the eyes on the outside of the head and the eye of the brain on the inside of the head? Does the heart *know* as well as feel and desire? Does the heart have reasons that the reason cannot know?

### **1) The Simulation theory**

In order to get into what epistemology is, it is my experience that the best way to introduce people to epistemology, is to introduce them to philosophical idealism. This is due to how far out idealism is.

In philosophy, as we already have touched, idealism is the group of metaphysical philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as humans can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial. Epistemologically, idealism manifests as a skepticism about the

possibility of knowing any mind-independent thing. Descartes was in that way a radical skepticist.

The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges was fascinated with idealism, and idealism is admittedly fascinating. There is something very poetically about it. In “A New Refutation of Time,” for instance, Borges builds upon arguments of the British empiricists Berkeley and Hume to question the objective existence of the material world, the self, and the continuum of time. Yet he teasingly states from the outset that, as this is his second version of the essay in which he questions time, it therefore presupposes it, for without time there could not be an earlier or a later version. He ends this essay recognizing his failure to achieve his aims: “To deny temporal succession, to deny the self, to deny the astronomical universe, appear to be acts of desperation and are secret consolations...Time is a river that sweeps me along...The world, unfortunately, is real; I, unfortunately, am Borges.”

He included philosophical meditations, notably “The Nothingness of Personality” and “Berkeley’s Crossroads,” in his first book of essays, *Inquisitions*, which appeared in 1925, several years before he published any fiction. He famously admitted that he tended to be “interested in religious or philosophical ideas for their aesthetic value and even for their strange and marvellous elements,” and had some of his invented philosophers treat metaphysics as “a branch of the literary of fantasy.” Rather than using his stories as vehicles for philosophical ideas, he often used those ideas as a starting point for fiction, and the literary use he made of them is more important than the ideas in themselves.

It was principally Berkeley, Hume, and Schopenhauer whom Borges referred to when discussing the idealism that was so important for his imaginative writing, and they stimulated his interest in three questions: substance, identity (or self), and time. As early as 1923, in his poem “Break of Day,” from the collection *Fervor de Buenos Aires*, he wrote:

Curious about the shadows  
And daunted by the threat of dawn,  
I recalled the dreadful conjecture  
Of Schopenhauer and Berkeley  
Which declares that the world  
Is a mental activity,  
A dream of souls,  
Without foundation, purpose, weight or shape.

It is clear that an idealist must be fascinated by the worlds of dreams, especially the thought that the whole world is a dream. In *Seven Nights*, in the essay *Nightmares*, Borges says: "If we think of the dream as a work of fiction – and I think it is – it may be that we continue to spin tales when we wake and later when we recount them." [...] "According to Frazer, savages do not distinguish between waking and dreaming. For them, dreams are episodes of the waking life." [...] "For the savage and for the child, dreams are episodes of the waking life; for poets and mystics, it is not impossible for all of the waking life to be a dream. This was said, in a dry and laconic fashion, by Calderón: 'Life is a dream.' It was said, with an image, by Shakespeare: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on.' And splendidly by the Austrian poet Walter von der Vogelweide, who asked, 'Ist mein Leben geträumt oder ist es wahr?' – Have I dreamed my life or is it real? I'm not sure." (read more about Borges in my article [Jorge Luis Borges](#)).

Philosophy students are always getting hooked on idealism. It is a brilliant way of starting a course in epistemology. I can for sure remember our discussions in the student bar about whether the large amounts of beer bottles in front of us were real, and whether the beer in our stomachs and heads were real.

The newest version of idealism is the so-called simulation theory, which is relevant due to its connection with my concept of the Matrix. I will in the following present a longer introduction to the simulation theory, because that could be an introduction to what Sauron's Eye is all about (part 2), and what the purpose is of the One Ring.

The Matrix is a 1999 science fiction action film written and directed by The Wachowskis. It depicts a dystopian future in which reality as perceived by most humans is actually a simulated reality called "the Matrix", created by sentient machines to subdue the human population, while their bodies' heat and electrical activity are used as an energy source. Computer programmer Neo learns this truth and is drawn into a rebellion against the machines, which involves other people who have been freed from the "dream world."

This film is also central in my own concept of The Matrix Conspiracy. So, what's the precise difference between my concept of the Matrix Conspiracy and New Agers' concept of the Matrix?

New Agers believe that the Matrix is a living organism, or simply reality itself. But one should remember that they are advocates of subjectivism and relativism, or otherwise said: they are philosophical idealists. In philosophy, idealism is the group of philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as we can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise

immaterial. Epistemologically, idealism manifests as a skepticism about the possibility of knowing any mind-independent thing. In a sociological sense, idealism emphasizes how human ideas—especially beliefs and values—shape society. As an ontological doctrine, idealism goes further, asserting that all entities are composed of mind or spirit. Idealism thus rejects physicalist and dualist theories that fail to ascribe priority to the mind.

This is the reason why they can believe that the whole of reality, including the physical reality, is a mental construct. And from that it is also easy to infer to the idea that we could live in a computer simulation. You can see this idea discussed in this article in Scientific American, by Clara Moskowitz, April 7, 2016: [Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?](#) A popular argument for the simulation hypothesis came from University of Oxford philosopher Nick Bostrum in 2003, when he suggested that members of an advanced civilization with enormous computing power might decide to run simulations of their ancestors. They would probably have the ability to run many, many such simulations, to the point where the vast majority of minds would actually be artificial ones within such simulations, rather than the original ancestral minds. So simple statistics suggest it is much more likely that we are among the simulated minds.

But the proposal of idealism is also the reason why they think you can't get out of the Matrix (that is: from illusion to reality), since the Matrix is reality itself: a mental construct, or a computer simulation. What you can do – and that's their proposed secret [sic] – is to realize that you can program this reality completely alone with the power of mind, and according to your own wishes and desires. The illusion is here that you have lived according to what others have programmed you to believe. The latter is the only idea I share with them.

My concept of The Matrix Conspiracy is that the Matrix is an ideology. And I'm not supporting idealism, but realism. The paradox of New Age's misunderstanding of quantum physics (which they see as central support for subjectivism and idealism) is that quantum physics actually proves the invalidity of both materialism and idealism. I have shown how in my article [Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Niels Bohr](#). Here I'm presenting a realism based on dualism, though not an ontological dualism, but an epistemological, or gnoseological dualism, which is necessary when we are talking of the ordinary mind, the subject. When we are talking about the enlightened consciousness I support a so-called metaphysical naturalism.

It's puzzling that they don't seem to have grasped the meaning of the film, only Morpheus's introducing claim that the Matrix is everywhere, in the bones, around us, etc. They speak Agent Smith's speak, and not the rebels. They speak about finding

ways of getting on in this Matrix, rather than being interested in finding ways of discovering the truth; or rather: what they see as the truth is that they can control the Matrix entirely through the mind.

To teach people this, is the main job of the Matrix Sophists. 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. [Elon Musk](#) is obviously one of them. Here is a video where he preaches The Matrix Conspiracy’s propaganda:

<https://youtu.be/dFJ28-NDjko>

Simulated reality is the hypothesis that reality could be simulated — for example by computer simulation — to a degree indistinguishable from "true" reality. It could contain conscious minds which may or may not be fully aware that they are living inside a simulation. This is quite different from the current, technologically achievable concept of virtual reality. Virtual reality is easily distinguished from the experience of actuality; participants are never in doubt about the nature of what they experience. Simulated reality, by contrast, would be hard or impossible to separate from "true" reality. There has been much debate over this topic, ranging from philosophical discourse to practical applications in computing.

The simulation hypothesis was first published by Hans Moravec. Later, the philosopher Nick Bostrom developed an expanded argument examining the probability of our reality being a simulation. His argument states that at least one of the following statements is very likely to be true:

1. Human civilization is unlikely to reach a level of technological maturity capable of producing simulated realities or such simulations are physically impossible to construct.
2. A comparable civilization reaching aforementioned technological status will likely not produce a significant number of simulated realities (one that might push the probable existence of digital entities beyond the probable number of "real" entities in a Universe) for any of a number of reasons, such as, diversion of computational processing power for other tasks, ethical considerations of holding entities captive in simulated realities, etc.
3. Any entities with our general set of experiences are almost certainly living in a simulation.



In greater detail, Bostrom is attempting to prove a tripartite disjunction, that at least one of these propositions must be true. His argument rests on the premise that given sufficiently advanced technology, it is possible to represent the populated surface of the Earth without recourse to digital physics; that the qualia experienced by a simulated consciousness are comparable or equivalent to those of a naturally occurring human consciousness; and that one or more levels of simulation within simulations would be feasible given only a modest expenditure of computational resources in the real world.

If one assumes first that humans will not be destroyed nor destroy themselves before developing such a technology, and, next, that human descendants will have no overriding legal restrictions or moral compunctions against simulating biospheres or their own historical biosphere, then it would be unreasonable to count ourselves among the small minority of genuine organisms who, sooner or later, will be vastly outnumbered by artificial simulations.

Epistemologically, it is not impossible to tell whether we are living in a simulation. For example, Bostrom suggests that a window could pop up saying: "You are living in a simulation. Click here for more information." However, imperfections in a simulated environment might be difficult for the native inhabitants to identify and for purposes of authenticity, even the simulated memory of a blatant revelation might be purged programmatically. Nonetheless, should any evidence come to light, either for or against the skeptical hypothesis, it would radically alter the aforementioned probability.

Simulated reality is a common theme in science fiction ([click here](#) to see a list). It is predated by the concept "life is a dream". It should not be confused with the theme of virtual reality.

But, a new article in Cosmos Magazine 02 October 2017 titled [Physicists find we're not living in a computer simulation](#) suggests that some physical phenomena may be impossible to simulate.

The article goes:

*The sci-fi trope might now be put to rest after scientists find the suggestion that reality is computer generated is in principle impossible, writes Andrew Masterson.*

*Just in case it's been weighing on your mind, you can relax now. A team of theoretical physicists from Oxford University in the UK has shown that life and*

*reality cannot be merely simulations generated by a massive extraterrestrial computer.*

*The finding – an unexpectedly definite one – arose from the discovery of a novel link between gravitational anomalies and computational complexity.*

*In a paper [published in the journal Science Advances](#), Zohar Ringel and Dmitry Kovrizhi show that constructing a computer simulation of a particular quantum phenomenon that occurs in metals is impossible – not just practically, but in principle.*

*The pair initially set out to see whether it was possible to use a technique known as quantum Monte Carlo to study the quantum Hall effect – a phenomenon in physical systems that exhibit strong magnetic fields and very low temperatures, and manifests as an energy current that runs across the temperature gradient. The phenomenon indicates an anomaly in the underlying space-time geometry.*

*Quantum Monte Carlo methods use random sampling to analyse many-body quantum problems where the equations involved cannot be solved directly.*

*Ringel and Kovrizhi showed that attempts to use quantum Monte Carlo to model systems exhibiting anomalies, such as the quantum Hall effect, will always become unworkable.*

*They discovered that the complexity of the simulation increased exponentially with the number of particles being simulated.*

*If the complexity grew linearly with the number of particles being simulated, then doubling the number of particles would mean doubling the computing power required. If, however, the complexity grows on an exponential scale – where the amount of computing power has to double every time a single particle is added – then the task quickly becomes impossible.*

*The researchers calculated that just storing information about a couple of hundred electrons would require a computer memory that would physically require more atoms than exist in the universe.*

*The researchers note that there are a number of other known quantum interactions for which predictive algorithms have not yet been found. They suggest that for some of these they may in fact never be found.*

*And given the physically impossible amount of computer grunt needed to store information for just one member of this subset, fears that we might be unknowingly living in some vast version of The Matrix can now be put to rest.*

Stories that suggest perceived reality is an artefact of a cosmic computer simulation abandon science and enter the domain of philosophy. And within philosophy it's an old story. In my view there isn't anything new in Bostrum's argumentation at all. He is just taking up older ideas and altering them a bit. The whole argument stands and falls with the question: *Is it possible to simulate reality?* Answering yes or no to this question depends on which metaphysical theory you are in to. Most idealists answer yes, and, as we shall see, so do some materialists, though it is my claim that materialists in that case must take upon them an idealist worldview which is the direct opposite of their own materialist worldview, and who therefore end up in a self-contradiction. The reason why materialists like the idea is probably that computers sounds very materialistic.

Many people who argue for the validity of the simulation theory are reductionists; that is: they make their claim based on a believe that they are speaking scientifically, while they in fact are speaking philosophy. These can be invalidated on the background of reductionism itself (see my articles [The Pseudoscience of New Age and Reductionism](#), and [The Pseudoscience of Reductionism and the Problem of Mind](#)).

In the following I will give a philosophical argumentation against the simulation theory.

We almost all have an experience of, how our senses and thoughts can deceive us. Therefore the question about, whether life could be a dream or an illusion, also always has occupied Man.

In the scriptless people's religions, or in the world of the child, the dreams are episodes in the waking condition. To the poets - and in the various wisdomtraditions in Western mysticism and in Eastern philosophy - it is not impossible, that the whole of the waking condition is a dream. As Shakespeare says in his play the Tempest: "We are of the same matter as our dreams; our short life is encircled by a sleep."

The spiritual practice can be said to consist partially of meditation, partially of Dream Yoga. Meditation and Dream Yoga are two sides of the same thing. If you nevertheless should try to discriminate, then you about meditation can say, that the three aspects of meditation are relaxfullness, awareness and heartfullness. These three aspects are trained through supporting exercises such as relaxation, Hara practice, as

well as Tonglen practice (see the supporting exercises in my book [Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader](#) ).

In Dream Yoga you can say, that the day practice of Dream Yoga consists - besides the continuous exercises of meditation - in understanding the nature of thought distortions; in seeing their illusory nature, in seeing how they create your reality; that is: to realize, that a lot of your waking life also has character of a dream (the night practice of Dream Yoga is about writing your dreams down, and practising in conditions of lucidity, as well as astrality, if such states should occur). – See my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#), and my article [What is Dream Yoga?](#)

A lot of philosophers within European philosophy have also claimed, that life is a dream, or that the whole world is our own construction, created either by sensation or thinking. The best known examples are probably George Berkeley and René Descartes. It is from these two philosophers the simulation theory has its origin.

In European philosophy there is namely a strong tradition for only reckoning with two sources of knowledge: sensation and thinking. Berkeley reckoned with sensation, whilst Descartes reckoned with thinking. Berkeley is famous for the sentence *Esse est percipi*, which means that reality consists in being perceived (to be is to be experienced). The absurdity in Berkeley's assertion is swiftly seen: If a thing, or a human being for that matter, is not being perceived by the senses, then it does not exist. In accordance with Berkeley there therefore does not exist any sense-independent world. He ends in the so-called solipsism, and so do all supporters of the simulation theory. That we will return to.

Descartes was also very dubious concerning how much we can trust our senses. Therefore also he took up the question Is life a dream? However his intention with this was in his *Meditations* to develop a valid epistemological argument.

In his *Meditations* Descartes presents the problem approximately like this: I frequently dream during the night, and while I dream, I am convinced, that what I dream is real. But then it always happens, that I wake up and realize, that everything I dreamt was not real, but only an illusion. And then is it I think: is it possible, that what I now, while I am awake, believe is real, also is something, which only is being dreamt by me right now? If that not is the case, how shall I then determinate it?

Precisely because Descartes not even in dreams can doubt, that 2 plus 3 is 5, he leaves the dream-argument in his *Meditations* and goes in tackle with the question, whether he could be cheated by an evil demon concerning all knowledge, also mathematics. This radical skepticism leads him forward to the cogito-argument:

Cogito ergo Sum (I think, therefore I exist). – [Note that Descartes' philosophical skepticism not is the same as scientific skepticism (about scientific skepticism: read my article [The Pseudoscience of New Age and Reductionism](#))]

In modern discussions about the reliability of our knowledge you often meet a variation of Descartes' argument of the evil demon. The argument is: 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 putting it in a jar with some nutrient substratum. At that time computer research perhaps will have reached so far, that you will be able to connect a computer with such a brain and feed it with all possible data – that is: supply us with an experiential "virtual reality", so that we think that we have a body, that we have a life and walk around in the world believing, that we can perceive our surroundings, whilst we in reality only is a brain laying in a jar. It is especially this thesis the movie *The Matrix* is based on. And it is fairly easy to see where it is Bostrum has his arguments from. Bostrum has in fact contributed with an article to the Popular Culture and Philosophy series on the Matrix: *More Matrix and Philosophy – Revolutions and Reloaded Decoded*. His article is called *Why Make a Matrix? And Why You Might Be In One*.

But the simulation theory faces precisely the same problem as the Dream Hypothesis and the Brain-In-Jar Hypothesis. A lot of so-called reductionists believe, that the Brain-In-Jar Hypothesis is possible. There are computer scientists, who believe, that you can understand consciousness as "soft-ware" and the brain as a "hard disc", and that you in a very few years will be able to decode a human being for the whole of its content of consciousness, immediately before it dies, and therewith ensure its soul an eternal life – admittedly on a discette, but what the hell, it is after all certainly always better than to pass into nothingness, and the discette will after all could be played again and again.

This is probably the most extreme "materialistic" example of the top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of a ladder, which humans have to climb in order to reach knowledge. The knowledge of the heart and the body is completely removed. Only what is going on in the head is considered valid. It is also a hypothesis which materialists can acknowledge, though it in fact is based on idealism.

The Brain-in-jar Hypothesis says it in this way: existence, that which I, Morten Tolboll, calls reality, is an illusion, because the fact of the matter is this, that I haven't got any body or any sense organs, but only are my brain, which is in a jar with a nutrient substratum, and which is connected to a computer, which provides me with experiences.

The problem is exactly the same as in Descartes' Dream Hypothesis: existence, that which I, Morten Tolboll, calls reality, is a period, which after its end (that is to say: when I wake up from it) will be realized as illusory, in the same way as I realize a dream as illusory, when I wake up from it. That is to say: that, which I call "reality", is a dream, and that, which I call "dream" (that is: the thing I am dealing with, when I am sleeping) is a dreamt dream.

Both the Dream Hypothesis, the Brain-in-jar Hypothesis and the Simulation theory are important in The Matrix Conspiracy. An important pedagogy of The Matrix Conspiracy is namely subjectivism and relativism, which claim, 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. Everything is our own thought-construction.

In the following I will show some epistemological problems, and hereafter I will go into some problems of mind which it also creates.

I will show the problem in relation to the Dream Hypothesis, and you just have to replace it with the Brain-in-Jar Hypothesis or the Simulation Hypothesis. They both end in the same problems.

Let us try to look at three logical problems, which the Dream Hypothesis (and therefore the Brain-In-Jar hypothesis and the simulation theory) runs into: The infinite regress, the solipsism, as well as the polarization-problem.

First the infinite regress:

I presuppose, that I - with the assertion that what I now call reality, is a dream - believe, that it in principle is possible, that I wake up from it and realize, that it only was a dream. In that case I shall after all find myself situated in a new reality, which relate itself to what I now call reality, as this relate itself to my nightly dreams. This "new reality" you could then term "the R-reality".

When I wake up to the R-reality, I realize, that what I until then called reality, only was a dream. But using the Dream Hypothesis (whatever argument I might have for it) I must already now conclude, that the R-reality also could be a dream, which I, if I some day wake up from it, shows itself to be contained in a R-R-R-reality – and in this way I can keep on.

If I say, that reality is a dream, and therefore ought to be called "dreamt reality", yes then I can not find any argument against, that it is a "dreamt dreamt reality" or a

”dreamt dreamt dreamt reality” etc., indefinitely (this is actually how the concept of the Multiverse has been developed - the simulated multiverse exists on complex computer systems that simulate entire universes. The concept of the Multiverse is popular both in idealism and in materialism, and therefore both in New Age and in Atheism).

If you then take solipsism:

Solipsism (of lat. Solus ipse, I alone), is the opinion, that I alone, and my states of consciousness, exist, or that I, and my states of consciousness, are the only things, which really can be realized. Everything else, for example other people’s consciousnesses and material things, which are claimed to be outside my consciousness, are problematic things.

The Dream Hypothesis (and therefore the Brain-In-Jar hypothesis and the Simulation theory) can for example only be stated in first person. There are not two persons who can agree about it, because all other persons than the person, which put forward the Dream Hypothesis, ex hypothesi are dream phenomena in his dream. When I – in first person – analyzes the eventual arguments against the Dream Hypothesis, I realize, that I don’t need to take them seriously, because they ex hypothesi only are dream phenomena, which can’t be compelling. But at the same time I realize, that all my arguments *for* the Dream Hypothesis for the same reason nor can be considered compelling. I have ended up in a self-contradiction.

And if you then finally take the polarization-problem:

Reality seems to be an Otherness, which determines and defines the world – that is: a negation-principle. Any concept, anything, is defined by its negation; that is to say: what it not is. A dream can in other words only be defined from what it not is. It is for example not reality. This logic is impossible to get around. How can you altogether assert that life, or reality, is a dream (or a simulation), unless *you* know what a dream (or a simulation) not is? And here I am talking about that you, and therefore every single individual, have this knowledge. You can’t explain the simulation theory in any meaningful way without that you constantly are making discriminations between simulation and reality, between subject and object, etc. To say that discrimination also just is a simulation is not a philosophical argument, but a way of explaining away this simple fact. My professor in philosophy, the late David Favrholt, has developed the polarization-problem, with inspiration from Niels Bohr, into what he calls *The Core* in everyday language (we will return to that in part 4).

The Brain-in-jar Hypothesis and the Simulation theory run into exactly the same logical problems.

To the common consciousness, or the common cognition - that is to say: sensation and thinking - life could very well be thought to be a dream. The Wholeness could possibly be sleeping. You could here very well imagine the validity of the above problems, but you end up in the three logical problems. It is precisely these logical anomalies, paradoxes and problems, which create Samsara's wheel of eternal repeating up-cycles which is followed by eternal repeating down-cycles and vice versa (for example life and death, success and fiasco, joy and sorrow) – as well as the ignorance and the suffering when you are caught into this wheel, for example in the experience of nightmare and anxiety. All Jorge Luis Borges' small stories are about these logical and philosophical problems. His stories are filled with mirrors, masks, endless series and regresses, labyrinths, doppelgängers, time, solipsisms and dreams.

As mentioned there is also within the wisdom traditions a lot of talk about, that life is a dream. The Chinese philosopher Chuang Tsi wrote for example:

*"One time I dreamt, that I was a butter-fly. Pleased with my fortune I flew around and wasn't thinking about anything else than being a butter-fly. About Chuang Tsi's existence I suspected nothing. Then suddenly I awoked, and it stood clear to me, that I was Chuang Tsi. But now I just don't know, whether I was Chuang Tsi, which dreamt that I was a butter-fly, or whether I am a butter-fly, which dreams, that it is Chuang Tsi. There is necessarily a difference in being Chuang Tsi and in being a butter-fly."*

At first Chuang Tsi's text seems to be even more radical than Descartes. But what you can say, is, that there is a radical difference between Chuang Tsi and Descartes. Descartes and Berkeley reckoned namely, as before mentioned, only with two sources of knowledge, sensation and thinking.

But Chuang Tsi is also talking about the third source of knowledge: The mystical cognition. To this third form of cognition, life is not a dream, but the Good, the True and the Beautiful itself – reality. The path to this can be described as in the education novel: at home – the homeless - home. In the start, at home (if you not, through meditation and Dream Yoga, are working with the third cognition-form), the Wholeness is sleeping. If you however start to work with this cognition, the education journey out in the world begins. The Wholeness starts to dream. But the more realization trained, the more you realize the illusory aspect of the dream of the Wholeness, and then the journey home starts. The Wholeness begins to wake up, for finally, in the revelation, to be completely awake.



The truth in this awakeness - and which of course also is there hidden, both when the Wholeness is dreaming and sleeping - is precisely the instance which creates the logical, and insoluble problems with theories which only work with two forms of knowledge, sensation and thinking.

This truth is reality, or the Otherness.

Stephen Hawking is apparently also supporting the Simulation Theory. In the documentary *Stephen Hawking's Grand Design* Hawking tries to explain what science can tell us about the meaning of life through physics, philosophical discussion, and Hawking's own unique scientific perception, he attempts to shed light on humanities most profound question *Is There a Meaning of Life?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUX6pfXRCLA>

In the documentary Hawking says: "It might seem crazy to doubt that our concept of reality is true, but I think to find the meaning of life, we must ask the question: is there an independent reality or not?"

This part of the documentary could be called "Stephen Hawking raises an interesting question about observer-created reality in the first six seconds, followed by a narrator blathering on about the Matrix. First the brain-in-jar hypothesis, hereafter the simulation theory, and claiming: this is a genuine scientific hypothesis." One might suppose that Hawking has approved the film.

The documentary ends with Descartes: we think therefore we are. The circle is closed: we're back in black, back in philosophy, or rather: bad philosophy.

Yes precisely: we think all this, it is a theory. The title is therefore good: Stephen Hawking's Grand Design. Hawking has replaced God and philosophy with himself. Because that's what it is. The theory of everything is something we think (see my article [Stephen Hawking](#)).

Celebrity atheists also acknowledge the Simulation Hypothesis. We may be living in a world computed by superhumanity to emulate its evolutionary history. Obvious not knowing that this is an idealist idea, the direct opposite philosophical theory than their own materialism. This curiosity actually directly *demonstrates* my claim that atheist fundamentalism and New Age are the two opposite coins in the same Matrix Conspiracy (see my article [Atheist Fundamentalism](#)).

It is for example interesting that the two arch enemies Richard Dawkins and Deepak Chopra both are overall excited for Hawking, for two opposite reasons:

Richard Dawkins welcomed Hawking's position and said that "Darwinism kicked God out of biology but physics remained more uncertain. Hawking is now administering the coup de grace."

Best selling author Deepak Chopra in an interview with CNN said: "We have to congratulate Leonard and Stephen for finally, finally contributing to the climatic overthrow of the superstition of materialism. Because everything that we call matter comes from this domain which is invisible, which is beyond space and time. All religious experience is based on just three basic fundamental ideas...And nothing in the book invalidates any of these three ideas".

This paradox is just incredible funny, and it shows precisely the paradox: Hawking's M-theory can be used to justify just about anything. Speaking at the string theory conference at University of Southern California in 1995, Edward Witten of the Institute for Advanced Study suggested that the five different versions of string theory might be describing the same thing seen from different perspectives. He proposed a unifying theory called "M-theory", in which the "M" is not specifically defined but is generally understood to stand for "membrane". The words "matrix", "master", "mother", "monster", "mystery" and "magic" have also been claimed.

So, with the Matrix Conspiracy we have two ruling metaphysical theories in the Western society: materialism (the bias of atheist fundamentalism) and idealism (the New Age bias). The consequences of both are a worship of the ego.

The reason why both is included in the metaphysics of the Matrix Conspiracy is that they define each other; they are so to speak complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same necessarily must supplement each other. The reason for this is the polarization-problem.

On the possibility of living in a simulation created by alien civilizations Richard Dawkins says:

*"Whether we ever get to know them or not, there are very probably alien civilizations that are superhuman, to the point of being god-like in ways that exceed anything a theologian could possibly imagine. Their technical achievements would seem as supernatural to us as ours would seem to a Dark Age peasant transported to the twenty-first century. Imagine his response to a laptop computer, a mobile telephone, a hydrogen bomb or a jumbo jet. As Arthur C Clarke put it, in his Third Law: 'Any*

*sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.' The miracles wrought by our technology would have seemed to the ancients no less remarkable than the tales of Moses parting the waters, or Jesus walking upon them. The aliens of our SETI signal would be to us like gods ...*

*"In what sense, then, would the most advanced SETI aliens not be gods? In what sense would they be superhuman but not supernatural? In a very important sense, which goes to the heart of this book. The crucial difference between gods and god-like extraterrestrials lies not in their properties but in their provenance. Entities that are complex enough to be intelligent are products of an evolutionary process. No matter how god-like they may seem when we encounter them, they didn't start that way. Science-fiction authors ... have even suggested (and I cannot think how to disprove it) that we live in a computer simulation, set up by some vastly superior civilization. But the simulators themselves would have to come from somewhere. The laws of probability forbid all notions of their spontaneously appearing without simpler antecedents. They probably owe their existence to a (perhaps unfamiliar) version of Darwinian evolution ..."*

[Dawkins, Richard. The God Delusion. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 72-73. Print.](#)

If such aliens exist, why should they use computer simulation? The very concept of simulation is taken from our own language and refers to something we have knowledge about here on Earth. It is a projection of ourselves. And for the same reason: why should they be subject to evolution? Evolution is also something limited to our own knowledge. Richard Dawkins is obviously trying to attribute these aliens his own limited concepts. There isn't any reason why we could not attribute them all kinds of other limited concepts coming from ourselves, for example magic and religion. If these aliens are so advanced it would be a mistake to use our own concepts on them at all.

Sam Harris makes the same mistake:

*"Many people have noticed that there seem to be no new arguments for the truth of any of the world's religions. I recently stumbled upon one, however, and it has given me a moment's pause. ...*

*"Given these premises - that human consciousness is purely the product of computation; that our computing power will continue to grow; and that our descendants will build simulated worlds - it seems tempting to conclude that simulated people will eventually outnumber all the real people who have ever lived. Statistically, therefore, it is more likely that we are simulated ancestors, living in a*

*simulated world, rather than real ancestors of the real, supercomputing people of the future.*

*"This is, of course, a very strange idea. And here is my own contribution: add to this strangeness the possibility that the supercomputing people of the future will build into their virtual worlds the truth of Mormonism, or some other faith that seems like it could not possibly be true at present. In which case, we may, in fact, be living in a world in which Jesus will return on clouds of glory to judge the living and the dead. Perversely, this could be a self-fulfilling prophecy: given how beguiled people have been by religious mythology throughout our history, our descendants might engineer specific religious doctrines into their virtual worlds just for the hell of it."*

[Harris, Sam. "Should We Be Mormons in the Matrix?" Sam Harris. 20 Apr. 2011. Web. 08 Aug. 2014.](#)

It is interesting that Sam Harris all the time are using the concepts of mind and consciousness, in order to explain why mind and consciousness not at all are mind and consciousness, but results of computation. He explains away. He explains consciousness as being something which not at all are consciousness. It is like explaining what an apple is by drawing a lemon. A reductionism in other word. Why is it that he with necessity must use the concept of consciousness, and must discriminate subject and object, in order to talk meaningful? Because that's what reality dictates him (it is not a simulation), and therefore we must conclude that consciousness is an ontological fact.

As all theories of everything the Simulation theory ends in the thought distortion called Endless Split of the Thought.

The endless split of the thought implies the polarization-problem. Reality seems to be an Otherness which determines and defines the world – that is: a negation-principle. Any concept, anything, is defined by its negation; that is to say: what it not is. A dream can for example only be defined from what it not is. It is for example not reality. How can you for example assert that life, or reality, is a dream, unless you know what a dream not is? What is the good? This you know if you know what the evil is. This logic is impossible to get around.

The endless split of the thought has to do with the contradiction and split that are lying in, that the expulsion of the polar partners, as well as the negation as such, logical seen not is possible. All images imply the negation. But the more extreme you are thinking, the more you expel the negation, the larger are your contradiction and split.

You can see the logical problems manifested in a nightmare. When you in a nightmare are forced to confront the negations, but at the same time don't practise realizationwork and ethical practice in your awoken life, the nightmare will be characterized by contradiction and split. It is this doubleness, which creates the terror in the nightmare (see the entry on [Doublethink](#)).

The paths and the locations in a nightmare can imply two types of terror. The one terror lies in the paths. Each point on a path is determined by the negation of the point, which itself is determined by a third negation etc. The path constitutes in other words a series of points with no end. The points themselves are limited extents. This means, that there never will come a time, where you will get out over the limited points. On the path you become forced from point to point without ever being able to reach the unlimited, this endless, which would bring the path to finish. And yet the path is endless.

The second terror lies in the locations. When each location is determined by the negation of it, this means, that it might well be, that the location is divided from its negation, but nonetheless identical with it. This means, that each location is an endless number of locations, an abyss of worlds, countless, swarming, branching off to all sides in labyrinths, yet without that the worlds ever become mixed together. This is the nightmare from where the concept of the Multiverse comes, and to me it seems scary that this theory is praised as something fantastic. It reminds about something thought out by a body dissociated and schizophrenic mind. But it is a result of the top-heavy Indo-European symbolism. Energetically it looks like a reverse cone.

You can see these terrors illustrated in the stories by the before-mentioned Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges. You can also see it in M.C. Escher's works, or in the movies by David Lynch.

Nietzsche is letting his "Zarathustra" preach the teaching of the "eternal recurrence of the same". This teaching contains in its poetic language some complicated considerations over the problem of time, over the perception of time and the understanding of life. But in all briefness it says, that any event repeats itself in all eternity – that is: without change and without any kind of increase. History is a circle, and there isn't anything, which hasn't been before, and which doesn't come again. A nightmarish thought because each event then must be an endless number of events, an abyss of events, countless, swarming, branching to all sides in labyrinths, yet without that the events ever become mixed together. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ has happened an endless number of times before, is happening again right now in an endless number of worlds, and will happen again an endless number of times in the future.

The weak nihilists break down, when they realize the meaninglessness in the eternal recurrence, while the superhumans on the contrary "insatiable shouts Da Capo, not only to themselves, but to the whole play and acting".

The problem of the endless split of the thought happens because of a lack of discrimination between the thinking and life itself; that is: the problem of *magical thinking*.

In fact it is the same type of split you can experience, when you are looking up towards the stars and become captured by this wonder over the infinity. How can it just go on and go on? But it is due to magical thinking, the lack of discrimination between the thought and reality itself. Something, which by nature is limitary, namely the thought, seeks to grasp the unlimited. Something, which by nature is expelling, seeks to grasp the all-inclusive. It results in a feeling of endless split, which again results in a lot of logical anomalies, paradoxes and problems. And it is these logical problems which lies underneath the thought distortions, for example *Dichotom Thinking* and *Catastrophe-thinking*, and therefore underneath a lot of inappropriate assumptions and rules of living.

It is precisely these logical anomalies, paradoxes and problems, which create Samsara's wheel of eternal repeating up-cycles which is followed by eternal repeating down-cycles and vice versa (for example life and death, success and fiasco, joy and sorrow) – as well as the ignorance and the suffering when you are caught into this wheel, for example in the experience of nightmare and anxiety. All Jorge Luis Borges' small stories are about these logical and philosophical problems. His stories are filled with mirrors, masks, infinite series and regresses, labyrinths, doppelgängers, time travel theories, other dimensions, parallel universes, solipsisms and dreams.

We have already examined the concept of endless series. But you must discriminate between the concept of endless series and the concept of endless regresses. An endless regress is an endless series, but an endless series is not necessarily an endless regress. You can very well operate with endless series without being involved in an endless regress, as for example when you talk about the cause of a road accident, which is enough explanation, though the chain of causes goes endlessly back in time. But if your thought is getting involved in such a chain of causes, then it ends as an endless split of the thought. This happens often in regression therapy, psychoanalysis, or self-analysis, where the discovery of the "cause" of, for example anxiety, doesn't heal the anxiety, wherefore you are in need of new analysis, new discoveries of causes, and so on, in endless series, that are flowering in all kinds of directions. I have investigated this in my book [A Portrait of a Lifearmist](#) in the section about analysis.

Anyway, you can use the reference to the endless regress as an argument, when the *understanding* of a concept or a point of view – or the description of something – presupposes a final reason; that is: that the series of assumptions for the understanding have to end somewhere, but where the concept or the point of view nevertheless implicates, that the series continue endlessly.

In ancient India they meant that the Earth was a flat disc. When the children asked how the Earth could keep itself floating in the Universe, then the wise men said, that it was because it was carried by a giant elephant. When the children asked what the elephant was standing on, the answer was: on a giant turtle. And when the children then asked what the turtle was standing on, the wise men answered: now you are asking for more than can be answered.

This “explanation” on, how the Earth keeps itself floating, leads into an endless regress. It is no explanation at all, because it ends with a riddle that is as equally great, and which demands as much explanation as the riddle you started with.

Theories such as *solipsism*, Theories of everything and Time travel theories always end up in an Endless Split of the Thought.

Endless Split of the Thought implies the problem of the relation between thoughts and consciousness. In the following I will illustrate the problem seen in relation with Time Travel.

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. And the problem of consciousness is the same on the astral plane as on the normal plane.

The problem with time travel is, that it is only in the energy aspect of humans you can talk about time travel (or the simulation theory). 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.

In time travel theories and in the simulation theory everything is reduced to the energy aspect, though. 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 (as well as the simulation theory) confuse thought with reality; that their arguments are based on magical thinking, even if they are materialists. The theory of time travel and the simulation theory are 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 have 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 other 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 can 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. Because the explanation would never end.

This is *precisely* the same problem with the simulation theory. A simulation would have to change everything in the Wholeness, which again means that it would have to change everything in an infinitely number of times. In that way the simulation theory would have to explain how everything could be changed infinitely. This explanation would neither come to any end. And the attempt of simulation would never end. And therefore it is not possible.

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 in an endless number of times. And that's not possible. It would never end.

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. Nor can you in relation with M-theory or simulation theory. You end in an endless split of the thought.

The unbelievable size of the observable universe alone could indicate that it must be an illusion or simulation. It appears Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, Neil DeGasse Tyson, Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins think so as well; that is: they *think* so. They have not used other sources of knowledge than their heads.

None of these people would ever just have considered to write a work like *The Lord of the Rings*.

The consciousness aspect of humans is the area of realization, or mystical cognition: intuition of the whole. On many occasions in *The Lord of the Rings* the Fellowship, especially Frodo and Sam, have to make choices that are not merely moral choices between good and known evil, but epistemological choices between wisdom and folly, reality and appearance, in choosing between two apparent goods and two apparent evils, especially what to do with the Ring.

The question of whom to trust frequently arises. For instance, how did Frodo know "Strider" was trustworthy when he first met him at Bree? He "feels fair and seems foul" – is this "feeling" coming from the heart and the "seeming" the third eye of the head?

How to know when to mete out justice and when to give mercy is another epistemological question, as well as a moral question. Neither Frodo nor even Gandalf says knew the role Gollum was destined to play yet Gandalf says "My heart tells me he has some role to play yet, for good or ill, before the end" (LOTR, p. 58). How did Gandalf know this? He did not know the future; he was not a prophet. In the terms of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, he knew it because he knew "the Deeper Magic from Before the Dawn of Time".

If you by now have realized how insane the simulation theory is (I hope so) you have a pretty good idea about what Sauron's Eye is, because that will be the topic for the next chapter. Sauron's Eye is the third eye, and the conspiracy of the third eye is the One Ring.

## 2) Sauron's Eye

It sounds scandalous to any rationalist, classical or modern, but sometimes it is "better not to know" (LOTR, p. 448). Sometimes knowing is dangerous. "Perilous to us all are the devices of an art deeper than we possess ourselves" (LOTR, p. 583). We can control the world but we cannot control our own control; and if we do not know ourselves, we will not know *that* truth.

As explained in the introduction: after my two kundalini cycles I moved to Rold Forest in order to go totally into the spiritual practice. Below I will describe a certain aspect of spiritual awakening, which has an astonishing similarities with Sauron's Eye and the power of the Ring.

Today I consider my own experience of healing as a reverse form of Kundalini yoga: a downwards movement instead of an upwards movement. Said in relation to Indian religion: a Luciferian movement. This has to do with what I now have started to call a top-down kundalini awakening, because that is the most precise description of the kundalini awakening which I, like many other people in spiritual crises, has been caught up in. You can also have a top-down psychic awakening, a top-down shamanic awakening, etc., etc.

A top-down awakening can manifest either as suffering (anxiety, the Dark Night of the Soul) or as intellectual, identifiical or euphorical ego-inflation. The intellectual and identifiical ego-inflation can happen without the top-down awakening, but have very similar symptoms, which I will describe below. Especially the euphorical ego-inflation is followed by a top-down awakening, and often alternates between ego-inflation and the Dark Night of the Soul: a so-called "negative" and "positive" side. Both the "negative" and "positive" side can last for a short time, or a whole life. They can alternate between each other, or they can be fixed in one side of the poles. A false guru can live an entire life in the believe that he is Jesus or Buddha. He can be characterized as a megalomaniac, but often he (or she) can't be diagnosed with a mental disease; that is: he or she is still able to lead a normal life.

A top-down awakening in simple terms means that your crown and third eye chakras are open and that you have quite a bit of energy surrounding your head and shoulders. Basically, you are receiving input from the heaven/sky but not the earth. This is

figuratively speaking though. The heaven/sky is more akin to what I call the dangerous areas of the collective time. And the earth is the heart (love) and Hara (existence). As I have said many times: heart and Hara must in this description not be confused with psychic chakras, but rather with love and existence.

Due to genetics, spiritual pursuits, or other reasons you have opened yourself to what you might interpret as the divine, spirit, and different and hidden layers of reality. It is fairly easy actually to open to what you think is spirit and to begin to be more connected to what you might interpret as spiritual matters. In reality it is the collective time you have opened up to.

Many people end up with this type of awakening because they became interested in spiritual pursuits, started attending classes, doing drugs, reading literature, and finding gurus and other teachers who show them how to seek outside of themselves. Others begin life with a top-down awakening due to family history of psychic abilities or previous life abilities carried forward into this life. In Karen Blixen's case it is my opinion that it started with her fateful experiences of crises in relation to unhappy love, losing her dream of Africa, as well as the lifelong illness (siphylis) that destroyed her sexuality.

The issue with this type of awakening is that it is not grounded in anything. It is not required to do much personal work or to open your first three chakras to have this type of awakening. The person experiencing this type of awakening begins to separate from this earth, this reality. They often will claim to not want to be here, or to originate from elsewhere. This very much may be true, but a recognition of the human body, the body that you are carrying this lifetime, and a desire to be grounded and do personal work which is often quite difficult is necessary for a full awakening or to come to a state of balance if you are experiencing this type of awakening.

The person undergoing a top-down awakening will have immense energy circulating into their crown, third eye, and around their head and shoulders. Unfortunately for the experiencer of this, the energy is not able to move much further down because the throat chakra and heart chakra require the lower chakras to be open to open themselves.

As an author, Karen Blixen maintained her image as a charismatic, mysterious, old baroness with an insightful third eye. In certain dharmic spiritual traditions, the third eye refers to the ajna, or brow, chakra. The third eye refers to the gate that leads to inner realms and spaces of higher consciousness.

People who are claimed to have the capacity to utilize their third eyes are sometimes known as seers. In some traditions such as Hinduism, the third eye is said to be located around the middle of the forehead, slightly above the junction of the eyebrows.

In Taoism and many traditional Chinese religious sects such as Chan (called Zen in Japanese), "third eye training" involves focusing attention on the point between the eyebrows with the eyes closed, and while the body is in various qigong postures. The goal of this training is to allow students to tune into the correct "vibration" of the universe and gain a solid foundation on which to reach more advanced meditation levels. Taoism teaches that the third eye, also called the mind's eye, is situated between the two physical eyes, and expands up to the middle of the forehead when opened. Taoism claims that the third eye is one of the main energy centers of the body located at the sixth Chakra, forming a part of the main meridian, the line separating left and right hemispheres of the body. In Taoist alchemical traditions, the third eye is the frontal part of the "Upper Tan Tien" (upper cinnabar field) and is given the evocative name "muddy pellet". (the lower Tan Tien is Hara).

According to the Christian teaching of Father Richard Rohr, the concept of the third eye is a metaphor for non-dualistic thinking; the way the mystics see. In Rohr's concept, mystics employ the first eye (sensory input such as sight) and the second eye (the eye of reason, meditation, and reflection), "but they know not to confuse knowledge with depth, or mere correct information with the transformation of consciousness itself. The mystical gaze builds upon the first two eyes—and yet goes further." Rohr refers to this level of awareness as "having the mind of Christ".

According to the neo-gnostic teachings of Samael Aun Weor, the third eye is referenced symbolically and functionally several times in the Book of Revelation 3:7-13, a work which, as a whole, he believes describes Kundalini and its progression upwards through three and a half turns and seven chakras. This interpretation equates the third eye with the sixth of the seven churches of Asia detailed therein, the Church of Philadelphia.

In New Age spirituality, the third eye often symbolizes a state of enlightenment or the evocation of mental images having deeply personal spiritual or psychological significance. The third eye is often associated with religious visions, clairvoyance, the ability to observe chakras and auras, precognition, and out-of-body experiences.

It should now be easy to see how deceptive the traditional Indian descriptions of the Kundalini awakening can be. It is not because they are wrong, but because the

upward pointing symbolism is deceptive. You get a sense of that you must move your energy upwards, and this can actually also happen in the top-down awakening. You can have an actual experience of the energy moving in your body, from your feet (often the left big toe) up through your legs, your abdomen, your breast, throat, head and out of the top of the head. I have certainly experienced that, without any realization happening. But this is not what is meant by a successful kundalini awakening, though deceptively described precisely like that. You can have the experience of the energy moving up without that your chakras are opening. This is experience without realization. The realization is first happening when the chakras are open, and an opening of a chakra is an opening of the essence of the chakra.

So, the energy is stuck in the upper body- leading to a bottleneck of energy, headaches, neck pain, disassociation, ego issues (these are some of the people who tell others how awakened they are or that they are enlightened but still are quite judgmental and lack focus on their own issues), and significant mental health issues including mania and depression can develop.

It is also quite common for the top-down awakened to be in a great deal of physical pain. Hip, back, foot, and leg pain are prevalent, but the all-over pain that comes with issues such as Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia, and other Autoimmune and Connective Tissue disorders are common in this category. It is also common for the experiencer to carry weight around the mid-section but have thin legs, and a constant raising of the shoulders towards the ears.

Other symptoms include: being open to spiritual guidance, psychic abilities, mediumship and channeling capabilities, understanding of patterns and concepts from a different vantage point (which is due to many of these individuals being halfway out of their body so they really do have a different perspective), headaches, sinus pain, closed off feelings in the throat, thyroid issues, cravings for meat, chocolate, carbohydrates, or other grounding foods, delusions, paranoia, and feelings of heaviness or stuckness in the shoulders, upper back, heart, neck, and head.

Alcohol became my grounding substitute for heart and Hara. Blixen's substitute for heart and Hara was her attempt of controlling the male sexual energy of her young students. This resulted in a strange demonical tantra game.

What is happening energetically to the top-down awakened? This is a significant energetic imbalance, and the energetic field of the experiencer often appears to look like an inverted cone. It can also be seen a reverse bottle standing on its bottleneck. The unbalance is the same as the one who experiencing a top-down awakening. It can

be hard for them to stand firm on the ground without having a feeling of “tipping over”.

Often the experiencer is partially or fully out of their bodies/disassociated, and often they prefer to remain this way (especially when they are ego-inflated). They feel different and separate from everyone else, and some remain in elaborately set up illusions of their own creation. This is because the ego-inflated awakened has awakened enough to be able to create in reality, but for this group it is rarely on a conscious level- so the creation of significant blocks, illusions, and other issues of a spiritual and physical nature is quite common due a relay of unprocessed personal and emotional material creating reality for them.

A top-down awakening is BY FAR the most common spiritual awakening to get stuck in. It also can be the most dangerous because it creates an environment energetically where you are not quite a part of any reality. With the ability to easily shift through dimensions, times, perspectives, and being fully or partially out of your body, it creates opportunity for other energies to attach, and for you to lose a sense of identity or purpose. Without the support that earth and grounding offer (heart and Hara, love and existence), it is difficult to filter the intense energies that are coming through. The more the lower chakras are blocked the worse the imbalance is.

With this type of awakening it is common to see people keep their spiritual lives and their physical lives quite separate. By this, I mean that they may be all about love, light, angels, and awakening in workshops or online, but in their daily lives they are often quite miserable and do not want to participate in life. Often I work with people struggling with depression and anxiety who put on an outward appearance, a mask of being spiritual and enlightened but in their daily lives they are struggling to function, to engage with others, or to want to be on Earth. This is an incredible common symptom in New Age circles due to the immensity of spiritual misguiding; spiritual misguiding which precisely are caused by the inflammatory awakened (here Karen Blixen is a paradoxical exception). It is all about role-playing: through courses and spiritual educations you can buy yourself new levels and titles, just like in a role-playing game. It is not good to be on the low level where most people are.

Indeed, I think we can speak about a collective top-down awakening within the enormous movement of New Age, which expresses itself in a variety of intellectual, identifiical and euphorical ego-inflations (and the long wake of psychic wrecks who have ended up in The Dark Night of the Soul). I guess this is what New Agers are speaking about when they are talking about the “global spiritual awakening” which shall lead to the prophesized New Age: the Age of the Aquarius. Just try to google “how to open your third eye” and you’ll get 19.800.000 results (when I tried). Most

of the techniques given are in my view examples of spiritual vampirism and directly criminal if there were any way of proving it.

A top-down awakening of the third eye can easily be seen in relation to Sauron's burning eye, which precisely describes what is going wrong. The Eye of Sauron was a symbol adopted by the Dark Lord during the Second Age and the Third Age. It was said that few could endure the eye's terrible gaze. The Eye was used on armor and banners of Mordor as a symbol of Sauron's quasi-omnipotence, and was adopted as something of an insignia by Sauron's forces in general.

The most scary about this development is that there seems to be a thought behind it. I have called this the 666 conspiracy. The 666 conspiracy is about Evil's plot against mankind. Is the third Antichrist among us, and will our worship of him be a sign of Judgment Day? It is clear that the Antichrist must be about anti-love and anti-existence. The techniques of "how to open your third eye", will, if you actually succeed, without question lead to a top-down awakening, which will block the opening down towards the heart and hara; that is: it will block the possibility for love and existence.

The most significant example of this teaching is the New Thought movement. The New Thought movement is all about the positive side of top-down awakening, about success, ecstasy, power, sex, money. Energy is blocked in the throat area. Love (which the movement deceivably talk about all the time) is blocked through the teaching of moral subjectivism (which is difficult to discriminate from nihilism) and existence is blocked through philosophical idealism, which teaches that existence is an illusion. The most direct satanic teaching is to be found in New Thought's self-proclaimed "Third Testament" *A Course in Miracles* (see my articles [The New Thought Movement and the Law of Attraction](#) and [A Course in Miracles](#)).

Another thought-provoking thing is: 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 - is turning this upside down. They teach the hindrances as positive and the openings as negative. Let me explain.

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 therapists, 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).

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. 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.

3) The postmodern intellectualism, 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.

This conspiracy is characterized by what you could call The Mythology of Authenticity. 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” in the negative sense of the word meaning that 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 the Matrix 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.

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 life.

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, 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 (*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 chronic 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 the end therefore 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 wisdomtraditions 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. In the New Age movement you can find a lot of true theory (which they often have copied and pasted from the original wisdom traditions). The failure shows in their practices (psychotherapy and coaching).

A spiritual practice can again be said to contain three aspects of spiritual practice which I explained in the Introduction. Let me just repeat:

- 1) Critical thinking.
- 2) Investigating the shadow.
- 3) 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, and critical thinking is seen as something negative, since it postulates objective truth.
- 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, since everything is a mind construct. 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 shows 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, which is the main background for a top-down awakening.

The central difficulty with the top-down awakening is therefore that it is difficult for people to want to do their personal work. Or rather: what they believe is personal work is controlled by the Mythology of Authenticity: the Dungeon Master of the Scientology Game (my expression “The Scientology Game” has only figuratively something to do with the actual movement called Scientology).

It can be entertaining to go to workshops, to visit gurus, to spiritually seek. For the experiencer to be healed, to come to a state of balance, or to progress further in their spiritual path, they must begin to do the personal work that they have been avoiding (art of life). But the New Thought movement directly teaches people to avoid their dark personal baggage. So, to let go of the ego, the Facebook memes that tell you

what awakening is supposed to be like, and go internally to find out is a scary proposition. You must be completely alone in this quest. By working through personal baggage and reestablishing a personal connection with the Earth (heart and Hara, love and existence), with ancestry (the dark, ancient inertia), and by dropping the mask that comes with being spiritual comes a state of balance, strength, power, and full realization. To do this I suggest that people find a religion to support them, and accept that the divine eventually is an external source you can't control.

As mentioned in the Introduction, then I can only attribute the solution to my own two dramatic kundalini cycles to an intervention from the source, symbolized with the meeting with a Dream Master, or a guardian angel (an external source, not a product of my mind). Especially the solution to the ego-inflation and the alcohol abuse was something completely unsought and unintended. I guess that no one would want to end either in The Dark Night of the Soul, or with a liver disease. But still these events were necessary for my further spiritual development. This thought is reinforced by the fact that I after the dramatic cycles is beginning to experience progressive karma, or divine providence.

Thus knowledge (as distinct from wisdom) cannot be the supreme good, for it is compatible with evil, just as power is.

Especially when the knowledge is only by analysis, by breaking the things into parts. "He that breaks a thing in order to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom" (*Letters*, no. 346, p. 424) This is Gollum's path:

*He was interested in roots and beginnings; he dived into deep pools; he burrowed under trees and growing plants; he tunneled into green mounds; and he ceased to look up at the hill-tops, or the leaves on trees, or the flowers opening in the air: his head and his eyes were downward...[H]e used [the ring] to find out secrets, and he put his knowledge to crooked and malicious uses...The ring had given him power according to his stature...All the great "secrets" under the mountains had turned out to be just empty night: there was nothing more to find out, nothing worth doing (LOTR, pp. 51-52, 54).*

One wonders how much of the above is a description of our own culture's Gollum-like exchange of ancient wisdom for modern knowledge. One also suspects that we all really know this, in our unconscious, for that is where language comes from, and our language does not say "modern wisdom".

The ranks of literary critics of fantasy are full of Gollums. Tolkien says of Faerie, "Its very riches and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveler who would report them. And

while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates should be shut and the keys be lost” (“On Fairy-Stories”, p. 33). “Faërie...has many ingredients, but analysis will not necessarily discover the secret of the whole” (ibid., p. 30).

Tolkien says, “As a story, I think it is good that there should be a lot of unexplained (especially if an explanation actually exists...There must be some enigmas, as there always are. Tom Bombadil is one (intentionally)” (*Letters*, no. 144, p. 174). Any good storyteller always suggests more than he says, or even knows, to give us a sense of a vast sea of wisdom underlying the story, and a sense of our own smallness, and these two senses together elicit wonder. Fantasy does this better than science fiction, because science fiction deals with the scientifically possible, thus with problems and puzzles that could in principle be solved and some day probably will, while fantasy deals with things beyond the capacity of natural science to explain or control.

Kreeft says that any theist could explain and justify the wisdom of ignorance. As C.S. Lewis put it, “[H]ow can the characters in a play guess the plot? We are not the playwright, we are not the producer, we are not even the audience. We are on the stage. To play well the scenes in which we are ‘on’ concerns us much more than to guess about the scenes that follow it.”

### 3) The Peter Pan Project

The central debate in classical modern philosophy is between the epistemologies of rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel) and empiricism (Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Hume). The issue is the priority of either reason or sense experience.

Both epistemologies ignore a more ancient organ of knowing: intuition. Pascal appeals to this in his famous saying: “The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of.” This is not a justification of sentiment, feeling, or desire over reason, but an expansion of the meaning of *reason* beyond “calculation” to “intuition”.

Intuition is about the art of *seeing with the heart*. Let’s therefore return to the movie *Avatar*. In the Blackwell series on pop culture and philosophy, the authors on the book about *Avatar* is focusing on the Na’vi teachings on *Learning to See*. *Learning to See* is the teaching which the female Na’vi *Neytiri* gets as a task of initiating the head character Jake Sully, into. And all the chapters have titles as:

*Seeing Eywa*: “I’m with her, Jake. She’s Real!”

*Seeing the Na’vi*: “You will Teach Him Our Ways”

*Seeing Nature: “Try to See the Forest through Her Eyes”*

*Seeing Our Bodies: “They’ve Got Great Muscle Tone”*

*Seeing Our Political Communities: “Sky People Cannot See”*

*Seeing Our Ethical Responsibilities: “Sometimes Your Entire Life Boils Down to One Insane Move”*

*Seeing the Movie: “You are Not Gonna Believe Where I Am”*

I would supply the expression of *learning to See* with the concept of the heart. The heart is the seat of consciousness, the Soul. Through the teachings of *Learning to See with the Heart*, the Life Artist perhaps becomes able to obtain a complete perception of life, without any division and separation. A perception which consists in, that you fully and totally exist; where you are what you are in progress with; where there are no inner spectator, theorist or doubter within you.

*Learning to See with the Heart* is about seeing the whole thing, everything as a whole (seeing it through her eyes); that is to say: where you in self-forgetful openness are allowing the thing to fill you out. Seeing is a presence of something, which is not hidden. It is a presence of something evidently, something the individual has a clear understanding of. It is a presence of something straightforward, a presence in naturalness. It is a perception where you so to speak become drawn into the thing, and are melting into a unified wholeness, which contains middle, fullness and light (this is what the 3D technology of the movie actually gives a taste of – therefore the importance in *Seeing the Movie*). Usually this happens in a short glimpse, inconspicuous; what you often describe as intuitive cognition. Suddenly you understand something. There is no causal explanation for it.

Man is in habit of seeing the things from outside, fragmented. You observe the tree as something separate, you observe your wife or husband, as something separate, the office, the boss – everything in fragments; that is to say: from outside as something cut off. Meditation is about seeing the world, which you are a part of, completely, as a complete whole and not divided; that is to say: where you fully and totally exist, and the important is present and real; without letting the past and the future construct the Ego, the observer, who places himself outside the observed, which is life itself.

In the same way, you can look at all the questions of life as a whole (as gestalts), and not as isolated parts. All this is the complete perception, where you are not outside, but in the middle of life itself. And then you truly are a Life Artist (or a Na'vi).

It is therefore completely central for the Life Artist to investigate the nature of experience, the way in which you can observe, listen, see. As a Life Artist you must try to find out, whether it at all is possible to see with more than just one side of your being: sight, intellect or feelings. Is it altogether possible to observe very closely, without that there happens a distortion? In the Life Artist it is worth the effort to investigate this. What will it say that you see? Can you observe yourself, observe what you in reality are: desirous, envious, worried, fearful, hypocritical, deceitful, self-assertive – can you quite simply observe this without distorting it?

It of course requires, that you learn what it is to see in philosophical sense. The word philosophy means love of wisdom, or love of learning. To learn in philosophical sense is a continual movement, a continual renewal. It is not "to have learned", and see on the basis of that. Usually we see on the basis of a memory about what we have learned, and have experienced; memory is the starting point. This is therefore not to see, not to learn in philosophical sense. That something is learned in philosophical sense presupposes a mind, which each time learns anew. There must be a creative emptiness. The mind must therefore always be new and ready to learn, just like a child. For that reason it doesn't interest the Life Artist to worship memory, but rather to observe, see and experience what really happens. As a Life Artist you must try to be extremely aware, awake, so that the seen and learned don't become a memory from which you see, and which in itself is a distortion. You must see each time as if it was the first time!

But what is it you must see? Regardless what problem, what thing you as a Life Artist are dealing with, then the starting point is yourself. Over the door into the temple in Delphi there stood: Know thyself! Self-knowledge is fundamental within all wisdom traditions, which look at philosophy as an art of life, both in the East and the West. For instance it was the returning meditation technique in the Indian philosopher Ramana Maharshi, all the time to ask himself the question "Who am I?", to everything, that happened to him.

When Ramana Maharshi asked *Who am I?* he answered like this: *I am not...* for instance *I am not* my body, *I am not* my reactions, *I am not* my feelings, *I am not* my thoughts. So, the whole of Ramana's teaching was about motivating the different seeking people to turn their search in towards the Source of the thoughts and consciousness. Who am I? Where do the thoughts come from? What is

consciousness, and where does it come from? Philosophical questions asked in a meditative-existential way.

Self-knowledge is the door you must open in order to reach into the source of the secret: your total being. And that is precisely *not* pleasant, therefore is it the fewest who is willing to do it, but thereby they also miss the most wonderful in life, which reveals itself when you have opened the door. What you must see, and experience, is what you in reality are. But to see, to observe and experience what you are, on the bases of a memory, means that the memory dictates, forms, or controls, your experience, and therefore it is already distorted.

The Life Artist must seek to find out what it *means* to experience. The scientist is perhaps seeing something through a microscope, and is observing it closely; there is an object outside himself, and he observes it without preconceived opinions, though with a certain knowledge, which he necessarily must have in order to be able to see. But the Life Artist observes the whole structure of life, its whole movement, including the whole of the being, which is "yourself". This can't be experienced with the intellect alone, or with the feelings alone, nor with any conclusion concerning right and wrong, or what "not must be", or "should be". When you therefore start a philosophical way of life you must, before you thoroughly can study yourself and life, be aware of the thinking's addiction to say yes and no, to comment, deny and accept, to arrive at conclusions; this ongoing process, which will distort the experience.

The Life Artist must therefore seek to understand the nature of experience, the beauty in observing, in seeing neutral as in a mirror, and in feeling deeply and incisively without seeking to achieve anything. As long as the mind of Man in any way is distorted – by neurotical impulses and feelings, by fear, despair, by self-assertion, snobbery and striving after power – it can't possibly listen, observe, see neutral (*The Sky People Can't See*). But this art of seeing, of listening, of observing, is nothing you just can choose to do, and nor is it a question of thinking, which develops towards something else.

When a person is aware of a danger, there happens an instant action; the instinctive, immediate reaction of the body and the memory. From childhood Man has been used to meet a danger in this way, so that his being at once reacts in order to avoid physical destruction. The Life Artist must ask, whether it in the same way is possible to act immediate, spontaneous, when something is *seen* - without that it happens on the bases of your historical limited background. Can the human being react free, and at once, to any kind of distortion of the experience, and therefore act spontaneous?



That will say an action where sensation, action and expression, is a wholeness (a gestalt), where they are total, and not divided in fragments?

This is what happens in meditation, in the passive listening presence. In accordance with the Taoists, the actual thing to be present in passive listening (wu-wei), is the same as to act spontaneous (tzu-jen). Any spontaneous action is an expression of, that there is a passive listening presence, a space between the thoughts. When for instance the Taoist is seeing, that there is fear, he observes it neutral as in a mirror, without saying yes and no, and feels it deeply and incisively, without seeking to achieve anything with it. The actual experience in this passive listening presence, makes the experience free from fear; and that is to act spontaneous.

In all this the unknown is at stake; reality or truth. *Learning to See with the Heart* is in other words to enter into the unknown. Besides meaning love of wisdom, the word philosophy also means love of the unknown. But a mind which in any way is historical limited by the known, by its own perspective, - the personal and collective images in time, which all fear-conceptions, ambitions, desires and disappointments, are manifestations of, - can't possibly enter into something, which presupposes discrimination; that is to say: a balanced, harmonic being, who is healthy on both body and Soul.

*Learning to See with the Heart* has nothing to do with concentration, all that which sort under the supporting exercises. *Learning to See with the Heart* is itself the art of life. Art of life means that you are present, that you are listening and observing passive with the whole of your being, with your body, your nerves, your eyes, your ears, your mind, with the heart, completely. It is this, which is meant with, that art of life is a *philosophical* way of life, something, which concerns your complete existence, the whole of your way of being in all the relationships of life. In this complete presence – in which there is no division between the observer and life itself – you can do anything; and in such a presence there is no resistance.

Art of life is an attempt directly to discover and experience truth. In order to be able to understand truth you must be exceedingly present in passive listening, and logical, healthy, reasonable; observing and feeling any of the movements of the thought, without evaluating them, and without attempting to achieve anything with it. Then this sense perception in itself is a complete act, and you can thereby be released from the thought, and achieve being-cognition.

Philosophy as an Art of Life is therefore not the chase after a thought or an idea. It is all thinking's essence, which is to go beyond all thought and feeling. It is, as Plotin said, the thinking's journey back to its own ancient and pre-modern Source. Not until

then philosophy is a movement into the unknown. *Learning to See with the Heart* is a voyage of discovery into the known, into your own perspective and history, into the whole of your world of ideas, knowledge, faith and experience, and through discrimination, to be released from it, and thereby to enter into the unknown, into the Source of wisdom (*Eywa*). On this journey you are in company with Odysseus, Dante, Faust, Neytiri and Jake Sully.

James Cameron is currently working in New Zealand on three sequels to *Avatar*, which will further explore the Pandoran biosphere and, according to early reports, will introduce a new indigenous undersea culture dwelling in Pandora's oceans. These new films will make use of pioneering methods of underwater motion-capture photography that represent a major leap forward in film technology. Another dreamlike extravaganza – endowed with the power to provoke a response that is at once visceral, emotional, and intellectual – surely awaits. If we only focus on the visual aspect, though, we'll miss more than half the picture. We need to keep our mental muscles in shape (the Navigator) to think about the philosophical implications of Pandora. So, while we're awaiting for the next installments of James Cameron's epic cinematic wakeup call, let's think over what already have been said. There will come more blog posts on the movie (see the blog archive [Philosophy and Popular Culture](#)).

The three stages on life's way is in my version a grounding movement from the head to the heart, helped by the Compass of Hara Awareness. This might seem odd, since many would consider it to be the opposite way around, but in my interpretation the movement is intimately connected to my concept of [The Peter Project](#), where the central message is: Rediscover the child within! Childhood games of make-believe is an important element in *The Peter Pan Project* combined with the art of seeing life as a play without reason (see my blog post [The Orchid Pavilion](#)).

[Neverland](#) is a fictional location featured in the works of J. M. Barrie and those based on them. It is an imaginary faraway place, where Peter Pan, Tinker Bell, the Lost Boys and other mythical creatures and beings live. Although not all people who come to Neverland cease to age, it's best known resident (Peter Pan) famously refused to grow up. The term is often used as a metaphor for eternal childhood (and childishness), immortality, and escapism. The latter is in my view not entirely fair though, because the novel [Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens](#), which is the prequel of the more famous novel [Peter and Wendy](#), has intimately to do with a little boy whose heart has been broken due to that his mother is loving another child.

Peter is a seven-day-old infant who, "like all infants", used to be part bird. Peter has complete faith in his flying abilities, so, upon hearing a discussion of his adult life, he

is able to escape out of the window of his London home and return to Kensington Gardens. Upon returning to the Gardens, Peter is shocked to learn from the crow Solomon Caw that he is not still a bird, but more like a human – Solomon says he is crossed between them as a "Betwixt-and-Between". Unfortunately, Peter now knows he cannot fly, so he is stranded in Kensington Gardens. At first, Peter can only get around on foot, but he commissions the building of a child-sized thrush's nest that he can use as a boat to navigate the Gardens by way of the Serpentine, the large lake that divides Kensington Gardens from Hyde Park.

Although he terrifies the fairies when he first arrives, Peter quickly gains favour with them. He amuses them with his human ways and agrees to play the panpipes at the fairy dances. Eventually, Queen Mab grants him the wish of his heart, and he decides to return home to his mother. The fairies reluctantly help him to fly home, where he finds his mother is asleep in his old bedroom.

Peter feels rather guilty for leaving his mother, mostly because he believes she misses him terribly. He considers returning to live with her, but first decides to go back to the Gardens to say his last good-byes. Unfortunately, Peter stays too long in the Gardens, and, when he uses his second wish to go home permanently, he is devastated to learn that, in his absence, his mother has given birth to another boy she can love. Peter returns, heartbroken, to Kensington Gardens.

Peter later meets a little girl named Maimie Mannering, who is lost in the Gardens. He and Maimie become fast friends, and little Peter asks her to marry him. Maimie is going to stay with him, but realises that her mother must be missing her dreadfully, so she leaves Peter to return home. Maimie does not forget Peter, however, and when she is older, she makes presents and letters for him. She even gives him an imaginary goat which he rides around every night. Maimie is the literary predecessor to the character [Wendy Darling](#) in Barrie's later [Peter and Wendy](#) story.

Throughout the novel, Peter misunderstands simple things like children's games. He does not know what a pram is, mistaking it for an animal, and he becomes extremely attached to a boy's lost kite. It is only when Maimie tells him that he discovers he plays all his games incorrectly. When Peter is not playing, he likes to make graves for the children who get lost at night, burying them with little headstones in the Gardens.

So, maybe Peter Pan, like Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, is more like a children's story for adults. Karen Blixen is certainly not for children. She is for adults. Tolkien represents a movement towards the child, and Saint-Exupéry is about rediscovering the child in us all; the last religious stage which in my view is the mystical experience. Both ethics and religiousness belong to the heart. In my view.

Authors like Karen Blixen, Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry see the universals in man and life. Whenever we think of an abstract universal, we need to use a particular concrete image. But the converse is also true: whenever we recognize a concrete particular as intelligible and meaningful, we use an abstract universal to classify it, to categorize it, to define it: we see or imagine the Bedouin as a man, not an ape.

The universal belongs to the heart. It can only be seen with the heart. As Saint-Exupéry famously wrote in *The Little Prince*:

*“Here is my secret. It is very simple: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye”.*

And:

*“What makes the desert beautiful,’ said the little prince, ‘is that somewhere it hides a well...”*

*The Lord of the Rings* never shows us a choice for or against any explicitly religious or supernatural faith. But it shows us many choices for or against natural faith as a way of knowing. It is the Hobbits who best exemplify the epistemological virtue of faith because of their humility. Humility is not only a moral virtue but an epistemological virtue too. The Hobbits show this virtue because they are relatively innocent and childlike (and sometimes even childish, which is *not* a virtue); and this apparent weakness, surprisingly, is their strength – as Gandalf, alone among the great Wizards, sees (LOTR, p. 264). Sauron and Saruman both discount the Hobbits, to their peril. Both have their kingdoms destroyed by the work of the Hobbits!

Jesus makes childlike trust the prerequisite for entering His kingdom: “Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3). Tolkien says something similar:

*There is a truth in Andrew Lang’s words (sentimental though they may sound): “He who would enter into the Kingdom of Faërie should have the heart of a little child.” For that possession is necessary to all high adventure, into kingdoms both less and far greater than Faërie. But humility and innocence – these things “the heart of a little child” must mean in such a context – do not necessarily imply an uncritical wonder, nor indeed an uncritical tenderness (On Faeire-Stories”, p. 43).*

Faith is not foolish or irrational. I believe that the concept of faith is exceptionally shown in both Tolkien's and Saint-Exupéry's works. It has to do with wonder (and enchantment), and is therefore also the beginning of philosophy.

"Already from the beginning wonder made human beings philosophize and still does it". This statement from Aristotle goes back to Plato and is also applying for today.

Philosophy begins with, that human beings are wondering. We all know, how curious children are. Children want to know something and see much more, than the adults do, they catch sight of things, which the adults not even put notice to. Children's nature is much more watchful, much more curious and eager to learn. They are lost in being. It is therefore children have so easy learning mathematics, geography or whatever subject. When we become older, our mind progressively becomes crystalized, it stiffens, becomes heavy and dull. We stagnate. We begin to have prejudices about everything and everybody. The mind is no longer open, to any problem we have taken position in advance. We are lost in becoming, or in the will to power. Said in another way: we are getting stuck in our heads, forced by the top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of growth seen a ladder.

The child is curious after knowing all about everything: why the sun is shining, what the stars are, all about the moon and the world around us; but when we become older, our knowledge only becomes a collection of information devoid of passion. We become specialists, we know a great deal about one or the other subject, but we don't care much about, what happens around us, about the need and the misery in the world, about the stars and the beauty.

If we want to know, why there is wealth and poverty in the world, we can find an explanation. There is an explanation for everything, and explanations seem to satisfy most of us. The same is the case as regards religion. We are satisfied with explanations, and to explain away everything we call knowledge.

Is that what we understand about education? Are we learning how to discover, or are we only coming to look for explanations, definitions, conclusions, in order to be able to dull the mind, and stop questioning?

The common theme in Saint-Exupéry's authorship, is Man's ability to wonder, and the loss of this ability. And the ability to wonder is the philosopher's basic virtue. If you as a Life Artist want to start philosophizing, you must therefore become like a child again.

In the longing after returning to the source of wisdom, from where all the philosophical questions stream, philosophy becomes an art of life, an exercise, namely meditation and wordless prayer.

On a beautiful evening in Greece, for now many years ago, I read Saint-Exupéry's small book *The Little Prince*. At that time I was sad and worried, but the book opened my mind, like the sunset opened the evening sky for the stars.

The general theme in the book is humans' ability to wonder, and the loss of this ability. The first part is the short introduction dealing with the narrator and his wondering view of the world when he was a child, and how adults could never understand the real meaning of things or perceive truth in the world - only the superficial and the usual, because they had lost the ability to wonder. This is generally one of the main ideas of the book; "blessed are the children...".

The professor in philosophy Tim Weldon has written a book called *Faring Homewards: The Philosophy of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*. The book superbly blends poetic sensitivity and literary history to bring the reader into a full experience of the much-loved but little-known French writer, Saint-Exupéry. This contemplative portrait is painted with a nuanced understanding of the imaginary landscape of the author of *The Little Prince*; a landscape shaped by the shifting sands of his own historical moment as well as by the timeless truths he embraced in his quest for meaning. Saint-Exupéry's Catholic childhood and his affinity with Pascal say more, according to Weldon, about the ethical and aesthetic underpinnings of the artist's thought and work than critics to date have understood. Weldon's brief but important volume reveals a Saint-Exupéry who is far more than a writer of the world's most famous children's story for adults; he becomes, in these pages, a fellow sojourner in the encounter with the infinite.

The book is divided into two parts: *By Starlight*, and *By Candlelight*. Weldon says that the division was made along metaphorical lines, as he believes Saint-Exupéry viewed the world first through a prism enlightened by the distance of starlight, and then later in life by the more proximate, sobering candlelight. Following a brief biography, the first part of the book includes Saint-Exupéry's discernible but overlapping and intertwined themes of romanticism and humanism. This part pertains to his worldly focus and the romantic imagery of his earlier writing, composed mainly before the 1942 publication of *Flight to Arras*. The second part focuses on what Saint-Exupéry believed mattered most, the truths of Catholic Christianity, and its place in civilization. In his last years he focused squarely on such mysteries as our relationship to God, others and human spirituality. Saint-Exupéry's reflections upon

these experiences were not exclusively to but culminate in the last of his novels to be published while he was alive, *Flight to Arras*.

Saint-Exupéry's upbringing was distinctly Catholic. As a child, his love for the Christmas Season would influence his writing in no small way. In almost every major work, he presents the aesthetic imagery and theological import of the holiday and his indebtedness to its spectacle and meaning. This passage from *The Little Prince* is one such example:

*When I was a little boy, the lights of the Christmas tree, the music of the Midnight Mass, the tenderness of smiling faces, used to make up, so, the radiance of the gifts I received.*

In his autobiographical work *Wind, Sand and Stars*, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry talks about his wonder over the desert; over the wind, the sand and the stars. His books are filled with wonderful meditations over this, yes, that the nights could be so beautiful, that he, as a pilot over the desert, often felled into thoughts, and was in danger falling down.

Saint-Exupéry, an early pioneering aviator, evokes a series of events in his life, principally his work for the airmail carrier Aéropostale. He does so by recounting several episodes from his years flying treacherous mail routes across the African Sahara and the South American Andes. The book's themes deal with friendship, death, heroism, camaraderie and solidarity among colleagues, humanity and the search for meaning in life. The book illustrates the author's view of the world and his opinions of what makes life worth living.

I consider Saint-Exupéry to be one of my central spiritual teachers, who has awoken my own philosophical wonder. In the beginning of the book he writes about sitting in an old omnibus which to him served as a proper symbol of the apprenticeship other pilots before him also had to serve before they might possess the stern joys of their craft. He writes:

*“For how many of us had this old omnibus served as refuge in its day? Sixty? Eighty? I looked about me. Luminous points glowed in the darkness. Cigarettes punctuated the humble meditations of worn old clerks. How many of us had they escorted through the rain on a journey from which there was no coming back?*

*I heard them talking to one another in murmurs and whispers. They talked about illness, money, shabby domestic cares. Their talk painted the walls of the dismal*

*prison in which these men had locked themselves up. And suddenly I had a vision of the face of destiny.*

*Old bureaucrat, my comrade, it is not you who are to blame. No one ever helped you to escape. You, like a termite, built your peace by blocking up with cement every chink and cranny through which the light might pierce. You rolled yourself up into a ball in your genteel security, in routine, in the stifling conventions of provincial life, raising a modest rampart against the winds and the tides and the stars. You have chosen not to be perturbed by great problems, having trouble enough to forget your own fate as man. You are not the dweller upon an errant planet and do not ask yourself questions to which there are no answers. You are a petty bourgeois of Toulouse. Nobody grasped you by the shoulder while there was still time. Now the clay of which you were shaped has dried and hardened, and naught in you will ever awaken the sleeping musician, the poet, the astronomer that possibly inhabited you in the beginning.*

*The squall has ceased to be a cause of my complaint. The magic of the craft has opened for me a world in which I shall confront, within two hours, the black dragons and the crowned crests of a coma of blue lightnings, and when night has fallen I, delivered, shall read my course in the stars."*

The central incident he wrote of detailed his 1935 plane crash in the Sahara Desert between Benghazi and Cairo, which he barely survived along with his mechanic-navigator, André Prévot. Saint-Exupéry and his navigator were left almost completely without water and food, and as the chances of finding an oasis or help from the air gradually decreased, the two men nearly died of thirst before they were saved by a Bedouin on a camel. He wrote:

*"You, Bedouin of Libya who saved our lives, though you will dwell forever in my memory yet I shall never be able to recapture your features. You are Humanity and your face comes into my mind simply as man incarnate. You, our beloved fellowman, did not know who we might be, and yet you recognized us without fail. And I, in my turn, shall recognize you in the faces of all mankind. You came towards me in an aureole of charity and magnanimity bearing the gift of water. All my friends and all my enemies marched towards me in your person. It did not seem to me that you were rescuing me: rather did it seem that you were forgiving me. And I felt I had no enemy left in all the world."*

Saint-Exupéry's most famous book, *The Little Prince* is the story of the little prince, whom the narrator discovers in the Sahara when he is trying to fix his downed airplane and is in fear of his life. The narrator and the reader slowly come to know



the prince's story. Over the course of eight days stranded in the desert, while the narrator attempts to repair his plane, the little prince recounts the story of his life, an account that is often triggered by his preoccupation with the sheep. The prince begins by describing life on his tiny home planet: in effect, an asteroid the size of a house (the asteroid was "named" B-612 by people on Earth; a real asteroid was named after the fictional asteroid).

The asteroid's most prominent features are three minuscule volcanoes (two active, and one dormant or extinct) as well as a variety of plants. The prince describes spending his earlier days cleaning the volcanoes and weeding unwanted seeds and sprigs that infest his planet's soil; in particular, pulling out baobab trees that are constantly on the verge of overrunning the surface. "Catastrophe" the little prince would call it.

The prince wants a sheep to eat the undesirable plants, but is warned by the narrator that a sheep might also eat roses with thorns. Upon hearing this, the prince tells of his love for a mysterious rose that began growing on the asteroid's surface some time ago. The prince says he nourished the rose and listened to her when she told him to make a screen or glass globe to protect her from the cold wind. Although the prince fell in love with the rose, he also began to feel that she was taking advantage of him, and he resolved to leave the planet to explore the rest of the universe. Although the rose finally apologized for her vanity and the two reconciled, she encouraged him to go ahead with his journey.

The prince misses his rose and claims that he only needs to look at the millions of stars to be reminded of his rose, since his rose is on one of them.

Through this story the narrator learns about friendship, love and truth in a touching way. It is in other words the little prince, who is the philosopher and not the adult.

The Little Prince could be an analogy of our own forgotten wonder over life: our inner lost philosopher and true Navigator. Asking philosophical questions begins with wonder, often generated by a severe existential crisis.

When philosophy asks questions it directs itself towards the form, not the content. It directs itself towards the Inner Side of the world, not the Outer Side. The form, or the Inner Side, is the universal, that which we all have in common. The content is the particular, that which we don't have in common. If you look philosophical at it, there is a difference between the individual person and Man himself. The individual person is a located being, who lives in a particular country, belongs to a particular culture, a particular religion, and who has a particular content of mind. Man on the other hand,

is not a located being. Man is everywhere: the form of consciousness (the soul) is the same for all human beings. If the individual person only acts in a special corner of the extensive area of life, then he acts without any connection with the Wholeness: the form, or the Inner Side. You must therefore remember, that philosophy always talks about the Wholeness, the form, the Inner Side - not a part of it, not the content, the Outer Side. The smaller is in the larger, but the larger is not in the smaller. The individual person is the tiny image-limited, stagnated and despairing being, who is satisfied with his tiny gods and his tiny traditions, whereas the welfare and weal of all, the sum of the world's necessity, misery and confusion, are lying Man on mind.

The division of human beings, in for instance Westerners and Orientals, is only geographical determined and entirely random. It has no essential importance. Whether we live east or west for a certain border, whether we are brown, dark, white or yellow, then we all still are human beings who are suffering and hoping, fearing and believing: there is unhappiness and happiness here as well as there. There is not a special Western or Eastern way of thinking when it comes to Man, but the individual person creates these divisions on the basis of his background, which is limited by the images of time: the content, the Outer Side.

Love is not geographical determined, it is not hold in honour on one continent, while it is denied on the other. When individual persons in this way divide mankind, it is often because of economical reasons or ideological beliefs, and it happens with the purpose of exploitation.

This does not mean, that human beings not are different in temperament etc. There are similarities, and nevertheless there are differences. It means that the understanding of the individual person not is philosophy. The understanding of the individual person belongs to science. In philosophical respect we are the same.

Philosophy asks after that, which makes a human being into a human being, the common or universal, which all of us are part of, in spite of the fact, that we can behave so differently and be studied in so many different ways. Here it is about what we can term the human nature, and the question is not solved by seeking concluded answers in religion, ideology or New Age spirituality, and nor is it solved scientific by experimenting, collecting systematic observations, and from them create theories. It is solved by thinking and meditating over everything, we already know about Man, and by seeking unity and coherency in it. The wholeness is the reason for that philosophy are seeking unity and coherence, and therefore are using logic as a tool.

The truth in philosophy is something a philosopher strive after *experiencing*, whereafter this *experience* can be written down. But the answers philosophers write

down in books are not the truth. They aren't conclusion to anything. They are to discussion. Philosophy throws out answers to the questions, argues for the answers in a rational and logical way, and investigates their consequences. Written down answers are in constant change. That's how the history of philosophy moves. The answers are fingers pointing at the moon. The fingers shouldn't be confused with the moon. But it is clear that some answers are better rationally reasoned than others; they are longer lasting, they are more *whole*.

So, in philosophy Man isn't only a result of a single influence. Man is much more complex, and to emphasize one influence, and at the same time understating others, is to cause a lack of balance, which will lead to even bigger lack of meaning and coherency, and therefore to even bigger chaos, much more confusion. Man is a complete process. There must be an understanding of the wholeness, and not only a part of it, regardless how important this sometimes may be.

Only the specialized is fixated in a determined cause, and in this way also in a determined effect. Where there is specialization there is stagnation. Man is not a specialized being. He can break through his limitation, which is created by the images of time – and this he will have to do if he wants to experience reality.

Human nature is the whole of mankind, and do not belong to a certain category. But with the individual person's mind follows the complicated problems of split, contradiction and war.

So in order to understand yourself you must understand that Man is an inviolable whole, not only a determined being, as for instance a society being with his particular assigned job: a worker, a citizen, a consumer, or a political being, right wing or leftist, or a religious being, Christian, Moslem, Jew, - but a complete whole in which an interaction and a reciprocity takes place.

You must realize, that suffering and split origin from ignorance about your own human nature. As long as you don't understand yourself, your perspective on yourself and on the world, your personal history, you must, whatever you do, and in whatever area, unavoidably create separation, despair and suffering.

In order to understand yourself you must go out on a voyage of discovery. A voyage of discovery, that goes into your ego and your personal history, and therefore into time as a whole. You must travel up The River of Heraclitus, you must travel up the river of time, which not only is your own personal history, but also the collective and universal history. You must become a Life Artist.

Therefore, as I point out in my first book *Meditation as an Art of Life*, asking philosophical questions is a meditative state of mind. I used the expression:

*“Asking philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way is the wordless silence within a strong existential wonder.”*

In that way philosophical questions function as a kind of Koans. A Koan is a story, dialogue, question, or statement, which is used in Zen practice to provoke the "great doubt" and test a student's progress in Zen practice.

The ability to wonder (or to be skeptical, critical) is the philosopher's basic virtue. If you as a Life Artist want to start philosophizing, you must therefore become like a child again. Children seems to come from eternity, or the Wholeness. It seems like you automatically begin to philosophize when you somehow get a sense of looking at things from the perspective of the Wholeness. Therefore enlightened masters also always are philosophers, no matter whether they have any formal education in philosophy or not. Krishnamurti was an exceptional example of a philosopher thinking for himself all the time, but he hadn't got any education in philosophy.

Sub specie aeternitatis (Latin for "under the aspect of eternity") is, from Baruch Spinoza onwards, an honorific expression describing what is universally and eternally true, without any reference to or dependence upon the temporal portions of reality. In clearer English, sub specie aeternitatis roughly means "from the perspective of the eternal". Even more loosely, the phrase is used to describe an alternative or objective point of view.

In the longing after returning to the source of wisdom, from where all the philosophical questions stream, philosophy becomes an art of life, an exercise, namely meditation. In this movement in towards the Inner Side (the form, the universal, the wholeness) 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?

Finally, in philosophical pedagogic, there isn't given answers. Philosophical pedagogic is an invitation to wonder, to think for yourself, to become a light for yourself, to develop your own teaching. Krishnamurti said: "I invite you to become aware of your unawareness." Kierkegaard said basically seen the same: "The only

thing I do is to invite to awareness of your paradoxical nature.” Philosophy is about awakening our innate awareness, it is about *Learning to See with your Heart*.

At least a dozen times during his quest Frodo chooses to follow his heart over his calculating reason and his experience, and most of the time the choice turns out to be crucially right.

Tolkien’s epistemology includes trust in *Learning to See with the Heart*. But the heart is not an infallible organ. Sauron’s and Saruman’s hearts and intuitions mislead them (they looked only with the burning third eye – Sauron’s eye is completely cut off from any bodily connection). For *Learning to See with the Heart*, unlike reason and sense experience, depends on moral goodness; it is trustworthy only in the virtuous, and the virtuous is what the Conspiracy of the Third Eye is closing the access to. So virtue is part of epistemology! Epistemology depends on ethics; knowledge (of the highest and most important things) depends on goodness. That’s what Jesus said, after all: “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any man’s will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God” (Jn 7:16-17). And, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mt 5:8).

We must be careful here. This is *not* “Get in touch with your own higher consciousness”, “Listen to your feelings”, or even “Feel the Force”. Frodo is humble and knows he lacks the wisdom the Quest demands, so he listens to others, to his superiors, and to tradition. And when he has to rely on his own intuition, it is his moral innocence, not any epistemological or psychological method, that saves him.

Frodo learn from experience, but not the way Goethe’s Faust does. He does not eat experience like a spider eating flies, trapping them in the web of his consciousness. He lets himself be tutored by experience because he believes in objective truth and, implicitly, in a providential order in the world. That’s why he trust experience. As C.S. Lewis put it, “What I like about experience is that it is such an honest thing. You may take any number of wrong turnings; but keep your eyes open and you will not be allowed to go very far before the warning signs appear. You may have deceived yourself, but experience is not trying to deceive you. The universe rings true wherever you fairly test it.”

Taken as a whole, Saint-Exupéry’s written work was about the visceral, lyrical, and even philosophical explorations of some of the deepest mysteries of the human experience: the presence of God in our lives, the human person understood as body and soul, the place of love and spirituality in human nature, human solidarity and the state of Western civilization, the awesome wonder of beauty, and so on. At times, employing the voice of the humanist, but mostly assuming the voice of a Catholic

thinker, the merit of Saint-Exupéry's writing lies in his plainspoken interpretations of these timeless meditations. Lost to the world in mid-life, we are left to ponder the genius that was and might have been.

Saint-Exupéry disappeared over the Mediterranean on a reconnaissance mission in July 1944, and is believed to have died at that time. But the death of Saint-Exupéry remains one of the most enduring mysteries of world War II. It wasn't until April 7, 2004 that the wreckage of Saint-Exupéry's Lockheed Lightning P-38 plane, discovered on the Mediterranean seabed four years earlier, was confirmed by the French authorities as his. Saint-Exupéry was such a popular figure in France that many likened this discovery to that of the mystery of Amelia Earhart's doomed 1937 flight over the Pacific Ocean – except this mystery was closer to being solved. Though the discovery yielded information on where the plane went down, it didn't reveal how:

"It's impossible to say if he was shot down, if he lost consciousness, or if he had a mechanical accident," said Patrick Grandjean of the National department of Subaquatic and Submarine Archaeological Research.

Naturally, the mystery fostered controversy. The wreckage of Saint-Exupéry's plane showed no signs of air combat, nor were there any claims in the records of the German military to their shooting down an Allied plane on July 31, 1944. Luc Vanrell, the local scuba diver who thought he discovered the wreckage years before the French government's confirmation opined publicly that Saint-Exupéry must have committed suicide. But no one knows.

Saint-Exupéry would reference the awe and power of Christmas yet again in his *Wind, Sand, and Stars*, comparing the beauty of flying to the experience of being "dazed a little like a child on Christmas Eve," and later in the novel, "something, I know not what, lent this night the savor of Christmas." Saint-Exupéry clung to such memories, admittedly, as they were to inspire hope and faith in the future:

*And so I said to myself, "The essential thing is that something should remain of what one has lived for: customs, family celebrations, one's childhood home. The main thing is to live for one's return..."*

If one were able to return. The solemnity of death, with the full weight of its mystery, was also to influence the younger Saint-Exupéry.

The ending of *The Little Prince* is somehow sad. There's no two ways about that. The prince has left the Earth—it looked like he died when the snake bit him, but his body

is nowhere to be found. The narrator's made it out of the desert, but that seems like nothing compared to wondering what happened to the prince. And the sheep. And the rose. The Little Prince says he is responsible for the rose's safety. The narrator's got questions that can't ever be answered. Whether the sheep has eaten the rose or the rose is safe is a "great mystery". This mystery, he says "alters everything".

But the ending also holds possibility for hope, because we don't know exactly what happened. Perhaps (we hope!) the prince made it safely home to his flower. Perhaps he remembers to keep the sheep away from his flower. Perhaps all is well up there in Asteroid B-612.

That's why, in the last two paragraphs of the book, the narrator turns to us readers and begs us to keep a look out for the prince, too.

As the prince said near the end of the story:

*"All men have stars, but they are not the same things for different people. For some, who are travelers, the stars are guides. For others they are no more than little lights in the sky. For others, who are scholars, they are problems... But all these stars are silent. You-You alone will have stars as no one else has them... In one of the stars I shall be living. In one of them I shall be laughing. And so it will be as if all the stars will be laughing when you look at the sky at night..You, only you, will have stars that can laugh! And when your sorrow is comforted (time soothes all sorrows) you will be content that you have known me... You will always be my friend. You will want to laugh with me. And you will sometimes open your window, so, for that pleasure... It will be as if, in place of the stars, I had given you a great number of little bells that knew how to laugh"*

#### **4) The Core– Rediscovering Truth**

"What is truth?" Kreeft quotes Mortimer Adler, who says that this is one of the easiest questions in philosophy to answer, and he quotes Aristotle's quintessentially commonsensical definition of truth: "When one says of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, he speaks the truth."

The most philosophical provocative part of Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-Stories" is what Tolkien says about fairy stories being "true".

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

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

Truth is objective, and discovered. We have already looked at this in relation with *The Core* in everyday language as explained in the chapter on Ontology. *The Core* is a teaching created by my professor David Favrholt, who was inspired by Niels Bohr. He begins with explaining what truth means in philosophical sense:

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

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

Bohr regarded the concepts of classical physics as a more explicit formulation of everyday language. In that sense everyday language is a necessary precondition for all natural scientific epistemology, and it can't be replaced by an unambiguous and formalised, logical scientific language.

Surprisingly, Tolkien shares this idea. Remember: The two magics have a number of things in common or (when misused) evil. Technology becomes evil when it is turned from a means to an end (from philosophy to ideology). Fantasy becomes evil when it is turned into a create-your-own-reality philosophy. The ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, between objective and subjective reality, is the first mark of sanity, and the confusion of the two is the first and most basic mark of insanity. Neither materialism nor idealism have the ability to distinguish. In order to establish



unambiguous description (and thinking) one must be able to discriminate between subject and object, dream and reality, etc. This is also the source of enchantment. Enchantment is only enchantment when it is sensed as being real, or true, as discriminated from unreal and false.

Favrholdt has developed this same important theme in Bohr's epistemology further in his own philosophy.

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

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

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

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

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

Any human being understands, what we mean by saying, that the witness explained in the court, that the thief had a pistol, but in reality the thief was unarmed. We also learn to talk about the poetic reality, about the experienced reality etc. We learn to talk about things, which exist, despite that no one experiences them, or have consciousness about them. When they found the Golden Horns at Gallehus, they

found something, which no one knew were there. But they found them. It wasn't so, that they arose, because they were experienced.

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

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

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

In accordance with Taoism there is nothing beyond the world. 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.

We can choose not to describe it and instead soak ourselves in Hinajana Buddhistic meditation (or music), 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-calledgnoseological 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 logically, that both materialism (the scientific bias) and idealism (the New Age bias) are mistaken point of views.

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

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

## 5) Hara – Rediscovering the Child Within

My booklet *The Philosophy of Hara Healing* is closely connected to [The Peter Pan Project](#), since a central part of Hara Healing is about rediscovering the child within. Children are natural centered in Hara, the body's reservoir of energy and life-joy. It is therefore they do things with an incredible lot of joy and vitality. To work with centring in Hara means that you become like a child again. I will in this section use some space to explain the importance of Hara, especially since Hara is the main compass in our top-heavy head fixated culture.

I'm puzzled over that the secret of Hara Healing doesn't exist in any explicit formulation, except in a book by Karlfried Graf Dürckheim called [Hara – The Vital Center of Man](#). Dürckheim was a German diplomat, psychotherapist and Zen Master. Unfortunately Dürckheim isn't a very flattering role model for Hara practice. Below I will explain what is going wrong. A veteran of World War I, he was introduced to Zen Buddhism early in life. After obtaining a doctorate in psychology, he became an avid supporter of the Nazi Party. Following World War II he was imprisoned in Japan which transformed him spiritually. Upon returning to Germany he became a leading proponent of the Western esoteric spiritual tradition, synthesizing teachings from Christian Mysticism, Depth Psychology and Zen Buddhism.

Zen Buddhism, by the way, also has a dark side. To many Americans, Zen Buddhists primarily devote themselves to discovering inner serenity and social peace. But Zen has had strong ties to militarism -- indeed so strong, that the leaders of one of the largest denominations in Japan have remorsefully compared their former religious fanaticism during Japan's brutal expansionism in the 1930's and 40's to today's murderously militant Islamists.

Dürckheim is an example of the corruption of psychotherapy, the moral subjectivism, which led him to Nazism. [Against Therapy](#) is a book by Jeffrey Masson. In this ground-breaking and highly controversial book. Masson attacks the very foundations of modern psychotherapy from Freud to Jung, Fritz Perls to Carl Rogers. With passion and clarity, *Against Therapy* addresses the profession's core weaknesses, contending that, since therapy's aim is to change people, and this is achieved according to the therapist's own notions and prejudices (subjectivism), the psychological process is necessarily corrupt, and can justify the use of for example brainwashing, beating and torture. In a nutshell it is the same argumentation I myself put forward towards the Matrix Conspiracy's two methods: psychotherapy and coaching.

The unconscious use of moral subjectivism is just one of the reasons why I'm emphasizing the importance of philosophy in a spiritual practice, because that would have hindered the unexamined use of moral subjectivism.

What I primarily miss in Dürckheim's book, and in other books, is an actual guide to how concretely practicing Hara. There exists a lot of references to Hara. Healers, for example, put their hands on your Hara center, or they invite to "breathe deep down from your stomach". But it's difficult to find any descriptions of the concrete daily, and constant practice of Hara awareness. No descriptions of the philosophy and central spirituality of Hara. Therefore I have developed the Hara meditation myself. I think it is incredible, when thinking of the healing power Hara has, that Hara practice is completely lying in the dark. However, this is not completely true. I have found two books, which, besides Dürckheim's, seem to deal with the philosophy of Hara Healing.

The first book is called [Head, Heart and Hara – The Soul Centres of West and East](#), and is written by Peter Wilberg. It is described like this:

*An ancient Daoist saying tells us "When you are sick, do not seek a cure. Find your centre and you will be healed." The centre it refers to is located deep in the sensed interiority of our belly, that abode of the soul known in Japanese as hara.*

*Not being in touch with this centre is a sickness – the generalized sickness of our globalized Western culture. This social sickness is felt by individuals as a lack of deep inner contact with themselves and others – a contact that can only be made from this centre, we can experience it only as a black hole that pulls us down into states of depression.*

*'Depression' (a word with no equivalent in Japanese) is, in essence, a lack of hara awareness – the capacity to actively press down or “de-press” our awareness into the inner soul depths of the abdomen or hara. With hara awareness we not only recontact our own innermost soul depths and soul centre. We learn to make inner contact with others from these depths and from that centre – to experience true intimacy of soul.*

*Paradoxically, what passes today as scientific psychology has no place for the soul or psyche – nor any understanding of its relation to our own inwardly sensed body. Hara awareness is both an alternative to medical and psychiatric cures and the basis for a genuinely psychological medicine – an anatomy of the soul-body and its centres.*

*Head, heart and Hara not only contrasts the head- and heart-centred culture of the West with the hara culture of Japan. It also shows how hara awareness can unite the primordial wisdom of both East and West. Peter Wilberg brings together the dao of Lao Tse and th logos of Heraclitus in a spiritual science and cosmology of the soul – with all its multiple aspects, centres and spheres of awareness.*

The only thing I somehow resonate with in this book is the above back-cover description. The book is a huge disappointment, and at the same time quite fascinating due to the paradox it reveals. Wilberg is apparently only using the concept of Hara to create a postmodernistic political manifest (spiritual Communism); a manifest which moves between utterly postmodernistic nonsense and New Age fantasies. What is fascinating about the book is that it is so top-heavy intellectual and therefore out of touch with Heart and Hara, love and existence as such. The only thing that somehow grounds the book in reality is the recognizable concepts, names and quotes it uses from philosophy and the wisdom traditions. If I should mention some explanations of what Wilberg is in to, besides the Matrix Conspiracy, it could be my articles [The Sokal Hoax](#) and [Constructivism: The Postmodern Intellectualism Behind New Age and the Self-help Industry](#), as well as my Matrix Dictionary entry [Gaia.com](#).

The other book is called [Dan-Tien: Your Secret Energy Center](#) (Dan-Tien, or Tan Tien, is the Chinese word for Hara). It is written by Richard Markert. It is described like this:

*The Dan-Tien is a source of primal wisdom and vital energy that resides within each of us. For thousands of years people in the East have learned to gather life energy (ch'i) in this center to promote well-being and longevity. Now, Christopher Markert reveals the secrets of the Dan-Tien to Westerners in this friendly guide. When you*

*think or act in a way that disagrees with who you really are, you may experience an unpleasant sensation in your Dan-Tien center. When your behavior is in tune with your emotions, you experience a sense of physical well-being. You have an "inner compass" that functions as a sensor (or an indicator); your compass communicates if you listen. Learning to use your Dan-Tien in everyday life is easy and the benefits are immediate. When you engage the energy of your Dan-Tien, your daily tasks become artful activities in which you joyfully engage yourself. Markert says that listening to your Dan-Tien can bring you "millions of happy minutes" in all that you do and in all of your relationships. With the author's examples and visualizations, you can learn to let your Dan-Tien bring you self confidence, love, and happiness.*

This book is much more grounded, and it is from this book I have the idea of Hara as the *Compass*. But I don't agree with everything written. I can't recommend the visualization exercises described in the book. Not that they are wrong, but they can be deceptive. I can only vouch for my own Hara exercise as described in my book. Not because I want to triumph my own teaching, but because that's what I have experiences with.

Both Dürckheim, Wilberg and Markert demonstrate that an experience of the sensational healing effect of Hara practice not is enough in a spiritual practice. Especially Dürckheim and Wilberg have at the same time developed a hostility toward the head, towards logic and rational thinking. But that doesn't eliminate the head, and instead they have therefore placed a Sophist in the place of the Navigator; a psychotherapist instead of a philosopher. This led them both into ideology. In Dürckheim's case Nazism, and in Wilberg's case what he calls "spiritual Communism". They are paradoxical examples of ending in what they set out to criticise: head fixation. But Dürckheim's book is still a good introduction to Hara. I can't recommend Wilberg's book.

Hara Healing would be able to revolutionize our health system. Hara is simply fundamental to all wisdom traditions and natural healing professions.

It should be mentioned though, that the *name* Hara is very well know in The West. But here it mostly is confused with a chakra. Here I think about *Svadhithana* and/or *Manipura*.

Traditionally, Hara is your vital centre, an area in the body, a centre of gravity, which main center is situated about 4-5 cm under the navel, inside the front body. In Japanese Hara not only means stomach in anatomical sense, but has existential meaning. Hara is therefore not a chakra (psychic centre). This has to be emphasized, because in the West there rules the idea, that Hara is a bodily focus-spot at line with

those Chakras, you find in the Tantric yogis' description of, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots – that is: the misunderstanding, that Hara just is a centre on the way towards higher lying chakras. This is a misunderstanding of Hara. My intention is to show what in reality is meant by *The Philosophy of Hara Healing*.

The concrete exercise, the Hara meditation, is described in my book *Meditation as an Art of Life*. The philosophy of Hara has primarily to do with ontology and existentialism. In short: a teaching of *Being*.

The main misunderstanding of spiritual practice is the symbolism of a ladder, where you get the impression of an upwards movement. The truth is that it is like a circle, where you break out from the center: an embryologically movement; a movement where you both rediscover your inner child, but also, and through it, the importance of the child in society.

I don't think you can experience enlightenment without experiencing Hara Healing, and I therefore also think, that if you from the start practice Hara Awareness, you can avoid many pitfalls on the spiritual path. The rediscovery of Hara is essential for the mystical experience. When starting practicing Hara Awareness you will quite soon begin to experience enchanting changes in your health, daily life and worldview which you haven't created with your will. You can hear it echoed in the philosophy of the medieval German mystic and fully enlightened master Meister Eckhart:

*I once had a dream. I dreamt that I, even though a man, was pregnant, pregnant and full with Nothingness like a woman who is with child. And that out of this Nothingness, God was born.*

Eckhart spoke of the Soul as the virgin "womb" and fruitful "wife" of the spirit. He also spoke of a "ghostly spot" in the soul which is "matter-free" and which links us to our spiritual essence. The belly or Hara is the site of this receptive and fertile "soul-womb".

In Buddhism the belly has always been understood as the centre and inner ground of human's being. The lack of visible exterior signs of "progress" in many traditional Buddhist sculptures is a reflection of a value system in which interest in the products of the head and the processes of the heart were subordinated to a concentration on man's inner being. Modern Western materialism is based on the values of Doing and Having, of achievement and fulfillment – filling the belly, answering the mind's questions and filling it with knowledge, satisfying the heart's desires. In short: it is the philosophy of Becoming (The Mythology of Authenticity). And yet it is precisely

this materialism that can leave people feeling empty rather than fulfilled. Becoming has no Being. Western philosophy is in essence the philosophy of Becoming, Eastern philosophy is a philosophy of Being.

Western man identifies Being with intellectual and emotional creativity and fulfilment, but despite the fullness of head and heart, the physical stomach feels drained and spiritual empty – for he lacks Hara. He is in reality not in a state of Being, but in a state of Becoming. Eastern man identifies Being with creative emptiness of head and heart – only to explode with the energy compressed in the Hara, and the Heart streaming with compassion.

So, there is an essential truth in the Buddhist practice of emptying, one which is in perfect accord with the creative impulse of the West, and has nothing to do with the attainment of a state of pure emptiness or Nirvana. This is the understanding that it is only if we are able to actively clear an empty space in our head, heart and hara – our thoughts, feelings, impulses and intuitions – do we become open ourselves to receive genuinely new thoughts, sense genuinely new feelings, and let genuinely new intuitions and impulses germinate and incubate within us. This was Meister Eckhart's understanding of the Virgin conception. The purpose of creating a "virgin" soul is to become permanently fruitful in soul, and in this way to become host to a new sense of self – one linked to Being or "God". For God is essentially "bearing". Eckhart's thinking was a "thinking of the belly", understood in a fundamentally feminine way through Christian symbolism – as the pregnant "soul-womb" of the spirit.

When we live in tune with Hara we naturally harmonize with young children because we are in touch with the inner child. To rediscover the inner child we do not have to analyze and explain our childhood. What matters is not so much our past but our present attitude toward it.

How do we feel about childhood and children in general? If we are in the habit of rejecting our own childhood, we may have mixed feelings about children also. Perhaps we have been influenced by certain theories and practices that prevail in our culture. Perhaps we assume that our customary ways of handling babies and of raising and educating children are quite all right.

But as we begin to live more in tune with our Hara in all areas of life, we may begin to doubt certain things that we are now taking for granted. Here and there we may stumble over ideas and practices that do not "feel good." Gradually we may want to replace these with others that are more in tune with human nature. This will then enable us to appreciate children in general and the child within us in particular.



As Christopher Markert writes in his book, then people in the Far East see children in a different light. Their lives revolve around the family, not around the individual and his/her achievements. Children are the essence of the family, not an addition to it. The contemporary Chinese/American, Lin Yutang, compared Western and Far-Eastern societies and came to this conclusion: "It has seemed to me that the final test of any civilization is, what type of husbands and wives and fathers and mothers does it turn out. Besides the austere simplicity of such a question, every other achievement of civilization – art, philosophy, literature, and material living – pales to insignificance." (*The Importance of Living*, London: Wm. Heinemann, 1938, p. 149).

Markert explains that the famous I Ching, the "Bible" of the Far East, is really about a family consisting of father, mother, three sons and three daughters, and their relationships with each other. In the Western Bible we find a universe that is created by an unmarried father whose son is also unmarried. Parts of our Bible help us to understand and appreciate children. But according to Markert, others do the opposite, and some of them make us wince. Markert says:

*"We can sense that they originated with people who condemned children because they hated themselves. Whereas Jesus enjoyed the company of children and admonished his followers to become like children if they wanted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Western culture as a whole reflects a quite different attitude. St. Paul taught that children come into the world as sinners because they are the result of the sinful sex act. To this day, many people in the West feel that children are little savages and sinners who must be guided through strict discipline, a spiritual life, and the threat of punishment until they become real Christians."*

In the Far East, the family resembles a circle with the child in the center, whereas the Western family looks more like a pyramid with the children at the bottom.

Markert says that in the Far-Eastern attitude toward children is also shared by most Indian tribes in North and South America, whose remote ancestors had migrated from Asia. When American Indians first met white settlers, they were often appalled at the callous and crule ways in which the whites treated their own children.

Markert tells about an American anthropologist, Jean Liedloff, who made similar observations with the Indian of Venezuela. In remote jungles she came upon tribes that had never seen white people before. The Indians led a simple life, of the type that we associate with the Stone Age. But what impressed Liedloff was their inexplicable happiness. What was their secret? Were they using a hitherto unknown drug? Was their religion in any way special? Had they developed an unusually harmonious social structure?

These people seemed to enjoy everything they did, even the most strenuous tasks, and they hardly ever argued with each other. When work had to be done, nobody seemed to be in charge, but somehow the work got done spontaneously. While the members of the expedition worried, argued, cursed, and suffered often, the Indians kept displaying this “irrational” happiness.

They seemed to be free of the “everyday frustration” and neurotic symptoms that we consider normal in Western societies. With growing amazement Liedloff, the anthropologist, watched them day after day, week after week, trying to discover the reason for the “abnormal” behavior. As she was taking notes one day, she suddenly noticed something about the Indian babies. They were not the hyperactive brats, the screaming, annoying bundles of frustration that she remembered from her native New York. What she saw instead were serene, smiling little people.

Why were they smiling? Apparently they were treated in a special way by their mothers and other members of the family and tribe. Most of the time during the day they were carried on their mother’s back while she went about her daily tasks. When the baby got restless, it was swung around and breast-fed. Thus it grew up in an atmosphere of continuous love and contact.

At the moment of birth, this baby had not been not been exposed to harsh lights, loud voices, and chemical disinfectants. It had not been manhandled and slapped by a (male) gynecologist to make it scream. After birth it had not been isolated in a separate room or plastic box, left alone to endure the terror of loneliness. Later it was not kept in a crib or baby carriage for endless hours. When it screamed and squirmed from pain, hunger, or loneliness, it was never purposely left alone to let it develop its voice or to let it get used to the hard facts of life.

Therefore it felt deep down that it could trust others, that it was loved and appreciated by those around it. The world was a good place to be born into, and it was good to be alive. A baby like this will spontaneously try to please others, it will soon develop into a happy member of the family and the tribe.

When it grows up it will not feel an irrational craving for recognition and ego-satisfaction that is so common with people in modern Western societies who have suffered from material deprivation. It will not be compelled by an obsessive, all-consuming desire to amass huge fortunes, to collect more and more academic titles or military medals, or to acquire more and more fame and power merely to satisfy the craving for love and recognition that it lacked as a baby. Instead it will grow up to become a happy, sane, and responsible adult, and a loving mother or father. All this is

due to that it never has met the Western symbolism of spiritual growth: the symbolism of the ladder. It has never been forced to leave its natural focus in Hara.

Dürckheim asks in his book: "If you ask anyone where in his body he feels his "I" he will probably consider it a strange question at first, but pressed for an answer, he will reply either "in the head" or "in the chest" or he will indicate with a vague gesture the region of his stomach and heart. Only very rarely will anyone indicate a region further down."

And this is understandable. Head, chest, and heart, like everything above the navel, represents the spheres of consciously thinking, willing, and suffering Ego.

If a man localizes the position of his "I" above the navel it is correct in so far as he has developed, as an ego, beyond the sphere of his unconscious life to the light of consciousness, since his general psychic level lies in the "I-self." The more he identifies himself with his I, however, and the more he bases himself with the sphere of its consciousness-pattern, the more he comes into conflict with everything excluded from it. This conflict will be the greater the more he allows the conscious to take precedence over the unconscious.

Dürckheim says that it is completely natural that a man should tend to give greater importance to the sphere he knows well and which he can control than to the one which he does not know at all and which moves him irrationally. It is also natural that he should put a higher value on the mind than on nature working within him, and should seek the Transcendental only above. It is natural because people nearly always view higher development as increasing consciousness in the purely rational or intellectual sense. But this idea leads into a blind alley because the only realities then perceived are those which the Ego can admit and comprehend. For the Ego-centered mind, with its mediocre moral values, the blind natural drives constitute a repellent and unworthy contradiction. The resulting conflict will block the opening down towards the heart and hara; that is: it will block the possibility for love and existence. Or more particularly the unfolding of *that* mind which transcends the overlordship of the purely controllable mind. Instead of a hierarchic order based on the *Way* leading to the full unfolded Self, a conflict arises in which the mainly thinking man excludes and represses that part of his nature which he feels to be uncontrollable, less valuable or even value-destructive. "Above" and "below" are then evaluated as high and low, noble and base, spiritual and material, light and dark.

Finally, Dürckheim says, such a man begins to see in uncontrollable nature nothing but threatening abyss, the downward pull. But in so seeing he not only cuts off and rules out the instinctive and emotional in the psychological sense, but also the

sustaining, informing, and liberating forces of Great Nature. To the extent that the tap root of his existence has disappeared from his awareness, he will, while striving for the “crown of life,” aspire misguidedly to heights existing only in his imagination. He becomes sapless and weak and gradually his life-stem dries out. By clinging to an impoverished and lifeless concept of values and blocks any integration with the underlying depths.

The tendency to depreciate and reject Nature is perhaps understandable at a certain level of development because the Ego naturally rejects whatever may threaten it. The man who at first knows the working of the unconscious only as dark urges of instinct and desire, feels continually threatened in his well-ordered Ego by the power of his desiring nature. Whether it is a question of the repressed powers of his instincts or of the Greater Being prevented from unfolding, he feels himself driven by the unconscious, or threatened by explosions, and he likes to speak of the “demon of the depths.” But what he calls “demonic” is nothing other than the untamed vitality of the Whole, struggling toward consciousness, against that small part to which, in his limited Ego he tries to reduce himself. This untamed vitality is Kundalini.

Dürckheim says that it is the suffering of man’s heart which leads to the beginning of all actions. Whether or not suffering is fruitful and leads him to self-fulfillment, that also he perceives in his heart. Around it is the chest expanding in exaltation or contracting in grief, then liver and stomach become involved – one speaks of “butterflies,” or a “gnawing in the vitals.” In the center of this middle region beats the heart which is uneasy and longs for peace. With the unrest of the heart all that is specifically human beings, and in its peace comes fulfillment. The unrest may be caused by the sorrows of this world, or it may also denote lack of fulfillment of Being. But in the final analysis it always reveals man’s separation from the divine Unity and his longing to merge himself with it anew.

The position of man between heaven and earth corresponds to the position of the soul between mind and nature, and this is represented in the symbolism of the body, by the position of the heart between head and abdomen. Head, heart, and abdomen symbolize, even for the naïve man, soul, mind and nature, and represent three forms and three stages of consciousness. The dark, instinctive, sensual consciousness appears in utmost contrast to the light consciousness of the head. In between stands the intuitive-perceptive consciousness of the heart. And this triad, seen intellectually, constitutes not only a genetic, organic sequence but also a scale of values.

To begin with, Dürckheim says, man regards the instinctive consciousness merely as the opposite of the mind, for he knows as yet nothing of a development from the pre-personal, via the personal, to the supra-personal, wherein each stage pre-supposes and

includes the preceding one. He sees, at first, only a succession of mutually exclusive forms of consciousness through which he ascends from his instinctive nature, through entanglement in personal feelings, to the height of rational thinking, clear and free from the shackles of instinctive as well as of emotional attachments. The development of the human being as a totality appears, from the viewpoint of the rational Ego as follows: first, the mastery of the instinctive drives, then overcoming the limitations of the subjective Ego, and finally ascent to the real “objective” morally developed Ego. On this scheme his striving should result in his being the master of his instincts and the servants of his mind or spirit in the realm of his heart. But actually something quite different appears. Out of his heart’s need it may one day dawn on him that the lost connection with the Ground of Being which he has regarded merely as Nature’s dangerous dark work is ruining the wholeness of his life. In the same way he may realize that in orienting himself upwards by the sole strength of his mind, which lifts his conceptional thinking into a guiding principle, he is missing the truth of life. And one day the moment may come when the sufferer will perceive something beyond the boundaries of his three-pronged scheme of development. The distinction of Below, Middle, and Above in the sense that lower body, heart, and head symbolize merely the instinct-bound, the worldly, and the rationally-fixed consciousness, will no longer satisfy him. For now it will be obvious that the way in which nature, soul, and mind have been understood is merely the way in which the whole pattern of life as been reflected in the mirror of the Ego.

When the little Ego withdraws and its working pattern is no longer the sole guide to the recognition of reality, life will disclose different horizons, gain new dimensions, increase in breadth, height, and depth. Those formulae in which man perceived his reality as three-fold and arising from nature, will indeed recur as a pyramid of concepts, but then they will have a new meaning and a broader base. The region of the heart, as the medium of endurance and of self proving in the world will still hold a central position. But like nature below and mind above the heart region itself will gain a wider significance. Nature, soul and mind will no longer be separate, self sufficient spheres but pointers to a supernatural whole. In the total experience of a wider life, instinctive nature, supporting the Ego from below, expands into Great Nature. The confined and suffering soul, enmeshed in its subjectivity, deepens into the Great Soul. And the mind, chained to the intellectual comprehensible, is lifted to the level of a Universal Consciousness.

Dürckheim asks: “In what sense does Nature in the new vision rise to Great Nature? It will enter into the inner life as the *operative unity of the Primordial* which a man will sense as his life-ground in whose undivided, pregnant unity all possibilities are contained.”

What does the released mind find? It will continue to perceive life in images and patterns, but then every pattern, image, and structure will take on a significance beyond all assertions and contradictions. It will then stand open to the Being which speaks intimately to man in symbols. Here the light of knowledge will be different in kind from that of conceptual thinking, where the fullness of being streams away in multiplicity, where the in-dwelling order of life is fixed in static patterns, and where the primal unity of the Divine eludes the Ego-limited mind.

And what is meant by the deepening of the soul? Then, as before, the sphere of the soul will remain the specifically human element driven always by joy and sorrow and battling for fulfilment. But the meaning and origin of suffering will then be seen differently. A man will no longer suffer merely from the unfulfilled desires of his natural being, but from the lack of fulfilment of his true being which is part of the Greater Life. Indeed it is the Greater Life that will then suffer within him, for it is always striving with all its force to reveal itself in the love of man according to the laws of the awakened spirit. This is Kundalini.

So, Dürckheim says, the effect of transcending the Ego-centered pattern of life is threefold: as a clarification of the senses opening anew to the Primordial, as an illumination of the mind in the light of which the patterns of Being is disclosed, and as an awakening of the revealing function and nature of the heart.

When a man begins to feel again the original Unity of life, and in his widened consciousness, begins to know the true meaning of consciousness, he will realize to what extent the development for which he is destined is obstructed by the way his heart dwells within his fixing Ego, and his Ego within his unpurified heart. He will feel, perhaps only dimly, the necessity for a fundamentally different attitude demanding a new standpoint and a new start. As distinct from the controlling attitude of the Ego, in the new vision he will see the need for an ever renewed merging of himself with the undivided Unity. Compared with his hitherto accepted rule of holding fast to what he has already achieved and undertaking new things only within the framework of the old, this new challenge will constitute an extraordinary demand on him. And yet the renewal of his life depends on his complying with it.

To be able to fulfil his vocation, which is to prove and to bear witness to the Divine Being in his life, to ascend to the new mind, a man must first go down into the depths of his whole and original nature. This is in short what I mean with my concept of a Luciferian movement (see my books [Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story](#) and [Karen Blixen – the Devil's Mistress](#)). Hara Healing is the actual practice of this.

In order *to go out* to grasp the fullness of the Primordial Unity he must first *go into* the original emptiness. To be able to find his way to the true light he must first plunge into the darkness of the untracked Unity. Where these insights are glimpsed the necessity for a fresh orientation will arise, and a new relationship to nature, soul, and mind. There must be a reversal of the twisted, upward pull, imposed in the good faith by the Ego, and a swing back to the perception of the underlying reality whence all life begins its way and its upward climb. The way to Truth for the man held rightly by his Ego must be a "backward turning."

In the new vision the symbolism of the body also takes on a different meaning. This is Dürckheim's essential message. The head and the space above it symbolize the mind and its realm as the totality of the Divine order. The heart and its beating symbolize the soul and its world – the realm where man testifies in love and freedom to Being. The lower body symbolizes Nature working in secret – the realm of the Divine Source. Here, everything concerned with the Greater Life, is conceived, carried, and born. Here all renewal has its beginning and from here alone it ascends. And here, therefore, everything that the Ego regards as valid must be reabsorbed – idea, image, or concept – for all that contradicts the eternally creative Being can be released only through transformation and renewal. The consciousness-patterns of the Ego – all these must be given up and left behind on the journey downward before man can begin his pilgrimage upward to the great heights and the true light. First he must be reunited with the earth which is his home. To achieve this is the real purpose of the practice of Hara.

## 6. Philosophy of History

As we saw in the chapter of Metaphysics: the stream of life not only contains your personal history, it also contains a collective and universal history – together a history, which consists of images. The Indian philosophy claims, that the movement of time in itself is a negation-power. Time is one great negation of the Now's unmoved being, which is the unmanifested, the actual source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful. In Western theology this is God. In Indian philosophy it is called Brahman. God is the nondual, monistic reality or Wholeness. This is the unmanifested, undescribable source of the Universe; an absolute Otherness in relation to the created world.

The negation-power is in that way the power behind the world's manifestation. The manifestation of the universe, the Indian philosophy claims, has thus arisen on the background of a mighty universal vision, which originates from past universes. In this way, the future arises, and an outgoing creative movement; a movement, which can be compared with what they within science call The Big Bang (but it is not the

same). In the outgoing movement, the great vision becomes, because of the negation-power, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision. In this way, the past arises, and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested. And then a destructive backmovement is created. Life becomes a Quest.

Philosophy of history is the philosophical study of history and the past, and in many ways it is therefore a study of the above-mentioned. Probably the most important question in the philosophy of history is whether history is teleological, that is, purposive, providential, plotted, planned, or predestined. Is it a story, with a meaning, or is it “just one damned thing after another?”

To see the difference, says Kreeft, contrast two famous poetic expressions of the two opposite answers. One is Hobbits’ humble Walking Song:

*The Road goes ever on and on,  
Down from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
Pursuing it with eager feet,  
Until it joins some larger way  
Where many paths and errands meet.  
And whither then? I cannot say (LOTR, p. 72)*

The song sees life – the life of the individual, of the community, and of the larger community of communities that is the world – as a Road, that “goes ever on and on”, that has an objective nature and meaning and direction of its own, and presents to us tasks so that “I must follow if I can”, even though we know little and “cannot say” the future. You could call this philosophy *Life seen as a Pilgrimage*.

The opposite philosophy is that history is no story at all. That is Macbeth’s philosophy of history:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time.  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out! Out, brief candle!  
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale*



*Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing (Macbeth, Act V, scene v).*

According to Kreeft this is Hell's philosophy of history, for Macbeth is a damned soul, and he is already seeing life as the damned see it.

Once, when our civilization believed in gods (Zeus, Jupiter, JHWH, Jesus), we understood our history to be part of a grand story. We pitied poor damned souls like Macbeth and wrote cautionary tales about them, like Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. But our culture has turned inside out, so that it is no longer on the outside of Macbeth, looking in at him with pity and terror, but inside Macbeth's mind, looking out at a world as objectively meaningless as his, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. And because our culture is thus not "looking at" Macbeth but "looking along" him, it is not writing moralistic plays like Shakespeare's, but "naturalistic" novels like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, showing what life looks like when its teleological frame is removed. Goethe also does this in his great revision of the Faust story by transforming Faust from a damned villain into a clever hero, by transforming the Christian God of moral goodness into the pantheistic God beyond good and evil, and by transforming the devil from God's enemy and Faust's terror into God's own dark side and half of Faust's fulfilment. This is also the idea behind Karen Blixen's demonical counter-stories. It is also the idea behind the paradoxical nature of my concept of Lucifer Morningstar. We must face the Guardian of the Threshold on our spiritual quest.

Myth and fantasy show us the significance of our lives, and, when done on a large and epic scale, of our history. By *not* showing us particular historical facts that we all know, a fantasy like *The Lord of the Rings* shows us more clearly the grander universal truth that we have forgotten: the truth that these particulars form a meaningful pattern, like threads on the back of the tapestry, deliberately, not randomly, arranged. What greater service could literature perform for us than that? What mythic search is greater than "man's search for meaning"? What issue is more momentous than whether history is "chance or the dance"?

When we see our lives from this higher point of view, we share in a tiny bit of God's mind. That is ultimately why we love literature, according to Tolkien:

*If lit. teaches us anything at all, it is this: that we have in us an eternal element, free from care and fear, which can survey the things that in "life" we call evil with serenity (that is not without appreciating their [evil] quality, but without any disturbance of our spiritual equilibrium. Not in the same way, but in some such way,*

*we shall all doubtless survey our own story when we know it (and a great deal more of the Whole Story) (Letters, no. 94, pp. 106-7).*

Let us first look at the philosophy of *Life Seen as a Pilgrimage* (the view that there is a planned road in history), and hereafter look at how the other philosophy (the view that there is no planned history of all). This can be seen in my concept of *The Mythology of Authenticity*. These two philosophies will hereafter be seen in the light of the cycles of nature, Christian history and evolutionism. Hereafter we will end this chapter with the question of whether we should be optimists or pessimists concerning history.

### 1) Life seen as a Pilgrimage

The below is a short version of my free Booklet [The Art of Pilgrimage](#).

In *Love's Knowledge*, Martha Nussbaum argues that literature humanizes philosophy by giving philosophy a corpus, a body, in which to live. Outside of this humanizing process, philosophy remains abstracted and disconnected from life experience. You can certainly say that about modern and postmodern philosophy. Moreover, in portraying characters whose actions mimic the lived experiences of human beings, literature offers us a lens into the philosophical dimensions of human actions – ethical, aesthetic, and ontological. If this is true, then Tolkien's characters can be said to humanize and clarify aspects of Western philosophy.

In *The Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture Series* volume on *The Lord of the Rings*, J. Lenore Wright claims, in her article *Sam and Frodo's Excellent Adventure*, that the narrative of Western philosophy is a journey-narrative. Considered together, the narratives that form the history of Western thought reflect journey motifs of two general types: a journey directed *outwardly* into the world, and a journey into the self [or the Soul]. The former – the journey without – is typified by a series of conflicts often initiated by the introduction of evil in the journey narrative. The latter – the journey within – is typified by a series of dramatic encounters wither within oneself (an inner psychological battle) or with another character. This encounter is often initiated by a strong emotion or force, such as love, and culminates in a union with the force against which a character struggles.

I begin my first book *Meditation as an Art of Life* with the claim that I would like to tell the reader the story of my life. I write:

*It is first by now I, as Karen Blixen could have put it, can begin to see the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of my life. By now I, seen with collective and*

*universal eyes, consider it as a philosophical journey, that began in the dawn of time, before this universe.*

*Anyhow, seen with the personal eyes, the memory of my philosophical journey goes back to when I was 5 years old. Here I started to reflect over, whether life is a dream. This philosophical question has always followed me: whether we sleep, whether we dream this long dream, which is life? Therefore my adolescence has always been accented by a strong wonder over life, and a strong longing after something inexpressible, after something that can't be satisfied by explanations and interpretations - perhaps a longing after awakening.*

You could say that this story continues in this book.

Wright claims that one of the most famous journeys in Western thought is St. Augustine's. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, Augustine depicts his early childhood in North Africa, his adulthood spent teaching rhetoric in Carthage, Rome, and Milan, and finally his conversion to Christianity and his subsequent rise to the position of Bishop of Hippo. In reading his life story, we also bear witness to his philosophical journey toward a vision of Truth found in the triune image of the Christian God. Augustine's description of his conversion draws heavily upon Plato's Allegory of the Cave, which appears in Book VII of the *Republic*. The Allegory of the Cave tells the story of a slave who breaks free from his shackles inside a dark dwelling and makes his way out into an unknown world filled with sunlight and "real" objects. As the slave comes to recognize the world beyond the cave, he denounces his allegiance to shadowy images and affirms eternal Forms, the source and constituents of all that is true and knowable. Plato offers an epistemological account of this experience in the *Phaedrus*, where he claims that every human soul once lived in communion with the Forms, contemplating the Beautiful and the Good, aware of true being in its supreme and uncorrupted state.

Following in Plato's footsteps, Augustine searches to understand Goodness and Beauty in the world. He begins his journey out of the cave of Pagan Rome by embracing Manichean philosophy, a materialist philosophy of good and evil. After meeting the spiritual guide of the Manichean sect, Faustus, Augustine flirts with astrology and then Academic skepticism, until he finally encounters an allegorized rendering of Christian thought in the preaching of St. Ambrose. Once Ambrose teaches Augustine how to allegorize scripture, Augustine sees himself in the image of God and begins his pilgrimage of faith.

A journey is a movement from one place to another. "But not all journeys are movements in space or through time", says Wright. Many are spiritual, like St.

Augustine's passage from Manicheanism to Christianity. Others are intellectual. Wright suggests as an example the journey of the townspeople in the movie, *Pleasantville*, who see the beauty of reality once the stifling veil of repressive rules is removed from their lives. Although a journey involves movement – physical, spiritual, intellectual, or philosophical – there is more to a journey than reaching one's destination. As Bilbo points out, "Not all those who wander are lost" (FR, p. 278). Indeed, movement requires one to accept and act upon at least two kinds of freedom: freedom from material belongings (a freedom to uproot and wander), and freedom from conflicting duties.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo's journey out of the cave is a journey out of the Shire. He frets over his journey and delays the decision longer than he should. Though he has longed to travel for some time, he confesses that leaving one's home under these conditions is an "exile" (FR, p. 69). Frodo becomes increasingly burdened by his outward journey as he recalls Bilbo's admonition that leaving one's home is dangerous business. The first step Frodo takes outside of his cave occurs when Gandalf recites the history of the Ring and Frodo infers the role he might play in its destruction. He thereby becomes part of the Greater History. As second step occurs when Frodo sells Bilbo's home and belongings to the Sackville-Bagginses, the relatives he despises (FR, pp. 64-69). A third step occurs when Elrond offers Frodo freedom from the burden of the Ring. "Frodo glanced at all the faces, but they were not turned to him. All the Council sat with downcast eyes, as if in deep thought."

*At last with an effort he spoke, and wondered to hear his own words, as if some other will was using his small voice. "I will take the Ring," he said, "though I do not know the way."* (FR, p. 303).

As Frodo and his hobbit companions journey further and further from the comfortable Shire, they forge new self-identities. Though typical hobbits are passive and fearful, Sam, Merry, Pippin face their fears and confront the horrors of war, engaging in varied forms of battle themselves. They suffer physical and psychological wounds, wounds that with each stage of healing, make them stronger, braver, and more confident. As a result the wounding and healing process they undergo, they unchain themselves from their natural instincts and hobbit-like desires. Only then does their physical journey become existential; that is: they begin to realize the five existential categories of suffering: unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness. These five categories constitute together the suffering, which in this way is a part of their lifesituation. Like this suffering has a past and a future. The past and the future form an unbroken continuum, unless the Now's releasing power is activated through their aware presence. Behind all the different circumstances which

constitute their lifesituation, and which exist in time, there in other words exists something deeper, more essential: life itself, their being in the timeless Now itself.

On their journey they begin to activate this deeper dimension and sense the opposite categories: reality, cooperation, movement, safety and meaning. Once this transformation occurs their self-conceptions become harmonized with their duties, and they fulfill the existential charge to “become who you are.”

Though Frodo makes his decision to carry the Ring to Mordor without obvious compulsion, his choice illustrates the limits of human freedom. Not only is freedom tethered to responsibility, it is contingent upon a willingness to choose between two viable options – a choice that is shaped by many historical situations. Frodo is the Ring-bearer in part because his cousin, Bilbo, surreptitiously acquired the Ring from Sméagol (a.k.a. Gollum) and then passed it down to him. He is also the Ring-bearer because the Ring remains in his possession – “the ring chooses the bearer.” Clearly, Frodo’s choice is not a choice for himself; his lack of knowledge regarding the location of the Cracks of Doom compels others to bear his burden along with him. His decision to carry the Ring, however, means that he is not only responsible for destroying the Ring, but he is also responsible for the individuals who help him achieve his Quest. His decision offers freedom *for* the Ring, not from the Ring. And Frodo’s decision to destroy the Ring *creates* the Fellowship; it is productive. It simultaneously binds the fellows to Frodo, and it frees them to travel with Frodo on his journey to Mordor. Hence, Frodo’s commitment to carry the Ring is a commitment to create freedom in fellowship.

Like philosophical inquiry, Tolkien’s journey motif moves in two directions: it is a movement outside the dark cave of illusion and into the light of knowable reality, and it is a turning away from the façade of the self into the innermost Soul. The journey inward into the Soul presupposes an existential freedom that is itself part of the structure of authentic human existence. The Ring-bearer and his fellows must break free from their assumptions and false beliefs if they wish to be transformed by the journey inwards.

Boromir attains his philosophical transformation and self-knowledge only at death’s door, when he confesses to Aragorn, “I tried to take the Ring from Frodo...I am sorry. I have paid...go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed’ (TT, p. 4). Aragorn replies, ‘No!...You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace!’” Burdened by his wish to save his people, Boromir succumbs to his deep desire to use the Ring to destroy enemies of his land. His enslavement to this desire brings about his own demise.

Wright says that a key step in the transition from enslavement to freedom is personal transformation. Once we break free from our inner chains, we are free to grow as individuals. For example, Gandalf's transformation from "Gandalf the Grey" to "Gandalf the White" begins in the bowels of Moria while battling a Balrog. When he reappears in *The Two Towers*, he represents a new beginning, the dawning of a new day. And as Aragorn assures Gamling, "dawn is ever the hope of men" (TT, p. 152). Other characters that achieve personal transformation include Aragorn, who began the journey as "Strider" and in the end is crowned "King Elessar," and Sam Gamgee who becomes "Master Samwise."

Wright makes us aware that the endowment of new titles and the changing of names is a sign of pilgrims making progress in journey tales. In the Eastern tale, *Monkey*, the main character acquires a new name along each stage of his journey toward Buddhahood. He begins as "Handsome Monkey King," then he is named by the Patriarch Subodhi, "Aware of Vacuity." And finally he becomes "Buddha Victorious in Strife."

But other characters never accomplish this existential feat. For instance, though he pretends to be a devoted disciple of Frodo, Sméagol secretly plans to take the Ring from him, with the help of the hideous spider-like creature, Shelob.

Tolkien suggests that Sam and Frodo's physical journey may have been mapped out for them by the circumstances of time and history. But he also suggests that their existential journey – their choices to either affirm or deny each element of the journey – is a matter of their own choosing. The two processes mutually fertilize each other.

Unlike the hobbits, Sméagol and Saruman are lamenting their own failures, licking their wounds, and wallowing in self-pity. Sméagol remains enslaved by the Ring even when it is out of his possession, pitying himself for his lack of food, lack of rest, and lack of trustworthiness. Saruman refuses to accept the mercy of Gandalf and company, stating, "Pray, do not smile at me! I prefer your frowns" (RK, p. 283), to which Gandalf replies, "alas for Saruman! I fear nothing more, can be made of him. He has withered altogether" (RK, p. 285). Both Sméagol and Saruman live inauthentic lives in the constant self-producing *Becoming*, and the denial of universal history.

Despite being burdened by nature and history, Tolkien's little hobbits, Sam and Frodo, set their own course as they journey toward self-knowledge and authentic living: the self-forgetful *Being*. This happens only by surrendering to the universal history they are set in.

Though most journey narratives adopt either the outward or inward model of journey narratives, *The Lord of the Rings* utilizes both. As John Dunne remarks, Tolkien's saga is "a great journey, but it's a conflict, a war, between good and evil; it's both of those at the same time." By drawing out the philosophical implications of the outward and inward journeys within *The Lord of the Rings*, we not only connect the past to the present historically, we confront and affirm the past existentially – we find ourselves in Tolkien's story. By confronting both the historical and existential facets of human experience, we begin to understand something new about our tasks as contemporary philosophers – the task to gaze into the fragmented abyss of postmodern culture and find meaning and value therein.

Wright mentions other great texts – both Western and non-Western – that contain journey motifs include *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Ramayana*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, *The Song of Roland*, *Tristan*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Dante's *Divine Comedy* Chaucer's *Cantebury Tales*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien describes the journey of Frodo and his fellows not as a heroic escapade, but as a "Quest." Like most quests with great or exalted purposes, the hobbits' journey is unexpected and undesired. It begins in the familiar Shire and moves quickly to lands unknown to them. Like Monkey's journey to India in search of sacred Buddhist scrolls in the Chinese epic, *Journey to the West*, Sam and Frodo's journey occurs mainly on foot, takes place over several months, and involves a series of clashes and battles. It also unfolds in stages. When Frodo first learn of his journey, Gandalf says to him, "It may be your task to find the Cracks of Doom; but that quest may be for others: I do not know. At any rate you are not ready for that long road yet" (FR, p. 73).

Sam and Frodo appear to be typical pilgrims – a little mad, weak-willed, and very reluctant to endanger themselves or their fellow travellers. For instance, as Frodo considers the journey before him, he says to Gandalf:

*Of course, I have sometimes thought of going away, but I imagined that as a kind of holiday, a series of adventures like Bilbo's or better, ending in peace. But this would mean exile, a flight from danger into danger, drawing it after me...But I feel very small, and very uprooted, and well – desperate. The Enemy is so strong and terrible.* (FR, p. 69).

Wright says that these friends need guides in part because they are weak-willed. Tolkien's description of Frodo and Sam is analogous to the medieval pilgrim, Dante,

and the fear he experiences as he makes his way through hell with his guide, Virgil. As Dante's trepidation begins to overcome him at various points in the *Inferno*, he faints, incapable of facing reality before him. Likewise, Frodo struggles against the increasing weight of the Ring, his own self-doubt, and his deep weariness. Historically, philosophers have received aid in their intellectual struggles by teachers and guides. For example, Plato burned his tragedies when he met Socrates. Aristotle joined Plato's Academy and became a teacher in his own right. St. Augustine studied under Albert the Great. Kant relied under Hume to "wake him from his dogmatic slumbers." And Jean-Paul Sartre, Hannah Arendt, and Hans-Georg Gadamer contributed to the burgeoning field of existentialism after studying with Martin Heidegger, who himself was deeply indebted to Edmund Husserl.

"What would a journey be without a guide (or two)?" Wright asks. Tolkien's mythical guide, the one who finds freedom in wandering, is Gandalf. Though Gandalf is often called away from Sam and Frodo to aid in the war effort, he never abandons his hobbit friends, assisting them in both word and deed. Gandalf arranges for Aragorn to serve as a guide to the hobbits. Later, thanks to Gandalf's wise counsel that "Smeágol may yet have 'some part to play'" (FR, p. 65), Gollum serves as Sam and Frodo's last guide in their almost hopeless Quest to destroy the One Ring.

Pilgrims are different from heroes in the classical sense of the term. According to both ancient mythology and modern epics, heroes are courageous, large in stature, often of divine ancestry or noble birth, sometimes magical, athletic, intelligent, adept at specific skills, and knowledgeable of the arts (often they play musical instruments). Classic Greek examples include Theseus, who with help of his beloved Ariadne slays the Minotaur who guards the labyrinth in Knossos, and Odysseus, who Homer represents as the noblest and most respected hero for his courage, cunning and eloquence.

Unlike these heroes, Sam and Frodo experience constant fear and dread; their journey is overshadowed by despair. Like all hobbits, they are small in stature, often mistaken for children. Nor are they of noble ancestry or exceptionally knowledgeable, intelligent, skilled, or athletic. Their strength lies in devotion, determination, and single-mindedness of purpose. They are not heroes in the classical sense; rather, they exemplify the traits of modern pilgrims. As their journey to Mount Doom approaches its end, the Quest transforms these two reluctant pilgrims into resilient, bold masters whose characters reflect the potency of the Ring. We see this transformation in Sam most clearly in his battle with Shelob. Tolkien writes:

*As if his indomitable spirit had set its potency in motion, the glass [Phial of Galadriel] blazed suddenly like a white torch in his hand...No such terror out of*



*heaven had ever burned in Shelob's face before...She fell back...Sam came on. He was reeling like a drunken man, but he came on. And shelob, cowered at last, shrunken in defeat, jerked and quivered as she tried to hasten from him. (TT, p. 383).*

We see the transformation in Frodo through Sam's eyes when the two companions capture Sméagol: "For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog" (TT, pp. 249-250). Despite their individual growth, these two friends realize their change may be of no consequence as they near the end of their journey to the Cracks of Doom. Sam, in particular, fears that even if they manage to destroy the Ring, they have no hope of escaping Mordor alive:

*But even as hope died in Sam, or seemed to die, it was turned into a new strength. Sam's plain hobbit-face grew stern, almost grim, as the will hardened in him, and he felt through all his limbs a thrill, as if he was turning into some creature of stone and steel that neither despair nor weariness nor endless barren miles could subdue. (RK, p. 225).*

Sam and Frodo's strength of character is the source of their authenticity as pilgrims.

Our contemporary concept of "hero" is rooted in the conflicts described in Greek literature, battles between great divinities and god-like humans. It emerged out of our primordial desire for immortality, along with an emergent need for divinity and unity. Despite our affluence and technological advances, the need for extraordinary creatures and events still exists. Wright asks: "So why are Sam and Frodo so ordinary?" In Plato's *Symposion*, his great dialogue on love, Diotima teaches that profound ideas emerge from one small intellectual spark. Tolkien teaches us the same lesson. The humblest creatures, as small as children, are capable of extraordinary feats.

Now, more than ever, we are realizing that we need ordinary people to be extraordinary. We need people to be all too human and frail. We need Sam and Frodo to be ordinary, not heroic. Tolkien's reluctant pilgrims show us that when ordinary people bind themselves to the good, life can be extraordinary.

## **2) The Mythology of Authenticity**

In the light of the two movements of time (history) – the destructive backmovement (the past) and the creative outgoing movement (the Future) - is also the question of the two commonest alternatives in the philosophy of history: traditionalism or

radicalism, conservatism or progressivism (not to confuse with progressive karma) – to focus primary attention on learning from the past or planning for the future.

Both are paradoxically enough included in the Mythology of Authenticity, but the Mythology of Authenticity is a postmodern mythology, which is even worse than modernity, since its basic thesis is that there isn't any planned history at all, and that it is up to humans alone to supply the world with values. The one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture (progressivism), the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement - conservatism). The Self-help industry is characterized by two specific methods: psychotherapy and coaching. This interest in the authentic human life is not a, for example, 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 material growth, where religion plays 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: 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 lives.

The constructivistic method is on the other hand more outspread in books about personal development (empowerment) 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. And both are rooted in psychology.

### *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.

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. 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. All is rooted in subjectivism.

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. An extreme focus on perfectionism, which therefore is closely followed by the opposite pole: failure.

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).

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. It is one big solipsism: "I alone set my values for everything in the world".

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.

This might sound like what we already have examined in connection with feeling good in the Hara, but no. Subjectivism not only denies the existence of the body, and therefore Hara, but it also replaces the Navigator (the philosopher) with a Sophist (an ideologist). It might well be that humanistic psychologists will disagree, but they have a philosophy that implies this. Therefore they end in self-contradiction if they object to what I say.

In humanistic psychology 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. In short: moral relativism, which we will return in the chapter on Ethics.

Religion has in humanistic psychology 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

### *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. 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 socially 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 is created by being interpreted. 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 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 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.

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.

This is humanism in a nutshell.

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 losing) 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. They both focus on *becoming* and are neglecting *being*.

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 Krogsgaard 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 Krogsgaard's examination (Krogsgaard 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 loses 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 self-esteem etc.), or they experience a need of changing in connection with challenges on for instance the workplace.

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 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).

7) 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.

8) Because he has realized, that the explanation of problems has to be sought 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 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 Krogstad 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 called the instrumental reason. We have looked at this. 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 scientific 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 therapy – as Krogstad 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 its own practice – that will say therapy in broad sense – alive through the assertion about the chronic 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. Krogstad says, that just like the Christian 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's revival of 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 myth-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 Krogstad 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. Therefore both worldimages are paradoxically enough expressions of progressivism. This is further reinforced by New Age's spiritual interpretations of evolutionism. I will return to that.

Humanity entails learning from others. Learning from others entails respect for tradition, for tradition is simply learning from dead others. As Chesterton famously said, tradition is "the democracy of the dead". In a context of spiritual practice the importance of this is seen in the original wisdom traditions, and their spiritual

practices which has been adjusted and corrected through hundreds of years of experiential practice.

The Mythology of Authenticity, and ego-inflation combined with it, removes all this experience with a handshake. In my booklet [The Psychedelic Experience versus the Mystical Experience](#) I investigate the concept of plastic shamanism (New Age Shamanism), and conclude with the claim that we with the psychedelic renaissance are witnessing an exploitative form of colonialism and one step in the destruction of Indigenous cultures, and eventually all the original wisdom traditions.

The main thesis put forward by users of psychedelics in connection with spiritual practice is that we with psychedelics are able to skip all preliminary work with spiritual practice. Psychedelics are a fast track to enlightenment. If not psychedelics, it is all kind of easy-solution-to-everything therapies.

Tolkien is a conservative. All pre-modern societies were, says Kreeft. Perhaps most of the masses in many modern societies still are. Their common sense will not let them believe that it is more important to invent new things than to use and enjoy the ones we already have. Most people are bourgeois, most people are Hobbits, most people are conservatives. But the teachers, the intellectuals, are massively progressives. As Kreeft says, then that is part of the reason for Tolkien's great unpopularity among the critics and his great popularity among their pupils, the masses, who have been deprived of this gospel of the goodness of tradition by their teachers.

There are many meanings to the concept "modern", but common to all of them is the opposition to tradition, the sense that the wisdom of the past has dissipated like a rainbow, the sense that (as Karl Marx put it) "all that is solid melts into air." Tolkien refuses this with a book that makes even its critics marvel at the solidity of Middle-earth and of its history and traditions.

The basic argument for tradition is simple that it works. It works in *The Lord of the Rings*, over and over again. There are many close calls and dangerous turns in the plot, and most of them would not have been negotiated successfully if the protagonists had not known and followed tradition. They remember something their enemies forget.

There are more than five hundred references in *The Lord of the Rings* to the past two ages of Middle-earth. Tolkien's heroes are humble and therefore look to the past, to the wisdom they had been *given*. His villains and fools are proud and therefore scorn tradition and look only within themselves for their wisdom.

Tolkien is implicitly asking his readers, his culture, to remember their links with their own ancient wisdoms – pagan, Jewish, and Christian (I would also suggest all other original wisdom traditions). Few lessons however, indirectly taught, could be more socially relevant than this one, for tradition means linking, unifying over time; and no community can exist without common unity over time as well as place. A generation gap destroys a community more surely than a war.

C.S. Lewis too was a conservative and called progressivism “the vulgarest of all vulgar errors, that of idolizing as the goddess History what manlier ages belaboured as the strumpet Fortune”.

Progressivism is “chronological snobbery”, he wrote,

*The uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate common to our own age and the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that account discredited. You must find why it went out of date. Was it ever refuted (and if so by whom, where, and how conclusively) or did it merely die away as fashion do? If the latter, this tells us nothing about its truth or falsehood (Surprised by Joy, pp. 207-8).*

Progressivism is arrogant, for we know the past far better than we know the future: “we have no notion what stage in the journey we have reached. Are we in Act I or Act V? Are our present diseases those of childhood or senility?...A story is precisely the sort of thing that cannot be understood until you have heard the whole of it” (*Christian Reflections*, p. 106).

But! The mythologist Joseph Campbell’s theory of the monomyth (The Hero’s Journey) is in the same way exceedingly conservative and founded on a deep nostalgia: for him, the cure for modern problems is found by returning to earlier notions of spirituality and moral virtue. In promoting a “living mythology,” Campbell harkens back to a lost “golden age” from which we have fallen, but to which we can return with effort and guidance of a “sage.” This might have to do with the inspiration from Jung. It is a reductionism, a psychologism. And herewith there is the danger of ending in idealism, and the same psychologizing, emotionalizing and therapeutizing ideology of our society, which *The Mythology of Authenticity* stands for.

### **3) Cycles of Nature, Christian History and Evolutionism**

I have therefore supplied this with my own metaphysical naturalism, and with this a philosophical principle, namely to examine, whether the karmic 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, Jung, 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 here comes the help from Tolkien's paradoxical anarchism, his "anarcho-conservatism" if you will. The Mythology of Authenticity defines Man as a being, who continuously need to cultivate himself therapeutic. The mythology does so by making Man into a problem to himself. It is indoctrinating people to see the Now as a problem by comparing with earlier, and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. Therefore Man is seen as being in a constant state of becoming (progressivism). This is precisely what traditional spiritual practice seeks to avoid. Spiritual practice is focusing of being in the Now.

Tolkien is not a progressivist, but he does not embrace the opposite error either, the notion that "there is nothing new under the sun", that history is a set of unending and unchangeable cycles of doom. That was the standard pagan philosophy of history as fate. Tolkien's Christian philosophy of history avoids both the false pessimism of pre-Christian paganism and the false optimism of post-Christian humanism (today popularized by New Thought, and its theory of positive thinking).

Tolkien mentions the importance of individual acts as one of *The Lord of the Ring's* major themes:

*The place in "world politics" of the unforeseen and unforeseeable acts of the will, and deeds of virtue of the apparently small, ungreat, forgotten in the places of the Wise and Great (good as well as evil). A moral of the whole...is the obvious one that without the high and noble the simple and vulgar is utterly mean; and without the simple and ordinary the noble and heroic is meaningless (Letters, no. 131, p. 160).*

Kreeft says that in the Christian philosophy of history there are things that are genuinely new because there is a God above time who can alter history. God says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing" (Is 43:19). History does not simply repeat itself, and the future cannot be predicted. Paganism tried to understand history in terms of the cycles of nature. The energy-laws work in all cycles of nature. On the plane of the outer forms there are birth and death, creation and destruction, growth and dissolution of apparently separated outer forms. This is reflected everywhere: the life-cycle of a star, a planet, a physical body, a tree or a flower; in the rise and fall of nations,

political systems and civilizations; and in the inevitable cycles of gain and loss in the individual person's life.

A cycle can last from some hours to some years. There are big cycles and small cycles within the big ones. The cyclic nature of the Universe is closely connected with the impermanence of all things and all situations. Buddha made this into a central part of his teaching.

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

As long as your awareness is identified with thinking, you will have lost the contact with your deeper being (your Soul), and only exist in the movement of time. You'll have your identity in your 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-cycle is good, and the down-cycle is bad, except in the mind's judgement.

The Bible understands nature in terms of history, as the settings for the drama between man and God and between man and man.

Tom Bombadil shows the relation between nature and history in Tolkien. Perhaps the most interesting being that uses the One Ring is Bombadil, the Master of the Old Forest. Bombadil is, unfortunately, cut from the movie version of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, but readers of the book will remember the arduous journey of the four hobbits through the Old Forest, and their eventual rescue (two rescues actually) by Bombadil, a being who appears to have complete command over all the living things of the Forest. Who is Bombadil? No clear explanation is ever given in *The Lord of the Rings*. He is not a wizard, nor an elf, nor a mortal man. His wife, Goldberry, describes him to Frodo quite simply: "He is, as you have seen him...He is the Master of wood, water, and hill". And Tom describes himself as "Eldest...here before the river and the trees." He remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn, made paths before the Big People and saw the little People arriving. "He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless – before the Dark Lord came from the Outside". Tom is

called “Iarwain Ben-adar” by Elrond during the Council, a name that means “oldest and fatherless”.

Whoever he is, he is surely one of the most powerful and benign characters that the hobbits meet in their journey across Middle-earth.

You might say, that if you would like to meet Tom Bombadil, then the best is to go out into the forest and stand completely immovable and quiet, just like in meditation. Then he is coming from the Old World.

If you are completely existential present in the Now, you will receive information through the universal images – you will be made transparent in wisdom. The Ego has stepped aside. You will have contact with the world of forms, as Plato formulated it.

All realization is, according to Plato, in the end due to a recollection of the eternal forms, which are lying as foundation for the accidental phenomena, because we before birth had a direct view of these forms. But this doesn't mean a return to the past.

The universal images (the world of forms, the world of realization) work in synchronism with the Now, therefore they are an expression of reality. Plato's recollection of the eternal forms is simply about returning to the Now. Precisely as Karen Blixen formulated it. She depicted precisely the universal images as the ancient, the original.

Contrary to this the personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore they are an expression of illusion or unreality: what Plato called the world of experience, or phenomena, the world of shadows, of reflections, and of imaginations.

But this doesn't mean, that the known (or the past) is deleted, but that there is introduced a completely new dimension where you are the known present in passive listening, where the known so to speak is made transparent in being and openness.

You can also say, that where the known before was characterized by personal and collective images, which worked in sequences in past and future, then the known now is characterized by universal images, which work in synchronism with the Now. It was this Karen Blixen was describing as the ancient, the original, and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. It is a return to the Now, the timeless eternity. As Rabindranath Tagore said: "The light

is young, the eternal ancient light; the shadows are a brief moment's matter, they are born aged."

In the midst of their conversations together, Tom asks to see the "precious Ring." Frodo, "to his own astonishment," draws out the Ring from its hiding place and simply hands it over to Tom. Tom laughs as he holds the Ring, looks through it with one eye, offering the hobbits "a vision, both comical and alarming, of his bright blue eye gleaming through a circle of gold." But then the most extraordinary event occurs: Tom puts on the Ring and does not disappear. It has no power over him, and he gains no power from it. He does a quick magic trick with the Ring, spinning it in the air and causing it to momentarily vanish, so that when Frodo gets the Ring back he is a bit perturbed. Is it the real Ring? Frodo puts the Ring on, and vanishes from sight – but not from the sight of Tom. Tom sees Frodo even as he tries to leave while wearing the Ring. He calls out: "Come Frodo, there! Where be you a-going? Old Tom Bombadil's not as blind as that yet."

Thus Bombadil appears to be more powerful than the Ring – or at least totally unaffected by its corruption. But at the Council of Elrond Gandalf explains that Tom "is his own master. But he cannot alter the Ring itself, nor break its power over others." If we consider the way the power of the Ring affects an individual's moral character, then Bombadil is an anomaly. He is not corrupted by the Ring, nor does he seem to desire it. At best he is curious to see it and to see how it affects the Ring-bearer, Frodo. Bombadil does not need the Ring – he is his own master.

The two characters that reject completely the power of the One Ring, Galadriel and Bombadil, are not mortal beings. Is Tolkien telling us that only immortal or divine beings can resist the power of the Ring, that mere mortals – humans like ourselves, such as Boromir – have to succumb to the temptation and corruption of the power of the Ring? To answer this question, we must examine how two hobbits – Frodo and Sam – deal with the possession of the Ring.

Frodo, of course, is the Ring-bearer, the central figure and hero in *The Lord of the Rings*. He possesses the Ring more than any other character during the events depicted in the trilogy, and he uses the Ring more than any other character. Is he corrupted by the use of the Ring? To a certain extent, yes. Frodo's use of the Ring becomes ever more conflicted as his journey progresses, so that ultimately he is "captured" by the power of the Ring and is unable to destroy it. Although Frodo is tempted to put on the Ring when he first encounters the Black Riders early in his journey, the first time that Frodo uses the Ring is in the House of Tom Bombadil. His motivation, in that first use, is relatively innocent: he is "perhaps a trifle annoyed" with Bombadil for treating the "perilously important" Ring in so lighthearted and



carefree a manner, and so he decides to make sure the Ring is still his, for Bomdadil could have switched rings during his magical trick. Frodo clearly has confused emotions. Tolkien presents us with two tempered descriptions of Frodo's pleasure in using the Ring. When he first put on the Ring and saw that Merry was astonished that he had disappeared, "Frodo was delighted (in a way):" Then, when Tom directed Frodo to stop the game, "Frodo laughed (trying to feel pleased), and taking off the Ring he came and sat down again." Tolkien does not explain why Frodo was not completely delighted and pleased. Is it because of the evil power of the Ring? A virtuous individual knows that the use of the Ring is wrong, so when one uses it one is filled with the conflicting emotions of power, satisfaction, and guilt. Frodo is thus already being affected by the Ring.

Frodo dons the Ring two other times in the early pages of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, once by "accident" in the inn at Bree, and once in the battle with the Black Riders near the summit of Weathertop. Clearly, Frodo does not consciously decide to put on the Ring while singing his song at Butterbur's inn. So Frodo can only be blamed here for being careless, but this is a carelessness that is probably being caused by the force of the Ring. Then on Weathertop, we see that the Ring answers to the commands of others. As the Black Riders approach Aragorn and the hobbits, Frodo's "terror was swallowed up in a sudden temptation to put on the Ring." Although he had the same desire when he was trapped in the Barrow earlier, this time the desire is different: "he longed to yield. Not with the hope of escape, or of doing anything, either good or bad: he simply felt that he must take the Ring and put it on his finger." And of course he does yield, for "resistance became unbearable." The Black Riders, the Nazgûl who wear the nine Rings given to the human race of men, have exerted their collective wills to force him to put on the Ring – unlike the accident at Bree – but his choice is not a free choice; it is the result of compulsion, the psychological power of other ring-bearers on the bearer of the One Ring.

The next time Frodo puts on the Ring is a free choice without any hint of compulsion: he dons the Ring in order to escape from Boromir and to separate himself from the rest of the Company. Yet as he runs away he climbs to the top of Amon Hen and sits on the ancient stone throne of the kings, where he surveys the lands around him, aided by the power of the Ring. This moment is filled with danger, for Sauron senses that someone is wearing the Ring, and the Eye of the Dark Lord begins to search him out. Frodo is filled with dread and a deep psychological conflict: he resists the Eye, crying out to himself "never" but perhaps he is saying "I come to you." "He could not tell." Then he hears another voice urging him to take off the Ring. These two "powers" contend within him. Writhing and tormented, for a moment he is exactly balanced between them.

*Suddenly he was aware of himself again. Frodo, neither the Voice nor the Eye: free to choose, and with one remaining instant in which to do so. He took the Ring off his finger.*

Just as with Galadriel's test, Frodo finds the power within himself to resist the force of the Ring. He overrides the power of the Ring when he becomes himself again. But he has used the Ring as a matter of conscious choice to escape danger and to gather knowledge. The Ring is having more and more of an effect on him; he is closer to becoming a wielder of the Ring, not simply its bearer.

Ultimately the force of the Ring overpowers even Frodo. Throughout the long journey into the heart of Mordor, we are constantly told of the physical and psychological weight of the Ring. The closer Frodo gets to Mount Doom, the more resistant the Ring is to his will and the harder it is for Frodo to go on. But when he reaches the Cracks of Doom, he is unable to perform his mission. Sam witnesses the scene as Frodo stands before the fire and proclaims: "I have come...But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!" Then Frodo puts the Ring on his finger and vanishes. It is thus left to Gollum to wrestle with the invisible Frodo, and in a desperate attempt to grab the Ring for himself, he accidentally destroys it in the fires of Mount Doom. Gollum bites off Frodo's finger, holds the Ring aloft and in his joy loses his footing and falls into the fire. The Ring is destroyed and Frodo is saved.

While Frodo is slowly eaten away by the corruption of the Ring, his companion Sam defeats the Ring's power in the short time that he is the Ring-bearer. Sam takes the Ring at the end of *The Two Towers*, for he believes Frodo to be dead and the task has fallen upon him to complete the mission of the Fellowship to destroy the Ring. But he discovers that Frodo is alive and has been captured by orcs, and he therefore abandons the overall mission in an attempt to save his master.

*They must understand that – Elrond and the Council, and the great Lords and Ladies with all their wisdom. Their plans have gone wrong. I can't be their Ring-bearer. Not without Mr. Frodo.*

Sam must remain true to himself, and the central mission in his life is to protect Frodo.

Sam, though, is stymied in his attempt to follow the orcs onto the Tower of Cirith Ungol, and eventually he stands alone on the high path that leads to Mordor. It is here that Sam encounters his fundamental moral decision. He feels the power of the Ring, even though he is not wearing it, for "as it [the Ring] drew near the great furnaces

where, in the deeps of time, it had been shaped and forged, the Ring's power grew, and it became more fell, untameable save by some mighty will."

Sam now feels himself "enlarged, as if he were robed in a huge distorted shadow of himself, a vast and ominous threat halted upon the walls of Mordor." The Ring tempts him, "gnawing at his will and reason," and he sees a vision of himself as "Samwise the Strong, Hero of the Age, striding with a flaming sword across the darkened land, and armies flocking to his call as he marched to the overthrow of Barad-dûr."

*And then the clouds rolled away, and the white sun shone, and at his command the vale of Gorgoroth became a garden of flowers and trees and brought forth fruit. He had only to put on the Ring and claim it for his own, and all this could be.*

But Sam is equal to his test, and he knows that it is not for him to bear the Ring and challenge the Dark Lord. Tolkien explains that two things keep Sam safe from the seductive power of the Ring: his love for Frodo and his own sense of self. First and foremost was Sam's love of his master, Frodo, but there was also Sam's "still unconquered...plain hobbit-sense." Sam knows that he is not big enough to bear such a burden, "even if such visions were not a mere cheat to betray him."

*The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command.*

Tom Bombadil seems to be a personification of nature, or a nature spirit. He is probably Aulë, the angel of the earth. In contrast

*The Ring itself is a historical being. It is a product of historical purpose and action and its meaning is a historical meaning...*

*In some way he [Bombadil] represents nature, and Tolkien uses him to identify the essentially historical by contrast. Tom asked about the Ring, but did not seem to take it very seriously; moreover, it had no power over him. It did not make him invisible, and, when Frodo put it on, Tom could still see him. The affair of the Ring was history, and Tom's was not a historical existence. At the Council of Elrond one of the elves suggested that they ask Tom Bombadil to take the Ring and hide it in the Old Forest. Gandalf answered that, if Tom could be persuaded to, he would not understand the need and would soon forget it or even more likely throw it away. "Such things have no hold on his mind"...Glorfindel said, "I think that in the end, if all else is conquered, Bombadil will fall, Last as he was First; and then Night will come" (I, 279). Glorfindel, it should be noted, did not predict such an outcome; the Council did*

*not despair. But historical decision is ultimately what determines nature and not the other way round. In Tolkien's "monotheistic world," the mysterious Authority which is in control of history is One for whom nature itself is a historical act* (Willis Glover, "The Christian Character of Tolkien's Invented World", in *Criticism: A Quarterly Journal for Literature and the Arts*, vol. 13, no. 1. Winter 1971, pp. 48-49).

The theological basis for this is the difference between men and angels, Angels are messengers from the the great singing vision, the Wholeness, which is transcendent in relation to the energy-aspect of the world and its natural laws, psychic laws, and the cycles of nature:

*The dealings of the Ainur have indeed been mostly with the Elves, for Iluvatar made them more like in nature to the Ainur, though less in might and stature, whereas to Men he gave strange gifts...He willed that the heart of Men should seek beyond the world and should find no rest therein; but they should have a virtue to shape their life, amid the powers and chances of the world, beyond the music of the Ainur, which is as fate to all things else...It is one with this gift of freedom that the children of Men dwell only a short space in the world alive, and are not bound to it, and depart soon* (*The Silmarillion*, pp. 41-42).

Kreeft asks us: "Note the connection between (1) the freedom in man's life and history, (2) his materiality and temporality, (3) his mortality, and (4) his restless longing (*Sehnsucht*). Angels are (1) transcendent to history, (2) immaterial, (3) immortal, and (4) complete."

Paradoxically, our freedom is our doom: we are doomed not only to restlessness and to death but also to freedom. Our free-*dom* is a free *doom*:

"What doom do you bring out of the North?"

"The doom of choice," said Aragorn (LOTR, p. 423).

Men has freedom continual to give new momentum and new course - within the karmic 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, the Soul. This dimension is not subject to the karmic structure, it is it, or it is over it. The Wholeness (God, Brahman, the Otherness) 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.

Human beings are, 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 (your Soul), 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 soul, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the soul the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

When your Soul 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 Soul, your spiritual essence), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma (personal and original sin), a progressive karma (divine providence) will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma, an opening for special providence.

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma and special providence. The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what clairvoyants may be able to see in the collective time, or fantasize about another person's karmic experiences and sins. Many of these experiences (for example about past lives) – and which have a certain reality for either the clairvoyant or the client – are collective fantasies.

Nobody can tell you about your karmic structures, about your personal or original sin, and not at all about your special providence (should another person know what God's special gift to you are?). But this is what New Age clairvoyants are doing all the time. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmic, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmic and sinful 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 and sin in other ways are nonsense. And by the way, that's the same with all spiritual.

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, your Soul. This dimension is not subject to the karmic structure, it *is* it, or it is over it. The Wholeness (God, Brahman, the Otherness) 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. It is from here the free will comes.

When your Soul begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmic lawfulness and can therefore relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmic structures, which after all not only rule between the many lives of your Soul, 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 karmic automatism (the automatism of personal sin and original sin, destiny, fate or predestination).

It is this double-aspect of a human being that solves the problem of free will in relation to fate, or destiny, or predestination. Fate, destiny, or predestination (compensatory karma) belongs to the energy-aspect of man. Freedom belongs to the consciousness aspect. That will say that man can use his free will to create new compensatory karma (fate, destiny or predestination) since this change the balance in the Wholeness (and therewith also past and future): it changes the structures and power lines in your soul, in the unconscious.

But you can also use your free will to begin a spiritual practice. When your Soul 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 Soul), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma (personal and original sin), a progressive karma (divine providence) will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma, an opening for special providence.

Throughtout *The Lord of the Rings*, most great things, great deeds, great heroes, and great ages are in the past.

Clearly Tolkien believes that his century, the twentieth, was spiritually smaller, in its virtues and even in its vices, than medieval Christendom; less heroic than the "Dark Ages" that produced *Beowulf*, and uglier than the Victorian and Edwardian eras, which Tolkien saw passing away before his eyes. *The Lord of the Rings* can be viewed as a mythical history of how tawdry modern ages like our own come to be.

When you today ask: *What is a human being?* 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; a reductionism.

Reductionisms are philosophical viewpoints, because they seek to answer the question about Man as such, but as philosophical viewpoints they are epistemological and ethical shipwrecks (see chapter 1, Metaphysics: A. Cosmology, part 2, Reductionism).

[Atheist fundamentalism](#) advocates some kind of sociobiology. 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 reductionism.

Within the pseudoscience of New Age the American physicist Fritjof Capra, has in his book, *The Turning Point*, outlined an ideology, where he combines quantum mysticism with reductionism, especially reductionisms such as historism and sociologism.

And, since the first publication of his ideas at the age of 23, the American New Age guru, Ken Wilber, has also 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's viewpoint is a kind of Hegelian idealism. Some kind of social Darwinism (see my articles [A Critique of Ken Wilber and his Integral Method](#), and [Ken Wilber](#)).

The ethical shipwreck is as follows: 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 did, 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 lose 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.

The self-help industry, and its belonging therapeutic techniques, for example 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, as a *basic* starting point, is considered as a victim, as non-authentic, and therefore as powerless.

The one face of this paradoxical Janus head is the empowerment culture, the other face is the victimization culture (and the connected recovery movement).

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

This New Age narcissism works finely together with the narcissism of atheist fundamentalism (remember how New Age from Theosophy has inherited a worship of evolutionary biology).



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.

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.

The combination of the two extremities – 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 scientific 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 some kind of “spiritual eugenics,” or “DNA-activation practice”: the applied “science” or the bio-social New Age movement which advocates the use of “spiritual” practices aimed at improving the genetic composition of people, usually referring to human populations (see for example my articles [A Critique of The Human Design System](#) and [Time Travel and the Fascism of The WingMakers Project](#) and my Matrix Dictionary entry on [Feminism as Fascism](#)).

In New Age you constantly hear the expression “the evolution of consciousness.” It is an utterly reductive and distorted view of how consciousness is developing spiritual. Consciousness doesn’t “evolve” towards something, and certainly not as some kind of “collective evolution of consciousness” which Ken Wilber is talking about. The spiritual growth of consciousness has to do with a process of awakening, and this is exclusively an individual matter. Furthermore, it can only happen through a transcendental intervention from the divine.

So, with the Matrix Conspiracy we have two ruling metaphysical theories in the Western society: materialism (the bias of atheist fundamentalism) and idealism (the New Age bias). The consequences of both are a worship of the ego, the One Ring.

Peter Bastian (1943-2017) was a Danish musician, philosopher and spiritual practitioner. "Always Already Loved" is an autobiographical book about his life since the publication of the "Master's Class" book from 2011 and about finding a new view of love. Shortly before he died after several years of illness in March 2017, he openly and honestly told about finding peace with himself by accepting who he is. The book reproduces Bastian's enthusiasm and amazement over reaching a Christian faith in being already loved.

"Always Already Loved" was created in a conversation at Arresødal Hospice, where the author Tor Nørretranders visited him 11 days before he died. The two friends spoke about everything Peter Bastian felt deeply in his heart. They talked about the grace, which Peter Bastian, after many years of spiritual search and work with self-improvement, found when he discovered the previous and always present love of God.

Before Bastian reached the meeting with God, which led him to be baptized and began to count himself as a Christian, he had for a long time belonged to the spiritual movement EnlightenNext, led by the American New Age guru Andrew Cohen.

Andrew Cohen (born 1955 or 1956) is regarded by some as a cult leader. He is the perfect example of a New Age guru, a promotor of the Mythology of Authenticity, mixed with New Age concepts of "the evolution of consciousness." The following description should be enough to describe what is going wrong. He eventually met H. W. L. Poonja in 1986, a self-styled teacher who taught that no effort is needed to attain enlightenment "because it is merely the realisation of what one already is". At their first meeting, Cohen realized that he "had always been free". Poonja declared Cohen to be his heir, and Cohen began to teach as a neo-Advaita teacher, and gathered a community around him.

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

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

According to Wilber, evolutionary enlightenment means "the realization of oneness with all states and all stages that have evolved so far and that are in existence at any given time." Cohen believes that individuals need to transcend egoism to express the "Authentic Self." Through identifying the evolutionary impulse as their own Authentic Self, individuals can transcend ego, and find a deeper self-sense without relying on asceticism or solitude.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now, let's return to Peter Bastian. His vision with the teachings of Andrew Cohen was to live a life devoted to the good and in the constant development of the best in man toward perfection. It is about the perfect person, the superhuman; the idea that there is a Yondershare ... that there is another shore. Once you have crossed the river to the other shore, you have arrived and can settle among others and like-minded. You have left all problems. But the longer Peter Bastian lived after these ideals and in this community, the more he discovered that man's own efforts to create a heaven on Earth led to a hell where people were hurting each other and lived in fear. The idea of a self-improvement process where you constantly are in progress with some kind of evaluation of yourself, became a problem. That's why Peter Bastian, a week before his death, wrote, as an introduction to the book:

*I can see how the idea of the good, the higher and the best version of myself has been a driving force, but also how that has created a hostility in my life.*

Despite the fact that much Christian speech about holiness remarkably reminds about this pursuit of perfection and goodness, Peter Bastian learned that what he met in Christianity was diametrically opposed to a laborious and self-made work towards perfection. When Peter Bastian is going to describe his meeting with God, he says:

"In the midst of all that, I became exposed to a Christian break in."

The message that met him in Christianity was completely opposed to what he had listened to and practiced in his time in EnlightenNext. He describes it himself as follows:

*And the message that I began to respond to was the message of unconditional love. That is, that we can give up the dream of becoming perfect people. There is one ideal for what love is. Jesus shows this to us. It is complete, and in all respects, unattainable and you do not have a chance [...]. You have a goal that is completely beyond yourself [...]. You can not live up to it, but you are always already loved. Love in advance.*

From a cramped striving to be good, Peter Bastian could rest in the love of *Another* - the love of God. This was not conditioned by his efforts, but was there in advance.

The greatest beauty of the book is its image of God as a complete *Otherness*, like the one who is always ready with his love, even before we think of him, and always, already overflows us with unconditional love even when we are unperfect. That's why Peter Bastian also speaks to us all when he says, "Here you can get caught up in a love that sees you as you are and can accommodate you no matter what happens, no matter what appears."

This is a paradox. Because you can't reach grace without doing anything. There are two mutual processes which fertilize each other. Your own work, and the help from the Divine. But beginning to work spiritually with yourself will often be a work with the dark ancient inertia, and therefore the realization that you can't do anything at all without help from above. In other words: you have to give up your resistance.

In New Age the *Otherness* has been removed. Here there only is one movement, your own eternal psycho-religious inner work supported by moral subjectivism. And this hinders the important concepts of self-abnegation and humility. Ego-inflation is the result. The concept of enlightenment has been turned into the One Ring. It has been turned into an enlightenment machine.

Evolutionism can't predict the future, it avoids looking at the cycles of nature. It is a straight line, not a circle. Evolutionism praises the up-cycles and doesn't allow the down-cycles, despite that the cycles of nature is evident to anyone. Evolutionism doesn't allow concepts such as hybris-nemesis, negativity and compensatory karma. Devolution is the consequence of violating the laws of the natural life-cycles. And 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.

When beauty is sacrificed for efficiency, the result is inefficiency. When men worship machines, the proper good not only of man but also of machines is sacrificed.

Consider the evidence. In the past, there were few machines and many slaves; and the rich, who could afford many slaves, lived a life of leisure because of them. Today, when machines have replaced slaves (an obvious advance), those rich enough to afford the most machines do *not* have more leisure than they had before, but less!

Leisure means time, or control of your time, i.e., liberty. Machines were supposed to give liberty both to the slaves, who were no longer needed, and to the masters, by maximizing their leisure. Every technological power is a power over time, a way of saving time, whether for traveling (fast cars), cooking (microwave ovens), or communicating (computers). Yet everyone complains about having *less* leisure, less "free time" than ever before. Our parents had more time for us than we have for our children; and their parents had more time for them than they had for us. Most of us *spend* more time paying for, learning, relearning, cursing, servicing, updating, and playing with our computers than we *save* with them.

But there is hope. After Sauron's defeat Aragorn ushers in a new golden age. Yet this is only temporary. *Every* victory over evil is. Aragorn's descendants gradually lose his nobility, and the patterns repeats.



The pattern is free, yet it is cyclic: (1) divine blessings, (2) consequent human prosperity, (3) the fall into pride and laziness, (4) consequent decline, (5) disaster, which stirs (6) repentance, which brings as its result (1) divine blessings again. This is the repeated pattern for the history of all nations. As Kreeft says: “For Israel, like Christ, is the rule as well as the exception, the key to universal history as well as the unique center of it.”

Whether one’s personal temperament is optimistic or pessimistic, any realistic philosophy of history must account for decline. Universal optimism and the idea of universal necessary progress are simply silly. As C.S. Lewis puts it, “It is, indeed, manifestly not the case that there is any law of progress in ethical, cultural, and social history” (*World’s Last Night*, pp. 103-4).

Kreeft invites us to see the interaction between Merlin, who is resuscitated to help modern England in her spiritually darkest hour, as some had hoped King Arthur would do with the twentieth century, in Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength* (pp. 292-93).

I have given a complete account of evolutionism in my free Ebook [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#). In my free Ebook [The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Idealism](#), I give further details on how evolutionism has distorted spirituality.

#### **4) Optimism or Pessimism?**

A pessimist like Tolkien can be a happy man. Both Tolkien and Lewis, who were traditionalists, conservatives, and pessimists rather than progressives, had an optimistic attitude toward ordinary life. Both lived good lives even in a purely material sense: they were able to enjoy the simple, best things in life, such as walking and weather and conversation with friends. We find the opposite connection on the part of the ideological Left, between their desperately optimistic philosophy of history and their inability to admit or enjoy ordinary, earthly Hobbit-like bourgeois pleasures. Indeed, no word is more despicable in the Marxist vocabulary than “bourgeois”.

Tolkien’s conservatism was directed towards the pre-modern. We shall later look at how he paradoxically enough also supported a certain kind of anarchism, when it comes to modernity. So he should certainly not be confused with any kind of modern conservatism. If I should compare his strange kind of anarcho-conservatism with another Englishman, it would be Tom Hodgkinson. Back in 1991, bored to tears by his job, 23 year old journalist Tom Hodgkinson lay on his bed and dreamed of



starting a magazine called *The Idler*. He'd found the title in a collection of essays by Dr Johnson, himself a constitutionally indolent man. How to live, that was the question. How to be free in a world of jobs and debt? And curse this alarm clock. Tom was fortunately sacked from his job and started to sign on. He wandered across the road to where his old friend, designer and writer Gavin Pretor-Pinney lived. Gavin was the kind of person who could help Tom to realise this dream. And he did. In August 1993, the pair produced issue one of the *Idler*. It had the sub-title "literature for loafers". Dr Johnson was the cover star and there was an interview with magic mushroom guru Terence McKenna. Contributors included a young journalist called Louis Theroux. The magazine has since enjoyed a number of incarnations. In the nineties it was published by the *Guardian* newspaper, then by Ebury publishing. Tom published the *Idler* as an annual collection of essays until 2014, then relaunched the mag in 2016.

The *Idler* Academy, founded at a festival in 2010, is the *Idler*'s educational offshoot. It is a school which offers online and real-world courses in the classical liberal arts and practical skills. From 2011 to 2015 Tom ran a small bookshop and café in Notting Hill. The *Idler* Academy teaches philosophy, astronomy, calligraphy, music, business skills, English grammar, ukulele, public speaking, singing, drawing, self-defence and other subjects. Here you can educate yourself in the ideas of Plato or learn the ukulele, in convivial surroundings with like-minded and interesting people.

Hodgkinson's book *How to Be Idle: A Loafer's Manifest* is an antidote to the work-obsessed culture which puts so many obstacles between ourselves and our dreams. Hodgkinson presents us with a laid-back argument for a new contract between routine and chaos, an argument for experiencing life to the full and living in the moment. Ranging across a host of issues that may affect the modern idler – sleep, the world of work, pleasure and hedonism, relationships, bohemian living, revolution – he draws on the writings of such well-known apologists for idleness as Dr Johnson, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson and Nietzsche.

Another book by Hodgkinson is called *The Freedom Manifesto: How to Free Yourself from Anxiety, Fear, Mortgages, Money, Guilt, Debt, Government, Boredom, Supermarkets, Bills, Melancholy, Pain, Depression, Work, and Waste*. Tom Here Hodgkinson shares his delightfully irreverent musings on what true independence means and what it takes to be free. The *Freedom Manifesto* draws on French existentialists, British punks, beat poets, hippies and yippies, medieval thinkers, and anarchists to provide a new, simple, joyful blueprint for modern living. From growing your own vegetables to canceling your credit cards to reading Jean-Paul Sartre, here are excellent suggestions for nourishing mind, body, and spirit--witty, provocative,

sometimes outrageous, yet eminently sage advice for breaking with convention and living an uncluttered, unfettered, and therefore happier, life.

In *Business for Bohemians: Live Well, Make Money* Hodgkinson combines practical advice with laugh-out-loud anecdote to create a refreshingly candid guidebook for all of us who aspire to a greater degree of freedom in our working lives. Whether you dream of launching your own startup or profiting from your creativity in your spare time, *Business for Bohemians* will equip you with the tools to turn your talents into a profitable and enjoyable business. Accounting need no longer be a dark art. You will become au fait with business plans and a friend of the spreadsheet. You will discover that laziness can be a virtue. Above all, you will realise that freedom from the nine-to-five life is achievable - and, with Hodgkinson's comforting, pragmatic and extremely funny advice at hand, you might even enjoy yourself along the way. This book is a help for people who want to make a living out of their true calling in life, and thereby turn their work into play and art.

In *Brave Old World: A Month-by-Month Guide to Husbandry, or the Fine Art of Looking After Yourself* Hodgkinson takes us on a modern tour of the ancient arts of everyday living: philosophy, husbandry and merriment. Drawing on the wisdom of an eclectic range of thinkers and writers, and, as ever, on Tom's own honestly recounted and frequently imperfect attempts to travel the road to self-sufficiency, *Brave Old World* charts the progress of a year in pursuit of the pleasures of the past. From January to December, let Tom be your guide to a better, older way of life. So, Tom Hodgkinson represents the same strange mix of anarchism and conservatism (Anarcho-conservatism), which also Karen Blixen and Tolkien represented; the defend of the pre-modern and ancient as a way to true freedom in the now.

Tolkien was not an optimist by temperament but by conviction. Had he philosophized by feeling rather than faith, he would never have been able to make both halves of this statement, in 1944:

*I sometimes feel appalled at the thought of the sum total of human misery...If anguish were visible, almost the whole of this benighted planet would be enveloped in a dense dark vapour...But...evil labours with vast power and perpetual success – in vain: preparing always only the soil for unexpected good to sprout in* (*Letters*, no. 64, p. 76).

Tolkien knows this by faith in the God who joins goodness and power in one being. But he also knows it by philosophical reason, for evil is a parasite on good; being as such is good. Therefore the more evil a thing is, the more it approaches nonbeing. Evil is self-destructive.

Kreeft says:

*Whether or not ‘optimism’ is the right word for Tolkien’s temperament, it is the wrong word for his philosophy. The right one is ‘hope’. The chances of history coming out well seem slim. But it happens. And it is precisely because the chances of salvation seem so slim that the victory is very precious – as Tolkien explains in ‘On Fairy-Stories’.*

*The Eucatastrophe, or Happy Ending, is not only consolation but truth – if the gospel, the “good news”, is not a lie. From the premise that Christianity is true it follows that the far-off glimpse of joy produced by fantasy is a glimpse of truths; that a great eucatastrophic tale like *The Lord of the Rings* is a gift of divine grace, an opening of the curtain that veils Heaven to earthly eyes, a tiny telepathic contact with the mind of God.*

There are at least two great eucatastrophes in *The Lord of the Rings*. The most dramatic one is at the Crack of Doom. Sam and Frodo are at the end of their road, utterly hopeless and prepared to die. One of Frodo’s fingers has already fallen into the Crack of Doom, surrounded by the Ring and Gollum’s teeth; and the rest of Frodo and Sam are about to follow when Mount Orodruin erupts. But Frodo has completed his Quest: this is his joy. As for Sam, Frodo’s return from what could be called spiritual death is *his* joy. Sam sees Frodo “pale and worn, and yet himself again...’Master!’ cried Sam, and fell upon his knees. In all that ruin of the world, for the moment he felt only joy, great joy. The burden was gone. His master had been saved; he was himself again, he was free” (LOTR, p. 926).

It is not his physical survival afterward that is the eucatastrophe. Had he died, as most epic heroes do (e.g., Arthur and Beowulf), the eucatastrophe would have been unmarred – just as Job would have been happy in the end even if he had *not* recovered his health, possessions, and family, so long as he saw God. The essential triumph is spiritual.

The joy of both Frodo and Sam is pure and poignant because of their unselfish love: Sam for Frodo, Frodo for the Shire and all of Middle-earth, which he has saved. They are not “winners”. They are wounded and ready to die, and they have succeeded only by an incredible grace, not by force of mind or body, plans or arms. Frodo, in fact, failed; it was Gollum who completed the impossible task. The nearly miraculous outcome leaves the reader no room for pride or self-righteousness, as many “happy endings” do.

The second eucatastrophe is described more honorifically – in fact, liturgically. As Kreeft says it resembles what we will surely experience in Heaven. This comes just a little later, after the rescue. Here too it is Frodo's honor that is the source of Sam's joy:

*Gandalf stood before him robed in white..."Well, Master Samwise, how do you feel?" he said.*

*But Sam lay back and stared with open mouth, and for a moment, between bewilderment and great joy, he could not answer. At last he gasped: "Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?"*

*"A great Shadow has departed," said Gandalf, and then he laughed, and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days upon days without count. It fell on his ears like the echo of all the joys he had ever known. And he burst into tears...*

*And then, to Sam's final and complete satisfaction and pure joy, a minstrel of Gondor stood forth, and knelt, and begged leave to sing. And behold! He said: "...I will sing to you of Frodo of the Nine Fingers and the Ring of Doom."*

*And when Sam heard that, he laughed aloud for sheer delight, and he stood up and cried, "O great glory and splendor! And all my wishes have come true!" And then he wept.*

*And all the host laughed and wept, and in the midst of their merriment and tears the clear voice of the minstrel rose like silver and gold, and all men were hushed. And he sang to them, now in the Elven-tongue, now in the speech of the West, until their hearts, wounded with sweet words, overflowed, and their joy was like swords, and they passed in thought out to regions where pain and delight flow together and tears are the very wine of blessedness (LOTR, pp. 930-31, 933).*

We are that laughing and weeping host, and Tolkien is our minstrel.

Eucatastrophe, of course, is almost the opposite of "progressivism". Both are "happy endings", but the first is sheer grace, while the second is necessity. We are "surprised by joy" in eucatastrophe, while we are surprised by evil and failure if we are "progressives".

## 7. Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that explores the nature of art, beauty, and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty.

In its more technical epistemological perspective, it is defined as the study of subjective and sensori-emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment and taste. Aesthetics studies how artists imagine, create and perform works of art; how people use, enjoy, and criticize art; and what happens in their minds when they look at paintings, listen to music, or read poetry, and understand what they see and hear. It also studies how they feel about art-- why they like some works and not others, and how art can affect their moods, beliefs, and attitude toward life. More broadly, scholars in the field define aesthetics as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature".

Of all the divisions of philosophy, this one seems the most resistant to analysis. What is beauty, and why does it move us so? Only a few threads are clear in this rope that tugs on our hearts. Kreeft says that one of them is glory.

Glory and splendor are certainly neither modern nor "familiar". Yet they contribute not only to beauty but also to joy, to human fulfillment. If we are created for royal glory, then royal glory will fulfill us, however unfashionable our ideology makes it.

The things in *The Lord of the Rings* that reflect this glory are manifold, and include humble, Hobbit-like things as well as exalted, Elvish things. Words and language reveal them, and it is not clear whether it is the glory of the things that justifies the words or the glory of the words that justifies the things. The original inspiration for *The Lord of the Rings* was linguistic. "In the beginning was the Word" for Tolkien as for God.

In his essay "On Fairy-Stories," Tolkien explicitly links the sort of scientific-technological ingenuity (the instrumental reason) with *magic*, culminating in "the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician." The magic of Faërie, by contrast, is what he calls *enchantment*. This is a brilliant and vitally important distinction.

Tolkien describes enchantment as "the primal desire at the heart of Faërie: the realization, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder." But the "realization" here is ambiguous, and properly so; it signifies both the making of the natural world wondrous through the creation of a "Secondary World...artistic in desire and purpose," and the realization (through the former) that the Primary or "real" world actually is wondrous. In the context of *The Lord of the Rings*, enchantment is the art of the elves; and as such, it has a special affinity with nature both as its principal inspiration and as the object of its enchantment: "Their 'magic' is Art, delivered from many of its human limitations: more effortless, more quick, more

complete...” and even though the Elves “became sad, and their art (shall we say) antiquarian...they also retained the old motive of their kind, the adornment of earth, and the healing of its hurts.”

Magic too concerns the Earth, but in a completely different way:

*Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside; but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose. Magic produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration in the Primary World...it is not an art but a technique; its desire is power in this world, domination of things and wills.*

The enemy is thus “Lord of magic and machines,” who favours “machinery” – with destructive and evil effects – because “magicians,” who have become chiefly concerned to use *magic* for their own power, would do so (do do so).”

That power doesn’t always start off as pure self-aggrandizement; probably rarely so, in fact. Tolkien recognized that “frightful evil can and does arise from an apparently good root, the desire to benefit the world and others - speedily and according to the benefactor’s own plans...” Even Sauron’s rise to power at the beginning of the Third Age started “slowly, beginning with fair motives: the reorganizing and rehabilitation of the ruin of Middle-earth, “neglected by the gods,” he comes a reincarnation of Evil, and a thing lusting for Complete Power...” Remember what Saruman the collaborator tried to tempt Gandalf with: “Knowledge, Rule, Order.”

On historical grounds alone, Tolkien is quite correct; the appropriation of magic and its transformation into modern science is one of the most important events (and closely guarded secrets) of the past three centuries. And in contemporary terms, the domination of financial and technological magic over enchantment – often through exploiting it (something at which advertising and public relations are masters) – is something we see confirmed everywhere in Middle-earth today, just as we continue to hear a great deal about how all this Progress is not only good for us, but unavoidable in any case. As he wrote in a letter:

*So we come inevitable from Daedalous and Icarus to the Giant Bomber. It is not an advance in wisdom! This terrible truth, glimpsed long ago by Sam Butler, stick out so plainly and is so horrifying exhibited in our time, with its even worse menace for the future, that it seems almost a world wide mental disease that only a tiny minority perceive it.*

Let me be clear: science as a human activity has perfectly honourable antecedents, and is not necessarily perverted by power-as-domination. What I'm criticising is reductionism, pseudoscience and scientism. In that I'm precisely defending true science. I have written about this several times (see my for example my article [Bridge Between Science and Spirituality](#)). Even today, some scientists are more oriented to the wonder of the natural world (i.e. enchantment) than its manipulation and exploitation (i.e. magic). Actually, this is discernible within Tolkien's work. In a letter, he observed that

*The Elves represent, as it were, the artistic, aesthetic and purely scientific aspects of the Humane nature raised to a higher level than is actually seen in Men. That is: they have a devoted love of the physical world, and a desire to observe and understand it for its own sake and as "other" ...not as a material for use or as a power-platform.*

The Noldor, or Loremasters, in particular, "were always on the side of 'science and technology,' as we should call it..." On the other hand, it was the Noldor who cooperated with Sauron in forging the Rings of Power, and were thus duped and betrayed by him.

Nor is technology as such evil, although there is far too much self-interested nonsense in reductionism, pseudoscience and scientism about it being "neutral"; there is nothing morally neutral about a bomb compared, say, with a bicycle. Tolkien admits that "It would no doubt be possible to defend poor Lotho's introduction of more efficient mills; but not Sharkey and Sandyman's use of them" – and still less, in Treebeard's words, "orc-work, the wanton hewing...without even bad excuse of feeding the fires..." I think the same point is evident from the Dwarves, who were created by Aulë the Smith, and in their hands "still lives the skill in works of stone that none have surpassed." They are also constitutionally prone to greed for gold and precious stones, not to mention *mithril*. But when Gimli discovers the Caverns of Helm's Deep, he is adamant that "No dwarf could be unmoved by such loveliness. None of Durin's race would mine those caves for stones or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be got there...we would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them."

Nor is science the whole problem, even today. *Nonetheless*, it is true, and vital to admit, that modern science – the ideology of which is sometimes called scientism – is a very different matter. It has become almost inseparable from both power and profit, and sometimes an object of worship in its own right. As such, it is now as much of a problem in our Middle-earth as it is in Tolkien's literary creation.

We who sense this must follow the path of the Elves. We must become Life Artists!  
A general practical part of aesthetics.

Let us look at these concepts in the light of Karen Blixen and her view of human nature seen in the image of an artist.

My three literary mentors (Blixen, Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry) could be said to follow Kierkegaard's three stages on the way to becoming a true self: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Each of these "stages on life's way" represents competing views on life and as such potentially conflicts with one another. In my interpretation Karen Blixen belongs to the aesthetic stage. Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry belong to the ethical and religious stage, though this doesn't mean that aesthetics not is a part of their work. It certainly is. Let me describe each of the stages:

The aesthetic is the realm of sensory experience and pleasures. The aesthetic life is defined by pleasures, and to live the aesthetic life to the fullest one must seek to maximize those pleasures. Increasing one's aesthetic pleasures is one way to combat boredom, and Kierkegaard described many methods of doing so.

Ethics are the social rules that govern how a person ought to act. Ethics are not always in opposition to aesthetics, but they must take precedence when the two conflict. The aesthetic life must be subordinated to the ethical life, as the ethical life is based on a consistent, coherent set of rules established for the good of society.

Kierkegaard considers the religious life to be the highest plane of existence. He also believes that almost no one lives a truly religious life. He is concerned with how to be "a Christian in Christendom"—in other words, how to lead an authentically religious life while surrounded by people who are falsely religious.

The three stages on life's way is in my version a grounding movement from the head to the heart. This might seem odd, since many would consider it to be the opposite way around, but in my interpretation the movement is intimately connected to my concept of [The Peter Project](#), where the central message is: To become like a child again. It is a rebellion against the top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of the ladder.

Karen Blixen is certainly not for children. She is for adults. Tolkien represents a movement towards the child, and Saint-Exupéry is about the child in us all. Ethics and religiousness belong to the heart. In my view.

The Luciferian self-forgetful and surrendering mystical movement in Karen Blixen can be seen already when she in 1913 travelled to Africa. She was 28 years old. She



was at that time lonely and proud as a descendant of great rulers or great dreamers. It was her youthful longings and dreams she travelled into. The strange, wild and dark world, which she met, she recognized. In the woods of North Zealand in Denmark, which are high and light and are penetrated by hundreds of roads and paths, like parks or great gardens, she had seen the ancient wood for her inner eye, a flowing world of great passions, which still was untouched by consciousness. In *The Plough*, a small story, which was printed in 1907, she had depicted the ancient wood:

*"In the wood there is not safe in the night, the ancient woods are haunting. Though fallen and died for so many thousand years ago, and forgotten in the day-time, they wake up at night again, rise, just like the fallen from their graves on the battle field, and transform the world. Impassable and terrible, with a gnarled and unlimited power, the ancient wood rises. And there are heard booms in the wood from the heavy steps of the great ancient elephants, and in the whoosh of the great tops is another sound, it is the night song of the wood, it is the ghost of the ancient songs, which were sung, when Earth was new. Oh, it is the voices of the ancient woods and their song about the great free Earth. It is the song of the great rivers and lakes and the great plains and the great changes, the song of the great battles, of loneliness, of freedom, of darkness, the great songs about ancient times, about the youth of the Earth, when it was wild and free - and the woods, the marshes, the great lakes and plains were its thoughts. Mankind was not born and nothing had name..."*

This wild nature (devoid of the culture of Mankind) is according to Blixen a part of our own original nature, which she sees in the image of an artist. She was actually herself quite a good painter.

She created her pictures not only in words but also in drawings and paintings. Her handwriting is, in and of itself, a beautifully rendered movement across the page, as if the writing's very form has a story of its own:

As a young girl she often mixed her writing exercises with her sketches, the one form of expression inextricably tied to the other.

As an author Karen Blixen was much indebted to the art of painting:

*"I would have always had difficulty seeing how a landscape really looked if I had not learned the key to doing so from the great painters."*

It all began in the sheer joy of reading and came to fruition when, as a seventeen year old, she entered the art school run by misses Sode and Meldahl in Copenhagen. Learning the fine art of perspective drawing was a revelation for her. The discipline

and rules of law involved in constructive drawing served as the basis for her work as an author.

Blixen received her first real training in drawing from Charlotte Sode and Julie Meldahl in their art school on Bredgade, in 1902-03, where she prepared for further studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and in 1910, twenty-five-year-old Karen Dinesen attended an art school in Paris.

Karen Blixen's letters from Africa speak only occasionally about artistic activities. The result, however, consist of some brilliant portraits of the native helpers on her farm, evidence of a considerable talent and a special insight into her models' personalities:

After the farm in Africa was sold in 1931, she returned home to Denmark. From then on the pictures appeared not on paper or canvas but in words. One form seemed to replace the other. At the same time, all her painterly insights were integrated into the written picture.

The intention with my works on my three literary mentors is to develop Karen Blixen's philosophy from the aesthetical stage into my versions of the ethical and religious stages, without losing her concept of the original artistic human nature. I will do this with my concept of the Life Artist.

Imagine making art, not with paint or clay, but with life itself as your medium. A "Life Artist," or "Lebenskuenstler" as the Germans would say, is someone who finds beauty in the colors life puts at their disposal, someone who makes do with the brushes they've got and doesn't pout over a few mistaken strokes.

On the website [Lebenskünstler](#), a Life Artist connotes a person who approaches life with the zest and inspiration of an artist, although he or she may not be working recognizably as an artist. He is a Lebenskünstler. Someone who pieces together his living from various activities that, collectively, bring in just enough money to live. No office, no suit, no boss, no rules. German has a word for such people, the website claims, and English doesn't. There's even a higher form of Lebenskünstler, the website says, and that is the Überlebenskünstler, or "survival artist."

Lebenskünstler – one who recognizes opportunities in life and takes advantage or makes use of those opportunities to make the most out of one's own life; one who lives life deliberately and to the fullest capacity (concept from Henry David Thoreau of "living deep and sucking out all the marrow of life"); one who gambles with the outcome of his/her own life by seizing opportunity; one who makes living an art.

So, the German word *Lebenskünstler* means ‘an artist of life’. It acknowledges that being an artist is not, in the first instance, about what you produce, but about your contribution to your environment based on the way you live. As creative entities, we can share our creativity in many ways. By how we dress or decorate our homes, by what we cook, by how we educate our children or entertain our friends, by how we dance and make love, by how we speak about our lives.

The website says that *Lebenskünstler* refers not so much to people who turn their life into a piece of art, and that it is not for nothing that Berlin has been dubbed a graveyard for ambition. The German capital has a particularly impressive record of attracting those eager to make a living as artists, many of whom succumb to the many initiative-numbing charms and morph into *Lebenskünstler* ,

Oscar Wilde once purportedly said “I put my talent into my work, but my genius into my life.”

The website focuses on the *Lebenskünstler* of Berlin. Going back to the 1970s – or maybe even to the 1910s – there has existed a decadent, artistic underground in Berlin which has placed little value on “making it” for the sake of making it. The king of decadent Berlin is the “poor but sexy” *Lebenskünstler*, an archetype who has had a huge influence on culture and nightlife here till this day. The *Lebenskünstler* cares little about his next record deal or art opening or publishing deal. Instead, life is his art. Only “now” matters and how you can make the most out of each moment. Screw success and any concept of “the future” because for decades Berliners – think of WWII, the Cold War etc. – have felt there is NO tomorrow (and they are right of course – we will all die).

The *Lebenskünstler*’s dilettantish self-expression might have no audience other than his circle of friends or 30 people in some tiny *Kleinkunst* venue.

So with the concept of the *Lebenskünstler* we actually have a quite good idea about what it might mean to be a Life Artist. We’ll soon find out that the term fits very well to many other people than the *Lebenskünstler* of Berlin, and in that connection we will ask whether the Life Artist is a person who creates himself through his will, or whether he in an act of surrender and self-forgetfulness is letting an external source of creation work through him?

Art of life is a sovereign life expression. In the sovereign life-expressions we clearly meet something, which arises as richness, gift or grace in our life, something we have

not created ourselves, and which at the same time is the actual and carrying in all being together between humans.

The Danish philosopher of life K.E. Løgstrup says, that the spontaneous life-expressions come from the universe, and that the Universe therefore not is irrelevant to Man. He isn't self-dependent, but is connected with the Universe. So Løgstrup claims, that we must interpret the Universe, and the sovereign life-expressions, as created. In that way we have an external source of creation, which we, with the right kind of living, could become one with. But how?

The relationship is the mirror, in which you can discover yourself. 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. Nor do you live because you create yourself, as Nietzsche, Sartre, Rorty, Foucault and all the other supporters of the self-production thesis claim. You live because you are in the relationship, and it's the lack of ability to understand this, which causes conflict.

The reason why that there is no 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 itself. 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 preferable idealize or escape, and rather live in the future than seeing the relationship in which we are in the moment.

Becoming is the thought-process, and both Nietzsche, Foucault and Rorty 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 with will can be controlled; that is: controlled by the thinking. Life is seen as a work of art, which Man, with his will, can model as he wants to. In short: the create-your-own-reality ideology. The artist's brush is the thought, and the colors of the thought is the old, the past. It is therefore not new colors. He is an imitator.

This is not how a true Life Artist works. A Life Artist doesn't imitate, he creates something new, and the new is life itself, not the thinking. Life itself is his colors.

In order to get in contact with life itself, the Life Artist often spend an inordinate amount of time engaged in carious leisure activities. The question then becomes: are such forms of recreation a waste of time? Everyone needs a break from work, responsibility, and even other people. As Aristotle observed, shared leisure activity is often the glue that bonds friends together. Indeed, the philosopher Josef Pieper went so far as to claim that leisure is "the basis of culture."

Pieper based his theory on – you guessed it – Aristotle, who said, "Happiness seems to be found in leisure; for we deny ourselves leisure so that we can be at leisure."

Basically, we're all working for the weekend. Pieper, though, had a specific notion of leisure in mind; not just any old form of rest and relaxation is beneficial for us. Pieper agreed with Aristotle that we must strive to flourish in our nature as "rational animals." Hence, leisure is most properly that time preserved from the work a day world to spend cultivating our intellectual tastes. Pieper, picking up a line from another Aristotelian philosopher, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), said that the right sorts of leisure activities – those involving intellectual contemplation – can even make us more like God: "'Because of the leisure of contemplation' the Scripture says of the Divine Wisdom itself that 'it plays all the time, plays throughout the world.'"

Many philosophers and other intellectuals have also been, and sometimes still are, accused of being bums in the sense of being useless to society – often forgetting that the democracy and the human rights they live by, are created by philosophers. For any philosophy majors out there, recall the look on your parents' face when you told them what you were spending their hard-earned college savings to study philosophy!

Aquinas, though – in an admittedly self-serving statement – asserted that it is "necessary for the perfection of the human community, that there be persons who devote themselves to the [use-less] life of contemplation." The problem with society, as Mill has noted, is that we get so caught up in making a living – working to make money so we can have shelter, food, and green nail polish – that we forget to live.

Already the ancient Greek philosopher and Life Artist Epicurus was a misunderstood man with an image problem. Because he recommended that his followers steer clear of lives of political and financial ambition, he was commonly thought to advocate a life of idleness and lazing about. Because he taught that pleasure was the proper goal of good life, Epicurus and his colleagues were dismissed as decadent sensualists. Because he occasionally wrote about food and drink, his philosophy has been characterized as one of wanton indulgence and gluttony. Even today, the term “epicure” is popularly associated with the pleasures of fine food and wine. Add to this the fact that Epicurus, breaking with ancient Greek custom, welcomed nontraditional students – women, servants, and prostitutes – to his school of philosophy, and we can see why Epicureanism was associated with sexual license and rumours of debauchery.

We have already met the modern English idler and Life Artist, who promotes all the qualities of an idle way of life, Tom Hodgkinson. His philosophy, in his published books and articles, is of a relaxed approach to life, enjoying it as it comes rather than toiling for an imagined better future.

Ronald Hutton’s book *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* demonstrates how the festive culture of the Middle Ages was gradually eroded by the Reformation and the Puritans. It was in this merry time the legend of Robin Hood was formed. Robin Hood is a heroic outlaw in English folklore who, according to legend, was a highly skilled archer and swordsman. Traditionally depicted as being dressed in Lincoln green, he is often portrayed as "robbing from the rich and giving to the poor" alongside his band of Merry Men. Robin Hood became a popular folk figure in the late-medieval period, and continues to be widely represented in literature, films and television. In *The Hobbit* we discover that this idea of [gift economy](#) is shared by Bilbo Baggins, who gives most of his treasures away. Also it is seen in the hobbit custom of giving presents when they celebrate their birthdays, instead of receiving them. We will return to gift economy in the Chapter on Ethics.

And Max Weber’s book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* shows how the competitive Protestants booted out the co-operative Catholics; it shows how a new ethic based on work and earning a lot of money came to replace, in the eighteenth century, the old medieval ethic, which was based on mutual aid. The medieval culture (which wrongly are depicted as a dark age by the Protestant work ethic) combined a love of Jesus, who preached idleness, and a love of Aristotle, who argued that leisure and contemplation led to happiness. (I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to banish their guilt around work).

And with Jesus we have the spiritual practice, which I consider to be the central art of life. A spiritual practitioner is namely always also a genuine Life Artist.

In my book *A Portrait of a Lifeartist* I set up six steps in the spiritual practice: that is: some existential conditions, and some, common to all mankind, growing conditions, and growth levels, in the Life Artist's voyage of discovery into himself, and thereby into life itself. The steps are:

- 1) The separation of the observer and the observed
- 2) Religion and supporting exercises
- 3) Passive listening presence
- 4) Discrimination
- 5) Creative emptiness
- 6) The wholeness of the observer and the observed

Step 5, Creative emptiness, is the condition where the mind is completely released from your perspective, from images of any kind, and the ideas, symbols and conceptions, which are their manifestations. The known has stepped aside for the benefit of the unknown, the beauty of creation. Everything is new, unnamed, unformed, non-linguistic presence. The mind is pure, fresh, young, innocent; completely open and receiving. The mind is awake and the heart is open, awareness and love in one. And in this creative emptiness reality and truth can be discovered, or received, it is one and the same.

Lao Tse said it so simple as it can be said, that the wise rules by emptying the mind and filling the stomach. Eckhart called the creative emptiness Virgin Mary, or the Virgin Mary-state, where God the father can give birth to Christ into Man. The creative emptiness is the possibility for the birth of Christ in us.

Jesus said it with the words about, that unless we change and become like children again, we shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

This creative emptiness can in other words not be reached by an act of the will. The creative emptiness comes when you in self-forgetful openness are one with nature. This is a so-called communicative view of nature, which 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 being has a community with this nature. You could call it metaphysical naturalism. It is connected to the heart, and therefore ethics.

Heartmeditation (Tonglen) begins by taking in your own suffering before you can help others. In order to have compassion for others, you have to have compassion for yourself. This is closely related to the art of being *What you are* present in passive listening (not what you wants to become, but simply what you are).

Having compassion for yourself could easily be used as a quote for positive thinking, which unfortunately also use this as a justification for their teaching of self-love. “Tonglen is one and the same as positive thinking!” they say. But what they in fact are teaching is how *to become another*, or how to *achieve what you desire*.

I’m puzzled over how they can make this mistake. But as everything else within New Age and the Self-industry, it is properly due to the anti-intellectual attitude within these circles; that is: intellectual laziness. They simply don’t bother to study carefully the wisdom traditions from where they steal their quotes.

In particular, to care about other people who are fearful, angry, jealous, overpowered by addictions of all kinds, arrogant, proud, miserly, selfish — you name it — means to not run from the pain of finding these things in yourself. Here positive thinkers begin to get in trouble. And when they get to know the following they are directly getting frightened.

In fact, one’s whole attitude toward pain can change. Instead of fending it off and hiding from it, one can open one’s heart and allow oneself to feel that pain, feel it as something that will soften and purify you and make you far more loving and kind.

The tonglen practice is a method for connecting with suffering — yours and that which is all around you — everywhere you go. It is a method for overcoming fear of suffering and for dissolving the tightness of your heart. Primarily it is a method for awakening the compassion that is inherent in all of us, no matter how cruel or cold we might seem to be.

As you do this practice over time, your compassion expands naturally.

You begin the practice by taking on the suffering of a person you know to be hurting and whom you wish to help. For instance, if you know of a child who is being hurt, you breathe in the wish to take away all the pain and fear of that child. Then, as you breathe out, you send the child happiness, joy, or whatever would relieve their pain. This is the core of the practice: breathing in another’s pain so they can be well and have more space to relax and open, and breathing out, sending them relaxation or whatever you feel would bring them relief and happiness.



However, you often cannot do this practice because you come face to face with your own fear, your own resistance, anger, or whatever your personal pain, your personal stuckness, happens to be at that moment.

At that point you can change the focus and begin to do tonglen for what you are feeling and for millions of others just like you who at that very moment are feeling exactly the same stuckness and misery. Maybe you are able to name your pain. You recognize it clearly as terror or revulsion or anger or wanting to get revenge. So you breathe in for all the people who are caught with that same emotion and you send out relief or whatever opens up the space for you and all those countless others. Maybe you can't name what you're feeling. But you can feel it — a tightness in the stomach, a heavy darkness, or whatever. Just contact what you are feeling and breathe, taking it in for all of us and sending out relief to all of us.

Tonglen can be done for those who are ill, those who are dying or have just died, or for those who are in pain of any kind.

People often say this practice goes against the grain of how we usually hold ourselves together. Truthfully, this practice does go against the grain of wanting things on your own terms, of wanting it to work out for yourself no matter what happens to the others. The practice dissolves the armor of self-protection you've tried so hard to create around yourself. In Buddhist language one would say that it dissolves the fixation and clinging of ego.

Tonglen reverses the usual logic (which positive thinking directly has made into a teaching) of avoiding suffering and seeking pleasure, and in the process you become liberated from a very ancient prison of selfishness. You begin to feel love both for yourself and for others, and you begin to take care of yourself and others. It awakens your compassion and it also introduces you to a far larger view of reality. It introduces you to the unlimited spaciousness that Buddhists call *Sûnyatâ* (see my book [Sûnyatâ Sutras](#)). By doing the practice, you begin to connect with the open dimension of your being. At first you experience this as things not being such a big deal or so solid as they seemed before. But you also begin to experience the wonder of progressive karma, divine providence or spirit help.

Tonglen can be done for those who are ill, those who are dying or have just died, or for those who are in pain of any kind. As I showed in my book *Meditation as an Art of Life*, it can be done as a formal meditation practice. And if you feel for it, go for it! But you don't need to. That's my point. It is not anything you'll need to develop towards because you right now not are ready for it. You can choose to make it into an ethical art of life, right on the spot at any time. For example, if you are out walking

and you see someone in pain — right on the spot you can begin to breathe in their pain and send out relief.

Or, more likely, you might see someone in pain and look away because it brings up your fear or anger; it brings up your resistance and confusion. So on the spot you can do tonglen for all the people who are just like you, for everyone who wishes to be compassionate but instead is afraid, for everyone who wishes to be brave but instead is a coward. Rather than beating yourself up, use your own stuckness as a stepping-stone to understanding what people are up against all over the world.

Gradually, as you do this practice over time, your compassion expands naturally and so does your realization that things are not as solid as you thought. As you do this practice, gradually, at your own pace, you will be surprised to find yourself more and more able to be there for others even in what used to seem like impossible situations (in chapter 10, Ethics, part 4: *Tonglen – Rediscovering Love*, I describe the concrete Tonglen practice).

Mogens Pahuus has in his book *Karen Blixen's Philosophy of Life* argued, that Blixen, when she speaks about God, is using the word in a quite another meaning than the traditional. According to him she uses it completely synonymous with nature, or rather, the creative powers in nature. It seems like she thinks of the human nature as being related to the rest of nature. The human nature is a unity of spirit, instinct, sensation, body and feelings, something which you can't control and master by standing outside it, but which is connected to life-feeling, spontaneity and self-forgetfulness, when you are one with it. Reason, you can say, is lying in an adaption to the realities, both in oneself and the surroundings. Therefore she sees the human nature in the image of an artist. One of my Sûnyatâ Sutras goes like this:

*Only meditative-existential you can be in the Now.*

*The passive listening presence is meditation.*

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

*The human essence is therefore meditation.*

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

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

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

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

*Total existential presence in the Now is meditation.*

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

But the mediocre (human made) moral authority is seeking to control this nature. Therefore the movement towards finding one's true nature is a Luciferian movement. The meaning of life is, according to Blixen, to express the human nature in a creative way.

This can of course only happen in the Now. You can also say, that where the old before was characterized by personal and collective images, which worked in sequences in past and future, then the old now is characterized by universal images, which work in synchronism with the Now, or with nature. It was this Karen Blixen was describing as the ancient, the original, and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. It is a return to the Now, to the timeless eternity. As Rabindranath Tagore said: "The light is young, the eternal ancient light; the shadows are a brief moment's matter, they are born aged."

In India, as noticed by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, works of art representing indifferent objects, local personages and scenes, such as fill the walls and rooms of most of our museums, have been characterized as *desi* ("local, popular, provincial") or as *nâgara* ("fashionable, worldly") and are regarded as esthetically insignificant; whereas those representing deities or revered ancestors, such as might appear in temples or on domestic shrines, are perceived as tokens of an inward, spiritual "way" or "path," termed *mârگا*, which is a word derived from the vocabulary of the hunt, denoting tracks or trail of an animal, by following which the hunter comes to his quarry.

Similarly, the images of deities, which are not local forms of "elementary ideas," are footprint left, as it were, by local passages of the "Universal Self" (*âtman*), through contemplating which the worshiper attains "Self-rapture" (*âtmanananda*). A passage from Plotinus may be quoted to this point: "Not all who perceive with eyes the sensible products of art are affected alike by the same object, but if they know it for the outward portrayal of an archetype subsisting in intuition, their hearts are shaken and they recapture memory of that Original."

I have termed these tracks, trails and footprints as "the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of Man and the Universe," or as "the universal images in time." They correspond to progressive karma. When you see them you see *The Stork*. I have, also with inspiration from Karen Blixen, termed the Original as "The Ancient."

Blixen must not be mistaken for a materialistic oriented atheist, or a satanist (I have explained Satanism in relation to Blixen in my Ebook *Karen Blixen – The Devil's Mistress*). Her insights are that of the mystic. Her mysticism is founded in nature, and

in the creative powers of nature. And since man is a part of this nature, she sees human nature in the image of an artist. In *Out of Africa* she writes:

*“People who dream when they sleep at night know of a special kind of happiness which the world of the day holds not, a placid ecstasy, and ease of heart, that are like honey on the tongue. They also know that the real glory of dreams lies in their atmosphere of unlimited freedom. It is not the freedom of the dictator, who enforces his own will on the world, but the freedom of the artist, who has no will, who is free of will. The pleasure of the true dreamer does not lie in the substance of the dream, but in this: that there things happen without any interference from his side, and altogether outside his control. Great landscapes create themselves, long splendid views, rich and delicate colours, roads, houses, which he has never seen or heard of...”*

So, when she is talking about people as marionettes in the hands of God (nature) she is talking about the mystical experience. The good marionettes give up their will and surrender to the self-forgetful oneness with nature, and therefore the oneness with their own nature. They will be rewarded with an image of a stork. The movement towards this is the Luciferian movement. The bad marionettes fight against their nature by using their will. The movement towards this is the movement of the mediocre moral order.

Again this seems completely paradoxical, but it is my claim that it only can be understood if it is seen in the light of the mystical experience.

It is without question good to become a Life Artist and finding your own nature. As shown, this is closely connected with the heart and the spaciousness of our nature. This spaciousness is our creative emptiness, the source of creation, and therefore also the source of beauty. Goodness and Beauty are in that way one and the same.

In Greek there is a word (*kalon*) that means both “good” and “beautiful”. This is specified by another word, *k’agathon*, which is a contraction of *to kalon kai to Agathon*, “the Good-and-beautiful”. A great marriage! Edmund Spenser (1552/1553 – 13 January 1599) was an English poet best known for *The Faerie Queene*, an epic poem and fantastical allegory celebrating the Tudor dynasty and Elizabeth I. Spenser could still woo readers of his age by imaging Virtue as a beautiful woman.

Also “Sleeping Beauty” (French: *La Belle au bois dormant* “The Beauty in the sleeping Wood”) by Charles Perrault, or “Little Briar Rose”, is a classic fairy tale which involves a beautiful princess, a sleeping enchantment, and a handsome prince. The version collected by the Brothers Grimm was an orally transmitted

version of the original literary tale published by Charles Perrault in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* in 1697. This in turn was based on Sun, Moon, and Talia by Italian poet Giambattista Basile (published posthumously in 1634), which was in turn based on one or more folk tales. The earliest known version of the story is found in the narrative *Perceforest*, composed between 1330 and 1344 and first printed in 2000.

Some folklorists have analyzed Sleeping Beauty as indicating the replacement of the lunar year (with its thirteen months, symbolically depicted by the thirteen fairies) by the solar year (which has twelve, symbolically the invited fairies). The basic elements of the story can also be interpreted as a nature allegory: the princess represents nature, the wicked fairy godmother is winter, who puts the Court to sleep with pricks of frost until the prince (spring) cuts away the brambles with his sword (a sunbeam) to allow the Sun to awaken sleeping princess (nature).

In modern times, Beauty and Goodness are divorced: moral goodness becomes drab and beauty morally dangerous. Milton could not make people of our age love his God more than his Satan. Aeschylus won civic honours (free room and board in the Town Hall for life) with his religious dramas, but a modern poet is expected to be a social rebel, live in poverty, go insane, and cut off his ear and send it to his mistress.

Tolkien bewailed both the ugliness of his age and in its separation between the good and the beautiful. (See “On Fairy-Stories”, p. 83).

But Beauty’s moral danger seems to be not just in modern culture but in the very nature of things. At all times and places the beauty of a Helen or a Cleopatra has lured men to destruction. A beautiful face often masks an ugly soul. And there has always been beautiful but wicked queens, like the White Witch in Narnia or the Snow Queen in Hans Christian Andersen. And also the reverse: someone like Strider, who seems foul yet feels fair, or like the prophets; the hick town of Nazareth; the cold, dirty stable in Bethlehem; and Calvary – why does God send His best gifts in such ugly wrappings?

According to Kreeft, the contrast between the good and the beautiful is *not* in the nature of things. Only in a fallen world is beauty a temptation, or “vain” (see Prov 31:30); and that is only because God trains us by what Lewis calls the Principle of “First and Second Things” in the essay by that title (in *God in the Dock*, pp. 278-81). Putting first things first is the key to the health of second things. Beauty is a “second thing”: it is very good, but not as good as moral goodness. And the worship of “art for art’s sake” will destroy not only true worship but also art. An example of this principle of “First and Second Things” in *The Silmarillion* is Feanor, who puts his own greatest work of art, the Silmarils, before his moral duty. He will not give up the

jewels, just as in *The Lord of the Rings* the proud will not give up the Ring. Feanor envies the Valar and refuses his duty and his destiny – unlike Frodo. Even Niggle (Tolkien's gently self-mocking self-portrait in "Leaf by Niggle") had to learn the principle that art must be put second to morality, his painting second to his needy neighbor (Parish).

But this way of putting it is misleading, as if beauty and goodness were separate entities that could in principle clash.

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.

In *Doctor Faustus* Thomas Mann describes, how the main character Adrian Leverkühn discovers and releases such collective powers and is using them to intensify his musical creativity to genius heights. He goes deliberately into a demonizing-process by making love with the whore Esmeralda, whereby he consciously catches syphilis, for then to use the inner pole-tension of this disease to heighten his creative capacity.

Afterwards the universal energy-mandala unfolds itself out through lines of genius musical works, where both those, who perform them, and those, who listen, are being caught by the magical circle.

Thomas Mann partially builds his figure on Nietzsche, and the whole of the novel is on a collective plane about, what the Germans did under The Second World War, where demonical polarized energy spread from Hitler and the secret SS-rituals.

In Adrian Leverkühn's dialogues with the Devil are clearly seen haughtiness and superman-feeling as the motives, which control the use of the collective creative energy.

The novel is a re-shaping of the Faust legend set in the context of the first half of the 20th century and the turmoil of Germany in that period. The story centers on the life

and work of the (fictitious) composer Adrian Leverkühn. The narrator is Leverkühn's childhood friend Serenus Zeitblom, who writes in Germany between 1943 and 1946. Leverkühn's extraordinary intellect and creativity as a young man mark him as destined for success, but his ambition is for true greatness. He strikes a Faustian bargain for creative genius: he intentionally contracts syphilis, which deepens his artistic inspiration through madness. He is subsequently visited by a Mephistophelean being (who says, in effect, "that you can only see me because you are mad, does not mean that I do not really exist"), and, renouncing love, bargains his soul in exchange for twenty-four years of genius. His madness – his daemonic inspiration – leads to extraordinary musical creativity (which parallels the actual innovations of Arnold Schoenberg).

Leverkühn's last creative years are increasingly haunted by his obsession with the Apocalypse and the Last Judgment. He feels the inexorable progress of his neuro-syphilitic madness leading towards complete breakdown. As in certain of the Faust legends, he calls together his closest friends to witness his final collapse. At a chamber-reading of his cantata "The Lamentation of Doctor Faust", he ravingly confesses his demonic pact before becoming incoherent. His madness reduces him to an infantile state in which he lives under the care of his relatives for another ten years.

Leverkühn's life unfolds in the context of, and in parallel with, the German cultural and political environment which led to the rise and downfall of Nazi Germany. But the predisposing conditions for Leverkühn's pact with the devil are set in character, and in the artistic life, the artistic processes themselves, not merely as political allegory. The interplay of layers between the narrator's historical situation, the progress of Leverkühn's madness, and the medieval legends with which Leverkühn consciously connects himself makes for an overwhelmingly rich symbolic network, an ambiguous complexity that cannot be reduced to a single interpretation.

This doesn't mean, though, that all great art is coming through because a creative person turns the collective energies in through the Ego-structures: Thomas Mann's musical image, which intuitively and poetical seeks to understand Hitler-Germany, is for example a contra-image to Bach's music, which toned God to honour and mankind to uplifting. To all the great works Bach added "Soli Deo Gloria".

In this way beauty is the bloom on the rose of goodness and truth, as Kreeft expresses it, the child conceived by their union; and thus it is not only good but Heavenly. And while beauty cannot of itself save us or substitute for either goodness or truth (contrary to Keats's moving but muddled sentiment that "beauty is truth, truth beauty; that is all you know on earth and all you need to know"), yet it contributes toward the

salvation of the creation. For it is the opposite of reductionism. In Heaven the poets “shall have flames upon their heads”.

We humans need beauty as well as morality in our lives. And the reason is that we are made in God’s image, and God is the most creative of artists. Tolkien calls us subcreators and notes that “we make still by the law in which we’re made (“On Fairy-Stories”, p. 74).

The Principle of “First and Second Things” applies to the relation between beauty and efficiency (a “Third Thing”) as well as beauty and moral goodness (a “First Thing”). Just as you lose beauty if you sacrifice morality for it – as Tom Shippey sagely points out, commenting on “The Scouring of the Shire”:

*“This country wants waking up and setting to rights,” says the leader of the Hobbiton ruffians, as though he had some goal beyond mere hatred and contempt for the Shire, and...it seems to be more industrialization, efficiency, economy of effort, all things often and still wished on the population of Britain. The trouble with that (as developments after the publication of The Lord of the Rings have tended to confirm), was that the products of efficiency-drives were often not only soulless but also inefficient. Why do Sharkey’s men knock down perfectly satisfactory old houses and put up in their place damp, ugly, badly-built, standardized ones? No one ever explains, but the overall picture was one all too familiar to post-war Britons...The Sarumans of the world rule by deluding their followers with images of a technological Paradise.*

*...But what one often gets (As has become only more obvious since Tolkien’s time) are the blasted landscapes of Eastern Europe, strip-mined and polluted, and even radioactive.*

Beauty can also be goodness’s prophet (LOTR, p. 901).

Modernity and postmodernity has created a bottle-neck of energy in our throats, which hinders energy in passing down into the heart and hara, into love and existence. Our heads look like balloons.

But creative emptiness is the condition where the mind is completely released from your perspective, from images of any kind, and the ideas, symbols and conceptions, which are their manifestations. The known has stepped aside for the benefit of the unknown, the beauty of creation. Everything is new, unnamed, unformed, non-linguistic presence. The mind is pure, fresh, young, innocent; completely open and receiving. The mind is awake and the heart is open, awareness and love in one. And



in this creative emptiness reality and truth can be discovered, or received, it is one and same.

As the Danish life-philosopher Mogens Pahuus says, then it is admittedly not everyone, who knows so great conditions as the great mystics. And these mystics' religious coloured usage of language can be difficult to interpret. But there is a mysticism we all know. It is the mysticism we know from the childhood, and the child in ourselves, and from experiences of the beauty of nature, music and art.

The child is curious after knowing all about everything: why the sun is shining, what the stars are, all about the moon and the world around us; but when we become older, our knowledge only becomes a collection of information devoid of passion. We become specialists, we know a great deal about one or the other subject, but we don't care much about, what happens around us, about the need and the misery in the world, about the stars and the beauty.

The Life Artist must therefore seek to understand the nature of experience, the beauty in observing, in seeing neutral as in a mirror, and in feeling deeply and incisively without seeking to achieve anything. As long as the mind of Man in any way is distorted – by neurotical impulses and feelings, by fear, despair, by self-assertion, snobbery and striving after power – it can not possibly listen, observe, see neutral. But this art of seeing, of listening, of observing, is nothing you just can choose to do, and nor is it a question of thinking, which develops towards something else.

The question about whether Man can be changed from the ground, is a question which affects the whole of your being; it includes observation, truth, beauty, love. And these are in art of life something else than words, they are something you directly experience and are in. The Life Artist must find a way in which you can live so that they become reality. You must go from just having some images of life, personal or collective, to having a philosophical way of life. It is herein the philosophical revolution is lying. In that sense the Life Artist is a philosophical rebel.

You can talk about an instrumental and communicative view of nature, which we already have investigated. 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. It simply doesn't allow the presence of beauty, though so fundamental for our experience. Have you ever heard a materialist talk about the enchantment of beauty?

But even the most fundamentalist materialist can't deny the beauty of nature. 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.

Would it not be better to investigate these two facts – the conflict, with all its struggles inwards and outwards, and the mind, which requires order, harmony, peace, beauty and love?

In the self-forgetful unity of experience and being, of openness for own, and therewith also everything else's being, there are values present which in themselves are good: values such as love, wisdom, meaning, truth, freedom, beauty; something, which Løgstrup called sovereign, or spontaneous, life-expressions.

The psychotherapist seeks to investigate, discover underlying "hidden subconscious truths", whilst the philosophical counselor investigates and exposes philosophical attitudes, ideas, values, conclusions, answers, images. The psychotherapist works with a theory and helps the client to achieve a knowledge about *how* you can solve a problem. Here it is the psychotherapist who investigates the patient. The philosophical counselor works with wisdom and helps the guest with *himself* to rediscover and experience truth, wisdom, beauty; that is: with how you in connection with a problem can *think for yourself*. The philosopher helps the guest to investigate himself.

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) - just look at Laurence Sterne on his "sensitive journey", or at Wordsworth and Coleridge, wandering on foot through Europe, with a great sense of beauty in their hearts, but with a very few money.

According to the Buddhists, then the brain can empty out itself. The body and the brain can dive down into immense depths, into conditions of incredible beauty and sensitivity. This timeless expansion which takes place, and the quality of it, and the level of intensity, is entirely different from the feelings, which have with absence to do; that is: feelings you are absent in, or absent from. You can for instance burst into anger, but at the same time surprised, or shocked, observe your anger. Or you can devote yourself in love, but relate dubious, astonished, offended, to your own feeling. Feelings, which you are locked off from, or locked inside, feelings, which you conscious relate distanced to, or feelings you are unconscious swallowed up in, or beside yourself in. All this are feelings, which have with absence to do.

The fate weaving activity of absence consists of speculation and imagination. Speculation and imagination are hindrances for Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The mind, which speculates, can never know the beauty in the present; it is caught in a net, which is weaved by its own images and words. No matter how widely it, like Orpheus, wanders around in its image-creation, it will still be in the shadow of its own structure, and will never be able to see what is lying beyond itself. The sensitive mind is not a mind with a big imagination. The ability to create images limits the mind historical; such a mind is tied to the past, to memory that makes it dull. Only the silent mind is sensitive. Any kind of accumulation is a burden; and how can a mind be free when it is burdened? Only the free mind is sensitive; the open is that which can't be measured and scaled, the wordless, the unknown. Imagination and speculation hinder the open, the sensitive.

What is, after all, life? Is it not all the time something new? It is something, which constantly is changed and is creating a new feeling. Today is never the same as yesterday, and that is the beauty of life. This "new" is the unique in life, a unique presence, which Buber called The Eternal Thou.

To be the process present in passive listening, is to see it completely with the heart and the mind, to observe it neutral as in a mirror, without saying yes and no, and feel it deeply and incisively, without seeking to achieve anything with it. And this presence is not itself such a thought-process. The presence is always something new, young and spontaneous. The thought is the eternal recurrence of the same, and therefore never new. The passive listening presence and the active evaluating thinking are two completely different things, and they can never meet. But the habitual in our surroundings dulls us, so we shrug our shoulders and say: "What is the use of it? That is the way of life". Thereby we spoil our sensitivity, so that we never act, when we are facing hideousness, exploitation, cruelty and suffering. Also our admiration and deep joy over all beauty are destroyed. In this way our life of feelings slowly and imperceptibly withers away.

Why are you dependent in philosophical sense? Your being is itself a relationship with the surrounding world, but when every relationship with the surrounding world rests on this dependency there is will to power, will to become something, and therefore violence, resistance and bossiness; the instrumental reason applied on human relationships. That is what we have made the whole world into. The systems have colonized the lifeworld. If we own something, we must rule over it. We meet beauty, suddenly there is love, and immediately it is transformed into an ownership; the same closed character and misery begins, and love and beauty have fallen out of the window.

The timeless is freedom. Freedom is the absolute good, and freedom is the beauty of the daily existence. To be alive is be alive in this freedom, and without it there can't be love, because it is openness itself. Everything exists, everything has its being in this freedom. It is everywhere and nowhere. It has no limits. It demands that you as a Life Artist die from everything you know; that is to say: die from your perspective on life, and don't wait until tomorrow. This freedom is the timelessness, happiness, beauty and love.

So, in order to be able to see Truth, Beauty and Goodness, you must also be able to feel, you must be endowed by passion after discovering, and having a great energy. When you observe a cloud and the light in this cloud, then there is beauty. Beauty is passion. In order to, that you can see the beauty in a cloud, or the beauty in the light on a tree, there must be passion, there must be intensity. In this intensity - this passion - there is no sympathy or antipathy at all, and therefore not the feelings, which follow these. The intensity is not personal, not yours or mine. When there is lust there is yours or mine. But the mind, which is passively aware, allows life and energy to flow back from the past and the future, into presence and reality. The energy and the life, which are invested in sorrows and bindings, plans and problems, are flowing in, filling the Now, increasing the intensity and the consciousness in the Now.

This opens by itself the heart; being and reality fall together, your life is real, you are self-forgetful wrapped up in beauty; there is no theorist or dreamer within you. You are your activity in the beauty; it is a presence of something, which not is hidden, something obvious, something, you have a clear understanding of. And in this way reason and feeling fall together.

## **8. Philosophy of language**

Philosophy of language explores the relationship between language and reality, in particular, philosophy of language studies issues that cannot be addressed by other fields, like linguistics, or psychology. Major topics in philosophy of language include the nature of meaning, intentionality, reference, the constitution of sentences, concepts, learning, and thought.

The topic that has received the most attention in philosophy of language has been the nature of meaning, to explain what "meaning" is, and what we mean when we talk about meaning. Within this area, issues include: the nature of synonymy, the origins of meaning itself, and our apprehension of meaning. Another project of special interest to philosophers of language is the investigation into composition, or the

question of how meaningful units of language are composed of smaller meaningful parts, and how the meaning of the whole is derived from the meaning of its parts.

Secondly, this field of study seeks to better understand what speakers and listeners do with language in communication, and how it is used socially. Specific interests include the topics of language learning, language creation, and speech acts.

Thirdly, the question of how language relates to the minds of both the speaker and the interpreter is investigated. Of specific interest is the grounds for successful translation of words and concepts into their equivalents in another language.

Finally, philosophers of language investigate how language and meaning relate to truth and the reality being referred to. They tend to be less interested in which sentences are actually true, and more in what kinds of meanings can be true or false. A truth-oriented philosopher of language might wonder whether or not a meaningless sentence can be true or false, or whether or not sentences can express propositions about things that do not exist, rather than the way sentences are used.

Kreeft says that the goal of philosophy is “Logos”. Logos, like its Chinese counterpart “Tao”, is an incomparably profound and multivalent word that means essentially three things: (1) the ultimate nature of things, the one source of all essential reality and intelligibility; (2) intelligence, understanding, wisdom, truth, as *the knowledge of* that essential reality; and (3) communication, language, speech, argument, explanation, or word, *the expression of* that knowledge. Philosophy studies all three: the first is metaphysics, the second is epistemology, and the third is philosophy of language. Pre-modern philosophy specialized in the first, classical modern philosophy in the second, and postmodern philosophy in the third.

## 1) Living Words

Words were to Tolkien the most beautiful things in the world. The most beautiful thing human eyes have ever seen is called “the Word of God”.

In order to understand how words can be alive we need to start with metaphysics again. Our investigation is a pre-modern investigation.

The images of time are both personal, collective and universal, and therefore they are found both *in* us and *around* us in the movement of nature. They are energy-formations, and therefore also a kind of matter. Nethermost lie the universal images, the Great Vision or Dreamtime: “The Words of God”.

Each of the universal images is made up by opposites as for example light and darkness, sound and silence, time and space, subject and object, identity and difference, heavy and light, long and short, high and low, masculine and feminine, good and evil, life and death. Each image includes in other words both a pole and the antipole of this pole.

These images are language which no longer is verbal, but superior, visionary syntheses and wholes. From these images the most universal models originate: philosophical, scientific, religious-spiritual and cosmic world-images. These images are close to what Plato called the world of forms, which means, that they are images in a Great Vision of creation. They are the models behind creation, that which makes possible, that we altogether can make concepts of life itself.

Often this universal vision is compared with the Holy Script. Johannes Scotus Eriúgena for example said, that the Holy Script is a text, which contains an endless number of meanings and which can be compared with the shimmering feathering of the Peacock.

The Koran is also considered to be such a holy script. It's a book which is said to be older than the Arabic language; you can neither study it historical or philological, because it is older than language, older than the Universe.

The Pentateuch, or the Torah, is also such a holy book. An inexhaustible intelligence is claimed to have condescended itself to compose a book. The Holy Spirit has condescended itself to literature, what is as equally amazing, as to suppose, that God has condescended himself to a human being. In such a book there can not be anything accidentally, contrary to, that there in all human scripts are something accidentally.

This has affected the Kabbalah, the Jewish mysticism. Biblical seen, then it is the common opinion, that the words of God were the tools, he executed his work with. God created the world by using words; God said, that there should be light and there became light. In the Kabbalah they presume, that it were the letters, which came first; that the letters were God's tools, not the words which the letters were standing for. In other words: they believe, that the holy script came before the spoken words. Therefore nothing in the Holy Script is accidentally. Jewish mysticists therefore treat the holy script, as if it had been a cryptogram: cryptographical.

For example, the thesis is, that if you can find God's name in four letters – and can pronounce it correct, then you will be able to create a world and will also be able to create a Golem, a human being. Within the Kabbalah there is, in that way, found

legends of Rabbis, who have discovered this name, and who have created Golem's to serve them. Thus also described in Gustav Meyrink's novel *The Golem*. This novel starts in the known myth from Prague about the artificial human being, a Golem, created by a Rabbi. The novel has something of Prag's oddity about it, and is about dreams, which forfeits themselves in other dreams.

In the same way the persons in Herman Hesse's utopian future novel *The Glass Bead Game*, have created a Glass Bead Game, which language of symbols and grammar together forms a kind of highly developed code, in which several sciences, but notably the mathematics and the music (or the science of music) have part, and which is able to express nearly all sciences and bring them in relation to each other. The Glass Bead Game is accordingly a game with all the content and values of human cultures, and one can play with them in the same way, as a painter play with his palette colours.

Herman Hesse says in the novel: "What mankind in its creative epoques have produced of realization, the high thinking and works of art, what the scholar's contemplation of the following periods have put on conceptual form and made into intellectual property – the whole of this enormous material of spiritual values the Glass Bead Player play on as the organist on the organ, and this organ is of a perfection, which hardly can be grasped, its manuals and pedals reconnoitre the whole of the spiritual cosmos, its registers are nearly countless, and theoretical seen it would in the game, with this instrument, be possible to reproduce the entire intellectual world content."

Our language, all our fictional productions, is, as the above examples show, reflections of the universal images in the Great Vision of the creation. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, then a library therefore is a magical room with a lot of bewitched spirits. They wake up when we call them. When we open a book an esthetic occurrence is happening. Because we are parts of the movement of time - which with it's images both flows through us, and around us in nature - then the same book changes, as we changes. The text itself is after all also the River of Time, or Heraklit's River. Language is in that way an esthetical creation.

The philosopher Francis Herbert Bradley said, that one of the effects of poetry is to give us the impression, not to discover something new, but to remember something forgotten. When they for example wanted to make a portrait of the philosopher Plotin, he said no with the following reason: "I myself is a shadow, a shadow of the archetype which is in heaven. How can you make a shadow of that shadow?" According to Plotin art was nothing but a shine of a second class, a reflection of the eternal images.

The Argentine writer Enrique Banchs said: "If human beings are fragile, how can an image of a human being then be delightful?" Banchs felt in this - in accordance with Jorge Luis Borges – the ghostly nature of the mirror – the reflection of one of the universal images of time. In the same way it is said in an Iranian poem, that the moon is the Mirror of Time. The fragility of the moon is also its eternity. Time is, as Plato said, the movable image of eternity. Anything fragile is movable images of eternity. Eternity is found in the universal images. But with the negation power, and the outgoing movement of time, the universal images become split, and become progressively perishable, material. The world is manifested.

As Borges says, then we in that way, in the mirror, see the doppelgänger, or the negation, the reflection of an image from another world. It's the strange and magical about the mirror: "as a moonlight in the dark."

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

The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with the Wholeness. They seek to put together, to synthesize, to join. In that way they constitute a common human consensus. We can all agree about them.

All the above-mentioned is impossible thinking for modernists and postmodernists. But Tolkien loved words precisely in that pre-modern sense. He loved words (especially proper names) so much that he gave all his favorite things many names, not just one, and lingered long and lovingly over the art of naming:

*Taniquetil the Elves name that holy mountain, and Oiolossë Everlasting Whiteness, and Elerrina Crowned with stars, and many names beside; but the Sindar spoke of it in their later tongue as Amon Uilos...Telperion the one was called in Valinor, and Silpio, and Ninquelóre, and many other names; but Laurelin the other was, and Malinalda, and Culúrien, and many names in song beside (Silmarillion, pp. 37-38).*

It is as T.S. Eliot says, in his sage advice at the beginning of "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats":

*The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,  
It isn't just one of your holiday games;  
You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter  
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE*



### *DIFFERENT NAMES.*

Words were important to Tolkien, not just instrumentally, through their power and effect on life, but metaphysically, through their source and basis and foundation. For “in the beginning was the Word” (Jn 1:1). A Word – the Word of God – was the origin of the world (Gen 1:3). And a word was the origin of *The Hobbit*, and thus its sequel *The Lord of the Rings*:

*All I remember about the start of The Hobbit is sitting correcting School Certificate papers in the everlasting weariness of that annual task forced on impecunious academics with children. On a blank leaf I scrawled: “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.” I did not and do not know why...I did nothing about it, for a long time...But it became The Hobbit in the early 1930s...Since The Hobbit was a success, a sequel was called for (Letters, no. 163, p. 215).*

Earlier, Tolkien’s whole mythology of *The Silmarillion* and its offspring *The Lord of the Rings* began with words. Tolkien first invented the Elvish language. Then he needed a race to speak it: Elves. Then they needed a history. It was the language that suggested the world and its history to Tolkien, not vice versa.

The same is true of Ents as of Hobbits and Elves: “As usually with me they grew rather out of their name, than the other way about” (*Letters*, no. 157, p. 208).

Tolkien discovered that “Legends’ depend on the language to which they belong...Greek mythology depends far more on the marvellous aesthetic of its language and so of its nomenclature of persons and places and less on its content than people realize” (*Letters*, no. 180, p. 231).

Many readers dislike the plethora of names in *The Lord of the Rings* and, even more, in *The Silmarillion*. One reviewer complained that *The Silmarillion* sounded like “a Swedish railway conductor with a head cold announcing stations”. (Kreeft calls that a fascinating aural experience!)

The words of much of *The Lord of the Rings* and all of *The Silmarillion* are vertical, and heavy, as Max Picard says of Hebrew:

*The architecture of the language was vertical. Each word sank down vertically, column-wise, into the sentence. In language today we have lost the static quality of the ancient tongues. The sentence has become dynamic; every word and every sentence speed on to the next...each word comes more from the preceding word than from the silence and moves on more to the next word in front than to the silence.*

*A quiver full of steel arrows, a firmly secured anchor rope, a brazen trumpet splitting the air with its few piercing tones: that is the Hebrew language – it can say little, but what it says is like the beating of hammers on the anvil.* (Max Picard, *The World of Silence*, pp. 44-45).

Kreeft says that each word in *The Silmarillion* seems like a thunderbolt from Heaven, a miracle. There are many capital letters, in contrast with the fashion of our levelling, reductionistic age to trim, to decapitalize, to decapitate. And there are many nouns, both common and proper. It is the Anglo-Saxon style. The words are solid, like mountains, heavy and slow, like a glacier. The sense of height and weight, a verticality, a supernaturalism. The reader is lifted up out of himself into immense polar skies, into the realm where “great syllables of words that sounded like castles came out of his mouth” (*That Hideous Strength*, p. 228).

## 2) The Black Speech of Mordor

But there is more: strange as it sounds, things are *in* words for Tolkien. The language of *The Lord of the Rings*, and even more of *The Silmarillion*, is not merely a device for communicating thoughts and feelings. The words are nor mere a label for concepts. Rather, it is *in* the words that the things live and move and have their being; and *in* the words they come to us. As Martin Heidegger puts it, language is “‘the House of Being’. For words and language are not wrappings in which things first come into being and are. For this reason the misuse of language, in idle talk, in slogans and phrases, destroys our authentic relation to things.” (Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 11).

*The naming does not consist merely in something already known being supplied with a name; it is rather that when a poet speaks the essential word, the existent is by this name nominated as what it is. So it becomes known as existent [real]. Poetry is the establishing of being by means of the word.* (Martin Heidegger, *Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry*, in *Existence and Being*, p. 304).

Thus poetry is making, as its name says (*poisis*). Poetry is not ornament but fundamental speech; prose is fallen poetry. And fundamental speech is an act of creating. And unspeaking is uncreating. “Last of all is set the name of Melkor, He Who Arises in Might. But that name he has forfeited, and the Noldor, who among the Elves suffered most from his malice, will not utter it (*Silmarillion*, p. 31). And Gandalf will not utter the words on the Ring in the Black Speech of Mordor in the Shire, but only at the Council of Elrond in Rivendell, and even in that safe and holy place the words summon something of the presence of their Hellish source:

*“Ash nazg durbatuluk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatuluk agh burzun-ishi krimpatul.”*

*The change in the wizard’s voice was astounding. Suddenly it became menacing, powerful, harsh as stone. A shadow seemed to pass over over the high sun, and the porch for a moment drew dark. All trembled, and the Elves stopped their ears.*

*“Never before has any voice dared to utter words of that tongue in Imladris, Gandalf the Grey,” said Elrond, as the shadow passed and the company breathed once more (LOTR, pp. 247-48).*

The power of words is based on the fact that real things are found in words. Words are not merely things among a world of things, things with one additional feature, the ability to point to other things. No, words are the encompassing frame of the world of things. Things constitute a “world” only by the creative word of the author, who names them.

And therefore, since the things are encompassed by words, our wonder at the things is encompassed by our wonder over the words.

Kreeft says that the genealogies are the duller part of the Bible for modern readers, but they were some of the most wonderful for the ancients.

The Black Speech is one of the more fragmentary languages in the novels. Unlike Elvish, Tolkien did not write songs or poems in the Black Speech, apart from the One Ring inscription. Tolkien stated:

*The Black Speech was not intentionally modelled on any style, but was meant to be self consistent, very different from Elvish, yet organized and expressive, as would be expected of a device of Sauron before his complete corruption. It was evidently an agglutinative language. [...] I have tried to play fair linguistically, and it is meant to have a meaning not be a mere casual group of nasty noises, though an accurate transcription would even nowadays only be printable in the higher and artistically more advanced form of literature. According to my taste such things are best left to Orcs, ancient and modern. ("Words, Phrases and Passages in Various Tongues in The Lord of the Rings", *Parma Eldalemboron* 17, p. 11-12).*

The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with the Wholeness. They seek to put together, to synthesize, to join. In that way they constitute a common human consensus. We can all agree about them.

But in the consciousness’ identification with thinking and time, the Ego is created. And the Ego uses the negationpower of time to make resistance. The resistance

consists in problematizing life itself by comparing with earlier and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. And in this evaluation-process the Ego splits up the universal images. It identifies itself with one pole in a pair of opposites, for which reason the polar partner is expelled. In this dividing process the collective and personal images arise, and herewith all the disagreements: it is here The Black Speech of Mordor origins.

Consequently the universal language, and the movement of time, reflect themselves in your thinking, but because of the Ego's evaluations the images are divided in words and analysis; what you could call thinking in opposites (subject as divided from object, good as divided from evil, love as divided from hate, perfect as divided from fiasco) - words and sentences which work in sequences in past and future, extremes, or analyses.

In other words: the Ego, in its identification with opposites, tends to debate, to work against other people, and seeks to demonstrate their flaws.

In accordance with Plotin then *The One* in its eternal and continual radiation, first of all manifests itself as thought, which in its individualized form shows itself in the Soul, which again find its way to the body, the lowest and the most random expression of being.

Now, if we talk about The Black Speech of Mordor as a speech of absence (no body and heart, no existence and love), then we could talk about Elvish languages as a speech of presence. There is no doubt that in our modern world, words are spoken out of absence. And since words are alive, are creative, words spoken out of absence creates a toxic atmosphere.

Man as a natural being lives in a challenge-reaction relationship. What it is about for the Life Artist, is to look your destiny in the eyes; that is to say: to become your reactions present in passive listening; to observe and feel them completely with the heart and the mind; to observe them neutral as in a mirror without saying yes and no; to feel them deeply and incisively without seeking to achieve anything with it. Shortly said: to omit dividing your reactions in likes and dislikes, good and evil, pleasant and unpleasant. At the very moment you divide them, you become the reactions absent, you relate doubtful, evaluating or offended to them. And then you don't understand them.

As a Life Artist you could ask yourself, whether you ever have looked at other people without the images you have formed of them - images you have pieced together through many years. You have formed an image of other people, and they have

formed an image of you. When it only is these images, which are facing each other, then there is no human relationship between you and the others.

These images arise when you not are your relationship with the surrounding world present. It is the absence, which creates images, because the presence, and therefore truth and reality, in the absence must symbolize itself. The absence is the disproportion between the observer and the observed, the unreality which is characterized by, that emptiness and loss slide in between, create reflections, displacement and darkness. And in this dividing state the Wholeness must symbolize itself. The symbolism of absence and fragmentation is a telescoping of the oneness and coherence of presence and Wholeness. It can't be in any other way.

The question then becomes, whether you can observe other people without condemning, evaluating, without saying whether they are right or wrong - only observing and feeling without letting your prejudices get any influence. Then you will see, that there is a quite different action, which takes place in this presence.

When you give something a name, you tighten it, through the name, to the past. Therefore you observe it with eyes, which the past has affected, and that will say: not in a new way. The past is your images of life, your perspective, and the only thing you see is your own perspective. To observe another human being with the eyes of the past, means, that what you see, is your own perspective of this human being, and not the human being in himself.

As a Life Artist it is important to pay attention to, that when you for instance observe violence, then you often try to justify it, as you say that violence is a necessity if you shall live in this barbaric world, that violence is a part of nature. Why do you do that? You are used to observe in this way, to condemn, justify, or to make resistance. But you can only observe violence with fresh eyes, and an open mind, when you become aware, that you tighten what you see with conceptions about what you already know, your own perspective, individual as cultural, and that you therefore not are observing it in a new way.

In this way the question arises: how are the conceptions created? What mechanism is forming these images? Another person for instance says to you: "You are a fool!" You are yourself absent in your emotional evaluations, you don't like it, and it leaves a track in your mind. The other human being says something else, and also that leaves a track. These tracks are the images of memory, and in the memory exist the tracks of the evolution of million of years. It is these condensed reactions, the tracks, which are blended with many other tracks, which form the images in time; a mixture of history

and nature. It is a wonderful picture book, the samsarical common human weaving spirit of the fates, reaching deep into beautiful and terrible astral worlds.

But if you are yourself present and the person says to you: "You are a fool!" if you in that moment are passively aware and feeling, then there is not left any track at all, because there is no displacement between challenge and reaction, but only a being, which is in the middle of itself, and characterized by fulfilment and naturalness. Perhaps the other person is right?

So we can see, that the absence weaves images, because emptiness and loss slide in between. Unreality is emptiness, absence, that to be outside. The concept "absence" indicates, that the unreality not is any emptiness, but an emptiness in relation to something defined. It is the absence of something. Unreality is defined from something, or in opposition to something, namely reality. And the unreal life is lying under for a constant tendency to fill it up. The emptiness has to be camouflaged, covered, forced out. You must keep the world together. And this you do by creating language or images.

The thinking weaves coherence, weaves meaning and weaves patterns. Feelings connect, suspicions suspect ahead, and fantasy creates images. The thinking puts together, associates and remembers the past. Untiring the thinking works and weaves the reality of the self-image and the world-image. And the thinking finds lawfulnesses in the stream of thoughts: laws of association, connections between causes, cyclic structures, archetypical attractors. All this constitutes a part of the dual and dualizing daily fate-weaving activity of the consciousness, and it happens on the background of absence.

But where absence weaves images, presence releases the mind for images. This is very simple. If you become thoroughly present in passive listening when you for instance are angry, then it is not absence, which allows the past to push itself in, creating reflections, and disturbing the actual sensation of the immediate anger.

The mind is pieced together by words and associations of thoughts, images and symbols, that are manifestations of the common human structure of belief and knowledge, which the images in time constitute. The evaluations originate from this historical background. Words such as God, love, Socialism, Communism, duty, necessity, etc. have an extremely important role in our life. Words have neurological as well as psychological meaning in accordance with the culture in which you have been raised. To a Christian some words and symbols have immensely meaning, and to a Moslem some other words have an equivalent vital meaning. And the evaluations take place within this area.

As we have seen, then the past is the foundation of the self-image and world-image, which form your perspective on yourself and life; and what you usually see, is your own perspective. The one who worship *is* therefore the worshipped. To adore another is to adore yourself. The world-image is a projection of yourself, only you divide yourself from it in the formation of the Ego, the self-image.

The fate weaving activity of absence is based on a desire after becoming something, to find secureness, meaning and coherence, and that which is weaved is the mutually dependent self-image and world-image, which divide themselves from each other in a subject-field and an object-field. This activity contains everything from dark and fateful movements, murmurous incantations, to highly raised epistemology, religious dogmatics and philosophical system-building. It is the Black Speech of Mordor.

Your world-image, weaved by the past, by books and prayers, reflects, after all, only your own historical background, your self-image and perspective. You have yourself created it, even though many others also have had part in this image-weaving process of creation. You choose that which is satisfying you, and what you choose is your own preconceived opinion. Your world-image is your intoxicant, and it is cut out from your memory. You worship yourself through the world-image, which your own thought has created, and thereupon divided itself from. Your devotion is love to yourself, camouflaged by the song your mind sings. The world-image is yourself, it is a reflection of your own self-image. And such a devotion is therefore a kind of self-deceit, which only leads to sorrow and isolation, and that will say: unreality.

The only thing humans can maintain is a projection of the known, their own perspective, but the unknown can't be maintained through the known. That which has a name is not that, which can't be mentioned, and when humans give a thing a name, they only awaken the determinated reactions. How noble and pleasant these reactions might be, they are not real. Humans react to stimulus, but reality doesn't stimulate, it is.

The fate weaving activity of absence consists of speculation and imagination. Speculation and imagination are hindrances for the truth. The mind, which speculates, can never know the beauty in the present; it is caught in a net, which is weaved by its own images and words. No matter how widely it, like Orpheus, wanders around in its image-creation, it will still be in the shadow of its own structure, and will never be able to see what is lying beyond itself. The sensitive mind is not a mind with a big imagination. The ability to create images limits the mind historical; such a mind is tied to the past, to memory that makes it dull. Only the silent mind is sensitive. Any kind of accumulation is a burden; and how can a mind

be free when it is burdened? Only the free mind is sensitive; the open is that which can't be measured and scaled, the wordless, the unknown. Imagination and speculation hinder the open, the sensitive.

Everybody lives within his own web, my in mine, the others in theirs. But will there ever be a possibility for breaking through this web, just like the butterfly, which breaks out from its cocoon? This web, this cloth, this case, is language, and it consists of your worries for your own person, and the others for theirs, your wishes contrary to theirs. This capsule is language, and language is the past, which have with personal and collective images in time to do. The web consists of all this. It is not one defined thing, but a whole heap, which the mind is carrying. I have my burden to drag on, the others have theirs, and in such a way we ramble through the world, alienated to each other. Can these burdens ever be put away, so that the mind meets the mind, the heart meets the heart? This is the actual question of the Life Artist.

It is clear that a human relationship, which rests on various fate-weaved images of life, never can be peaceful, because these images of life are fictional and you can't live in an abstraction. And yet this is what we all do: we live in ideas, in theories, in symbols, in conceptions we have created about ourselves and others, and which haven't anything with reality to do at all. All our relationships, in respect to property, ideas or people, largely build on this image formation, and therefore there is always conflict.

The whole wish about, through image formation, to weave meaning and coherence, is based on a wish about creating permanence, secureness for the Ego. But on the contrary it creates anxiety, anxiety of that this pattern, this condensation, shall end. It is the anxiety of death.

Death is the unknown, which always threatens the known, the patterns you have created. The paradox is, that you can't be afraid of the unknown, because you don't know what the unknown is, and therefore there is nothing to be afraid of. Death is a word, and it is the word, the image, which creates anxiety. The word is a manifestation of your self-image and world-image. For as long as the image exists - the image from where the thought originates - the thought must constantly create anxiety. Then you rationalize your mortal dread and build a defence against the inevitable, or you invent countless faith-conceptions, which can protect you against the anxiety of death.

One of the more ingenious death-images is The Tibetan Book of the Dead. It is a kind of trailmarker and pathfinder, or travel catalog in the conditions after death, meant to be read loudly by a master, or congenial, to one, who is about to die, and also after



death has occurred. But it still is lying within the area of the known, it is a philosophical mapping of death, the unknown. And the map is not the landscape. In the same way with the Egyptian Book of the Dead; the reason why the ancient Egypt's religious god- and symbolic world has fascinated people at all times - and given occasion to many mystical and enigmatic interpretations, which still have a splendid time - is perhaps due to, that it is a manifestation of some death-images which penetrate everything in ancient Egypt, architecture, art, politics etc., and that death is the greatest mystery of all. We like to have an explanation.

But it is still a religious conception made with the purpose of protection against the anxiety of death. Therefore there is an abyss between you yourself and what you are afraid of; that is to say: you are creating a distance to death by relating theorizing to it. In this abyss, which consists of time and space, there must be conflict; that will say: anxiety, worry and self-pity.

The mind can only be in peace when it doesn't experience anything; that is to say: when it doesn't determine and name, register and store anything in memory. It is not only the upper layers of the mind, which all the time name and register, it is all the various layers of consciousness. But when the superficial mind is silent, the deeper mind can send up signals. And when the whole of the consciousness is silent and in peace, free from the eternal self-producing becoming - this shutting itself away from life - when there is spontaneous openness for, and self-forgetful being one with life itself, not until then will that, which can't be measured, reveal itself: the new and unknown.

Propaganda is about using the meaning of the words to provoke a desired effect in the recipient. The propagandists ignore any direct communication, and use instead the many possibilities of language for manipulation. What they want is to organize sense impressions, the religious or the political sense impressions, the social or the private sense impressions, so that what you see, is the image the propagandists have created.

Neither the religious, nor the temporal propaganda, speak about truth. Propagandists are using, as Habermas expresses it, an instrumental usage of language on human relations, where it actual only should have been used on technical problems. They relate to humans in a strategic and controlling way, rather than the understanding way, which characterizes a communicative usage of language.

We are not only naming things in order to communicate to each other, but also in order to give an experience continuity and content, to reanimate it and repeat its sense stimulations, because this gives strength and continuity to the observer, to the wish about permanence, to the common elevation of the memory. Propaganda is always, in

some way, about supporting this self-centred becoming something, the formation of the self-image, by integrating it in the world-image the propagandists seek to manipulate through. And they use words such as duty, necessity, God, freedom, homeland, reward, punishment etc.

The past is based on the images of time, which are of a linguistic kind. They manifest themselves as symbols. Language itself is a symbol, and we are used to symbols: we see the tree through the image, which is a symbol for the tree, we see our neighbour through the image we have created of him. It is apparently about the most difficult for Man, to observe something directly instead of through images, opinions, conclusions, which altogether are symbols. In the same way symbols play a great role in dreams, and therefore dreams are so deceptive and dangerous. The meaning of a dream is not always clear, though we realize that it consists of symbols, which we try to decipher. When we see something, we speak so spontaneous about it, that we don't realize, that the words also are symbols.

All this shows, that there perhaps is a direct communication in technical questions, but rarely in human relationships, and in the human comprehension. There is no need for symbols when we are getting beaten. It is a direct communication. Zen masters often use unexpected strokes in order to provoke their disciples to let go of themselves.

This is an interesting point: the mind denies seeing the things directly, to be them present without the word and the symbol. You for instance say, that the sky is blue. The one who hears it, interprets it from the conception he has about blue and reproduces it to you in his own code. In that way we live in symbols, and dreams are a part of this symbolic process. We are not able to perceive directly and immediate without the symbols, the words, the prejudices and the conclusions.

The reason for this is clear enough: It is a part of the self-centred becoming something, the will to power with its defence, resistance, escape and anxiety, and where you shut yourself away from life, are getting absent in evaluations and analyses, and where emptiness and loss slide in between, create reflections, displacement and darkness. The Black Speech of Mordor. In this unreal state reality can only communicate itself symbolically. The symbol is a telescoping, a representing quintessence of the Wholeness, the information quantities, and the greater clarity, which is connected with reality and presence, but which the absence can't contain, because it splits, shuts itself inside, or shuts itself away from.

It is lying in Man as a natural being that the brain is a reaction converted to code language, and that dreams therefore necessarily must be symbolic, because we in the awoken state not are able to react, or perceive, directly.

### 3) The Elvish Languages

However art of life is to move yourself backwards through the whole of this structure, which is created by the outgoing movement of time. Art of life is therefore, as Plato made it clear, to remember the outgoing movement's negation, namely the backmovement of time, the memory of the universal vision and the universal images.

The purpose of life for the individual therefore is to move the opposite way: from the low to the high, from the random body and all it's lust to *The One* and all it's light. Life seen as a pilgrimage.

In art of life this consists in practising neutral observation rather than evaluating; it is to be in the Now rather than in the past or the future; it is to think between the opposites, rather than to think in extremes; it is to use dialogue rather than debate; it is to, together with other people, to work one's way towards a mutual understanding; it is to use language from the universal images of time, rather than the personal or collective images of time.

That the mind must disentangle from language is not equivalent with that language must stop. Language is in its original form divine, but it usually develops into The Black Speech of Mordor, especially in the reductionist language of modernity and postmodernity: the speech of absence and noise. In order to, that our usage of language can be precise, logical and clear, there must be a non-linguistical sensation, which carries it. It must be made transparent in presence and reality. When language is made transparent in presence it works from the universal images, and therefore synthesizing and healing. This is precisely how the Elvish languages function.

Tolkien constructed many Elvish languages. These were the languages spoken by the tribes of his Elves. Tolkien was a philologist by profession, and spent much time on his constructed languages. The Elvish languages were the first thing he imagined for his secondary world. Tolkien said that his stories grew out of his languages. Tolkien also created scripts for his Elvish languages, of which the best known are the Sarati, the Tengwar, and the Cirth.

If things come to us in their names, if language is the "house of being", then the power of things comes to us in the power of their names. Words have power, not only

to communicate, intellectually, and not only to suggest, emotionally, but also a magical power that can produce physical effects.

There are many examples of this in *The Lord of the Rings*. Bombadil is the clearest one. His words save Merry from Old Man Willow and Frodo from the Barrow-wight, for “*None has ever caught him yet, for Tom, he is the master: His songs are stronger songs, and his feet are faster*” (LOTR, p. 139).

Frodo too uses the “magical” power of words: when he calls Tom’s name, two miracles happen, one spiritual and one physical. The name conjures up both Frodo’s courage and Tom, who actually comes. Kreeft says that if we find this unconvincing, it shows how little we have taken God at His word when He repeatedly promises the same thing Bombadil did. To put the promise in contemporary words, “You just call out My Name, and you know, wherever I am, I’ll come running to see you again...”

We know there are words that sacramentally effect what they signify, there are operative words, there are magic words. Two of the most familiar “magic words” are “I love you” and “I hate you.” These are not labels for communication; they are spiritual weapons, arrows that pierce through flesh and into hearts. The whole of *The Lord of the Rings* is an armor-piercing rocket that can get even into our underground bunkers.

The most powerful words are proper names, names of persons or places. When the Black Rider bangs on Fatty Bulger’s door in Buckland saying, “Open in the name of Mordor”, all the authority and power and terror of Mordor are really present there. When Frodo, on Weathertop, faces the Black Rider, “he heard himself crying aloud, ‘*O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!*’” (LOTR, p. 191), as he struck the Rider with his sword. Afterward, Aragorn says, “All blades perish that pierce that dreadful King. More deadly to him was the name of Elbereth” (LOTR, p. 193).

In Shelob’s lair Frodo speaks in tongues again: “‘Aiya Earendil Elenion Ancalimal!’ he cried, and knew not what he had spoken; for it seemed that another voice spoke through his” (LOTR, p. 704). And when the tiny Hobbit with the tiny sword advanced on the most hideous creature in Middle-earth with the phial of Galadriel and the name of Galadriel, Shelob cowered.

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, and *Communal reinforcement* which opens you for the power of suggestion. When you use an *Ideology* (a system, an image), or other limited thought-constructions, to explain everything, you end in an *Endless split of the thought*.

The main reason for the rise of magical thinking is that you don't discriminate between image and reality, the map and the landscape, subject and object. Such a discrimination is central in critical thinking, but it does not involve an ontological dualism, so that you can't experience nondual, mystical states of mind. It involves a so-called epistemological dualism, or gnoseological dualism, as we already have investigated.

So central in critical thinking is the discrimination between subject and object, dream and reality - and what is lie or illusion, and reality.

And discrimination is also a central virtue in true spirituality. The Dominican mystics called 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.

For example: meditation will in the start be characterized by, that you again and again discover, that you already long ago have absented in your thoughts by evaluating, comparing, hoping and worrying, that you again and again are being distracted by the thoughts. Don't get impatient because of this tendency, for it is an important part of the realization-aspect of the training. What it is about, is that you become aware of this fact, and sober-minded again and again take yourself out of this already automatically confirmed stream of words and image. You could call this *The Sword of Discrimination*. Day by day, year out and year in, it is necessary to swing The Sword of Discrimination. This is done by discriminating between neutral observation and distraction, again and again.

An important part of this is the discrimination between yourself and the spirit, between your own energy and divine energy. There are three steps in this:

- 1) The tool to be used against intellectual ego-inflation is 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 lived life.
- 2) 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, which again is a central part of critical thinking
- 3) Furthermore: ground connection (Hara, earth bound work, preferably with other people, for example as a social- and healthcare worker), realization work, discrimination, humble separation of the ego and the spirit; the separation of the ego and the rising, bubbleling, jubilant delight. Moreover, ethical practice, training of compassion, for example Tonglen practice.

I have explained that the two main reasons why religion and supporting exercises are a necessity is partly, that the ongoing self-confirmation of the ego and its negative automatic thoughts (or more deceptive: positive thinking), is replaced by a spiritual remembrance, partly that the collective inertia is purified and prepared, so that the Ego is made transparent along with that original sin and negative karma are transformed and transfigured in the contact with the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness, the saints, spirit helpers etc.) And these two processes mutually fertilize each other.

I have also described 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; under one: the will to power, the One Ring) – 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.

The magnet of attraction (the will to power, the One Ring) works through the cords of the painbody. Cords are often created in combination with a kind of demonical contract. Again, one of the worst example is the New Thought movement, which has made up a whole pseudoscientific system about the laws of this magnet of attraction.

You could for example mention *The Secret*, which is a best-selling 2006 self-help book by Rhonda Byrne, based on the earlier film of the same name. It is based on the pseudoscientific law of attraction which claims that thoughts can change the world directly. You could also say that it claims that your cords can change the world. Well, a part of that is certainly true, but not in the way the followers believe. The movie based on the book was released around the same time as the film version of *"The Da Vinci Code,"* and it was cleverly packaged as a historical mystery. There

are lingering shots of faded cursive script on parchment paper, often accompanied by pounding drums or wordless choirs, and Byrne talks about “tracing the Secret back through history,” revealing all the great thinkers who have harnessed its power. (According to one titlecard, “The Secret was suppressed,” though we never learn how, or by whom).

Intercut with this is a succession of American self-help gurus explaining that by really focusing on what you want, your “positive” energy flows out into the universe and is rewarded (notice the weird prior assumption, that it is “positive”, to focus on your own wishes/greed). And intercut with this mantra are dramatised scenes of this “Law of Attraction” in action: a little boy visualises a brand new bicycle and gets one from his dad; a woman focuses on some jewellery in a shop, and gets it; a man is visualizing a parking space, and vupti, there it is! At one point the “miracles coach” Joe Vitale likens the universe to a giant shopping catalogue. He says: “You flip through it and say, “I’d like to have this experience and I’d like to have that product and I’d like to have a person like that. It is you placing your order with the Universe. Its really that easy.”

On the official website ([www.thesecret.tv](http://www.thesecret.tv)) you can download a “Universal Bank (un)limited” check, which you can fill in with your name and the \$ amount you want. The drawer is The Universe account (unlimited abundance). You can also buy The Secret Lamp (“your real-life Aladdins Lamp); The Secret Scroll Document Holder; The Wealth Beyond Reason Starter Pack; The Wealth beyond Reason Power Pack, etc. You can also join the free forum (though, of course, the fee based “Abundant” membership is highly encouraged), and much more. For money.

The movement also uses so-called vision boards, also known as a dream board: a collection of aspirations that are placed on a backing made from any stiff material that you want to utilize. You might place poems on the board expressing your biggest dreams, affirmations and magazine covers, or a variety of other things that you consider useful. Your vision board can aid focus and help you attract what you want.

That is probably the closest you come to an officially system about how to create cords through contracts. The problem is that you don’t know who it is you are making a contract with. Cords are working both ways. The contract is validated by the magnet of attraction; that is: the cords are connected to the material world: instincts, sexuality, emotions, desire, collective ideals, ownership, personal power – and cut off is the direction in towards the spiritual essence: the Soul, 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.



And since demonical powers also are attracted to all this, they will help you, since they feed on the magnet of attraction. They will feed on the cords, or rather: they will sit on the other end of the cord and feed on the energy you send them.

The New Thought movement is based on the usual New Age reductionism called psychologism, which comes to expression in philosophical idealism and subjectivism; a theory that doesn't allow any objectivity, and therefore no other source of energy than yourself. One big ego inflated by the will to power, which the demonical powers can feed on.

Therefore demonical beings gather around New Thought believers. The spiritual work of New Thought is characterized by victim blaming, meaning that they love to believe that anyone who is having difficult spiritual experience is doing so because they in some way "asked for it" or had a lot of darkness. This belief is maintained and passed along by people who live in fear of the spirit world (darkness). They maintain illusions such as this so that they can feel comfortable and safe playing in the spiritual realms with the mentality that nothing bad or difficult will happen to them as long as they maintain a positive outlook or "high vibration".

The problem is that this "positive outlook" is all about the magnet of attraction: the will to power.

It is actually true that the higher vibration or more conscious we become the more that we become aware of darker energies – either to help, or simply because we see more of the spectrum of the universe and are more aware of the spirit world than most people are. The more conscious we become, in fact, the easier it is for us to have all sorts of energies gravitate towards us, or even attempt to cord to us.

In some cases we may have asked for something interesting to happen to us, or worked with magic, occult material, or spiritual work that was beyond us. We may have simply been lonely and wished for a friend. All of these are contracts that may have provided an opening for a being of some sort to take us up on our wish and to form a contract or bond with us. Through discrimination we become increasingly conscious and can realize what or who is in our bodies and our field and take care of it on the appropriate level.

While there are many benevolent, kind spirits and energies (or at the very least energies that don't really care about us so as not to interfere with us, our energy, or our lives) there are also energies that will interfere with cords that are either really toxic and imbalanced, or the cords that have an incredible high amount of flowing energy through them. Both types are not attaching to cords antagonistically – they are most

likely looking to feed off of the toxic or negative thoughts and emotions...or of the pure heart-centered emotions that higher vibration cords can involve.

In the case of energies attracted to “lower” cords, such as cords that have a history of trauma, lots of emotions, and a rather toxic nature, it is natural for these energies to simply release from the cord once we do our personal work with such a cord – releasing trauma, charged emotions, and correcting any significant energetic imbalances in energy flow. Quite simply, some energies are looking to feed on toxic energy. If we no longer have toxic energy or interactions, the energies feeding off of the cord will simply lift off and go elsewhere.

But the personal work is work with the shadow, with the painbody. And this is precisely what New Thought refuses to do. They have created a bottle-neck of energy in the throat (it is focusing on *thinking* alone), which hinders the energy in flowing down into heart and hara, love and existence. Its whole philosophy is based on creating this bottle-neck, partly through moral subjectivism, partly through philosophical idealism that denies the existence of the body. And therefore all kind of demonical energies can attach to the cords from the throat and from the third eye. Also remember: what New Thought considers as “positive” is the magnet of attraction, which seen in the view of true spirituality is the cause of all our misery.

A true spiritual practice acknowledge the existence of both an outer divine source and an outer demonical source, both of which you can’t control. Therefore the discrimination between yourself and these sources. The Ego is in this way made transparent along with that original sin and negative karma are transformed and transfigured in the contact with the divine Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness, the saints, spirit helpers etc.) And these two processes mutually fertilize each other.

Therefore I combine The Sword of Discrimination with the divine sword of the archangel Michael. Archangel Michael is traditionally thought to be who to call while cord cutting. He is an angel of protection and carries a sword of light. Traditionally, you would call on him to do the basic cutting for you. So, while sweeping your own sword of discrimination ask Michael to help you to cut all ties, cords, and contracts that are no longer of use for you.

Note that this is not about cutting all cords. There are cords that can’t be cut, but which can be altered. There are also useful cords, and finally there are the divine cords, the dreaming tracks and songlines in your progressive karma, divine providence and spirit help. Cords are a part of Man as a communicative being, they

are about relationships, and therefore they must be looked at with an ethical foundation.

Cords are often combined with words and language. Let us take the word God. The word originates from the past, the world-images; it is a condensation of a fount of tradition and memory, with all its intellectual and sentimental connotations. The past is your perspective, and what you see is your own perspective. The world-image is a projection of yourself, only you differentiate yourself from it in the formation of the Ego, the self-image. In that way there is created a dualism between the object-field and the subject-field.

Language in the object-field is like the atmosphere, which refines and thins itself outwards: atmosphere – stratosphere – ionosphere; weightless floating in space – full outlook to the blue globe and the stars. The structure of language is the images in time; both the personal, collective and the universal images. The collective and universal images are lying in the object-field almost as a vast refined organic unity. It is therefore language must be seen as an aspect of Man as a natural being. Lévi-Strauss has, as mentioned, a point here. The culture must be restored in nature.

Language is most condensed in the spoken, communicated language: words, sentences, opinions, conversation. This is the subject-field, which primarily is characterized by personal images, but which accordingly originates from collective and universal images.

We have seen how the thinking divides everything. It separates large from small, outside from inside, up from down. The inner reality is divided in feelings and emotions, thoughts, sensations and intuitions. And the individual feelings are divided in hate against love, lust against pain. The outer reality is divided in the observer and the observed, the listener and the sound, the speaker and the spoken. In order to be able to function at all, the thinking differentiates the world in two: subject and object. The thinking is dual.

In close coherence with these aspects of thinking exists language. The thinking functions in language. And language is not only words and sentences. Language is music, mathematics, myths, archetypes, symbols, signs, etc. Language and thinking carry each other. And the collective history is so to speak lying in nature in the form of projected energy. The universal history though, is not projected energy, but is lying beyond Man, it is the actual foundation for the creation of the universe, it is the Great Vision, God's plan you could say, the dreaming tracks and the songlines in the artwork of the universe and of Man. It works in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with life itself, and not projected in past and future.

The Pythagoreans were primarily mathematicians and astronomers. Their discovery of the mathematical relations of music made them assume, that the tones were the audible expression of the structure of the whole of the universe. They meant they had found consistency between for instance the movement of the planets and the individual tones, between the mutual location of the heavenly bodies and the intervals between the strings of the lyre. From this they concluded, that the movements of the planets in space had to bring forth tones, "the music of the spheres".

Since music in that way is an expression of divine or cosmic powers, it is also able to form the human Soul in compliance with the divine relations of numbers. A thought, which came to characterize both Plato, Aristotle, Aristoxenes and Plotinus. The Christian mystic Hildegard Von Bingen wrote a series of songs in the Gregorian tradition; songs, which she received in divine visions, because she in that degree was able to be completely existentially present in the Now. And a similarly philosophy of music you also find in Indian philosophy.

Energy – and consciousness – has an immanent tendency to depict themselves. Energy moves, projects itself from latency to reality. Consciousness, or thinking, tends to separate and divide phenomena in order to analyze them, understand them. Energy projects itself in images and symbols. Consciousness divides images, symbols and phenomena in order to understand them. It is this, which happens when the thinking sucks energy and life out of the present, and transforms past and future into reality, and reality into emptiness. These two basic tendencies: the fall of the energy out in projection, and the fall of consciousness out in division - are what meditation seeks to avoid. Meditation seeks to give energy and life back to presence and reality.

The thinking is constituted by words and images. Words again consist of two elements, partly of a meaning-element, or meaning-symbol, partly of a sound. Whether the word is spoken, thought or only affected in a suspicion, it will always sound or mean something.

The image-side of the thought-process will also be seen to consist of two elements, partly – as all other images by the way – of a color (eventually only the color-nuance black/white) and partly of a structure.

The thinking's words and images are therefore composite by four fundamental elements: sound and color, symbol and structure.

You can then say, that all this is a manifestation of the past, the self-image and the world-image. It means that the subject-field and the object-field are equivalent with

the ordinary thinking in words and images. Only for the thinking is the inner and outer world. By changing the thinking the world also changes. The space is around, and it is an objective outer occurrence. In that way it looks. And in that way they have believed it was; Aristotle and Newton agreed in this.

First with Leibniz, Kant and Einstein started a revolution in the conception of space. Einstein stated, that time and space are ways in which we think, and not relations we live in. Kant suggested, that space and time were forms of experience, not outer objective relations in themselves, but fundamental common human structures. Leibniz claimed that space and time is the order of things and not things, whereby he expressed, that space and time is human made conceptions, not objective facts.

But be careful now! This doesn't mean, that the ordinary inner and outer reality not are real. The reality, both the subjective and the objective, is real. But as mentioned it is the absence, which creates images, this, that you are yourself absent in your thinking, shut inside, or shut away from, in a disproportion between the observer and the observed, filled with reflections, displacement and darkness. Shortly said: space and time.

If the clarity of the mind increases through, that you are becoming yourself present, then the thinking can be made transparent, whereby it begins to unfold its components: sound-color and symbol-structure. In this structured clarity the mind meets the world in a new way, both the inner and the outer, even though inner, on this step, apparently still is clearly divided from outer. The Wholeness has, from its deep, dreamless sleep, begun to dream. The whole of Middle-earth is an example of a dreaming Cosmos. Therefore the paradox that Middle-earth, though based on fantasy, seems more real than our own world.

Instead of, that you via the senses, only meet a world of houses, humans, trees and things – or of feelings, thoughts, lust and pain - then you in this presence furthermore can see a world-image of auric colors, archetypical symbols and yantric, or other, energetical structures. Moreover you can in this presence hear sounds, not sound-images communicated through the hearing sense, but the presence itself hears directly: un-mediated sounds. Your mind is now in an astral state.

If you are absent in the thinking you meet a world divided in inner and outer, and constituted by closed things, substances, structures. This is what we saw in the part on The Black Speech of Mordor. The Ego has, as we all know, not directly insight in, and access to, the inner of things, or the inner of other humans. If you however are present in passive seeing and listening, you can, in your thereby gained clarity - in the astral state of mind - furthermore see and hear a world of vibrant, soundfilled

energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colors. This world-image is open. Such a presence has to a certain extent directly insight in that, which to the thinking's absence, is closed and inaccessible.

The clearness from the dissolved and evaporated thoughts and contents will widen the mind out towards the borders, where behind the collective common human structures are found: the images in time. These common deep thoughts of mankind, can the mind, by force of its increased clarity – the astral state - see as visions: primordial images, religious images and structures, symbols, wisdom-figures, figures from fairy tales, higher worlds, other dimensions. In short: the astral worlds.

The astral state of mind is also implying a so-called astral body, or a dream body, which is able to leave the physical body while it is sleeping. It is called astral travel, or astral projecting, because it is a kind of projection of the mind, which goes out over the borders of the five senses, though these also seem to follow. With this astral body you can travel elsewhere, both on earth, to other planets, into the astral worlds, into the kingdom of death, and into countless heavens and hells. It is like entering the fairy tale of Peter Pan.

The personality, when it is in this astral state, can receive supernatural information through such astral worlds, and their images and symbols, partly from the collective images, partly from the universal images. However there is immensely difference between, whether the above-mentioned visions appear as a result of upward energy, which sucks energy and life out of the present, and transforms past and future into reality, and reality into emptiness – and whether it happens in the form of downward energy, where there flows energy and life back from past and future, back to the Now, to presence and reality. The latter condition is characterized by discrimination, whilst the discrimination is missing in the first mentioned. The first mentioned might be caught in a spiritual crisis.

Language is most condensed in the spoken, communicated language: words, sentences, opinions, conversation. The thoughts can be as speech, only without sound. But the thoughts can also be abstract, faster, dispositions to words and sentences. And here language nuances itself: polar structures, emotional, creative, intuitive, symbolic and metaphorical language games, musical and mathematical language games. All this is lying in the collective images. The collective images are lying on an astral plan, and work in sequences in past and future/cyclic structures.

Even deeper are the universal images lying, what Sri Aurobindo called vision-logic: language which no longer is verbal, but which is superior, visionary syntheses and wholes, that work more in synchronism with the Now, than in sequences in past and

future. From this plane originates the world-images, the superior universal systems and paradigms: philosophical, scientific, religious-spiritual and cosmic world-images and mappings. These are linguistically refined, highly abstract, stratospherical or ionospheric levels of language and systems of reference, but however still linguistic structures and interpretations. However, they are in their original form not human made, and there is in Indian philosophy many discussions about whether they are expressions of the actual divine unmanifested source, or whether they lie somewhere between the unmanifested and the manifested. They probably correspond to what the Western philosophers have called unmoved matter. To Christians, Muslims and Jews, they are the thoughts of God. To the Shamans they are the Dreamtime. They are what the Elvish languages are based on. The Elvish languages are open to these thoughts.

There is an old myth of an original language. It is in Plato (the "Cratylus") and the Bible (the story of the Tower of Babel, answered by Pentecost). If this is true, it explains why every proper name of Tolkien's seems exactly right. (This is a power even many of his critics marvel at.) When we read them we are *remembering* (Plato's *anamnesis*); our cognition is a recognition. Our "word detector" buzzes when we meet the Right Word, the Platonic Idea.

The most powerful and magical language is music. The reason for this is that music is the original language. Music is the language of creation. As mentioned: In *The Silmarillion*, God and His angels *sings* the world into being: "In the beginning, Eru, the One, who in Elvish tongue is named Iluvatar, made the Ainur of his thought; and they made a great music before him. In this music the World was begun" (*Silmarillion*, p. 25).

It is not that the music was in the world but that the world was in the music. Many Indigenous Australians refer to the Creation time as "The Dreaming". The Dreamtime laid down the patterns of life for the Aboriginal people. Creation is believed to be the work of culture heroes who traveled across a formless land, creating sacred sites and significant places of interest through their singing. By singing the world into existence, the Ancestors had been poets in the original sense of poesis, meaning 'creation'. In this way, "songlines" were established, some of which could travel right across Australia, through as many as six to ten different language groupings. A songline, also called dreaming track, is one of the paths across the land (or sometimes the sky) which mark the route followed by localised "creator-beings" during the Dreaming. The paths of the songlines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dance, and painting.

A knowledgeable person is able to navigate across the land by repeating the words of the song, which describe the location of landmarks, waterholes, and other natural phenomena. In some cases, the paths of the creator-beings are said to be evident from their marks, or petrosomatoglyphs, on the land, such as large depressions in the land which are said to be their footprints.

By singing the songs in the appropriate sequence, indigenous people could navigate vast distances, often travelling through the deserts of Australia's interior. The continent of Australia contains an extensive system of songlines, some of which are of a few kilometres, whilst others traverse hundreds of kilometres through lands of many different indigenous peoples — peoples who may speak markedly different languages and have different cultural traditions.

Since a songline can span the lands of several different language groups, different parts of the song are said to be in those different languages. Languages are not a barrier because the melodic contour of the song describes the nature of the land over which the song passes. The rhythm is what is crucial to understanding the song. Listening to the song of the land is the same as walking on this songline and observing the land.

In some cases, a songline has a particular direction, and walking the wrong way along a songline may be a sacrilegious act (e.g. climbing up Uluru where the correct direction is down). Traditional Aboriginal people regard all land as sacred, and the songs must be continually sung to keep the land "alive".

This mythology reminds in an astonishing way about “the music of the spheres,” in which everything is, the “Song of Songs” that includes all songs. All matter, space, time, and history are in this primal language.

Plato knew the power of music. In the *Republic* it is the first step in education in the good society and the first step in corruption in the bad one. Nothing is more powerful to the good society, to education, to human happiness in this world.

Music is not ornamented poetry, and poetry is not ornamented prose. Poetry is fallen music, and prose is fallen poetry. Prose is not the original language, it is poetry made practical. Even poetry is not the original language; it is music made speakable, it is the words of music separated from their music. In the beginning was music.

*The Lord of the Rings* is full of singing. One of its indices lists fifty-six songs or poems. The Hobbits sing high hymns to Elbereth and homespun Walking Songs and Bath Songs. Tolkien, like Bombadil, is a writer of prose who is bursting with poetry



and music. Peter Beagle calls him “a writer whose own prose is itself taut with poetry”.

Music is an essential part of Elvish enchantment. When the Fellowship enters Lothlorien, Sam says, “I feel as if I was *inside* a song, if you take my meaning” (LOTR, p. 342). And we say the same when we enter *The Lord of the Rings*.

Kreeft says that the last division of philosophy that will ever be understood clearly and adequately by reason is aesthetics, and within aesthetics, music.

## 9. Political Philosophy

Political philosophy, or political theory, is the study of topics such as politics, liberty, justice, property, rights, law, and the enforcement of laws by authority: what they are, why (or even if) they are needed, what, if anything, makes a government legitimate, what rights and freedoms it should protect and why, what form it should take and why, what the law is, and what duties citizens owe to a legitimate government, if any, and when it may be legitimately overthrown, if ever.

In a vernacular sense, the term "political philosophy" often refers to a general view, or specific ethic, political belief or attitude, about politics, synonymous to the term "political ideology".

Political philosophy is a branch of philosophy. Political philosophy is also considered by some to be a sub-discipline of political science; however, the name generally attributed to this form of political enquiry is political theory, a discipline which has a closer methodology to the theoretical fields in the social sciences (like economic theory) than to philosophical argumentation (like that of ethics or aesthetics).

Of all the divisions of philosophy, this is the one Tolkien was the *least* interested in. That is one of the typical differences between conservatives and progressives. In fact, one of his primary political convictions (“small is beautiful”, or “populism”) is by definition the antithesis of politics in the modern sense of something specialized, overarching, comprehensive, organized, bureaucratic, governmental, statist, socialist, and elitist.

### 1) Philosophy versus ideology

All in all: Tolkien is against ideology and *for* philosophy, or said in a different way: Tolkien is against lie and manipulation and *for* truth. Because, let’s be honest, if there

is something politics is characterized by, it is lie and manipulation. One might think that *all* people would share this view. They don't. Most people are in for ideology. So, when talking about populism this must not be confused with the anti-intellectualist and anti-scientific movement, which is clearly ideological; a movement which is about to become elitist itself due to its power in popular culture (see my article [Anti-intellectualism and Anti-science](#)).

Furthermore: We talked about Tolkien's support of some kind of anarcho-conservatism, but again: this must not be confused with any ideology. I think the best way to explain wherein Tolkien's political views differ from others therefore is to discriminate between philosophical education and ideological education.

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.

There are of course many different forms of philosophical education, corresponding to the numerous ways in which truth may be pursued. 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. This is an anarchistic approach.

Ideological education - (today through what I call 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. It is one of the two evils of mankind (the other is the Ego/the will to power). Both evils form the One Ring: the channeling of energy in towards the Ego/will to power, and the channeling of energy out towards others in ideology.

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 attributes 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.

Philosophy is in opposition to thought distortions. Philosophy 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.

## 2) Anarcho-Conservatism and Simple Living

In general cultural terms, Tolkien is certainly a traditionalist, an antiprogressive, and an antimodernist. In political terms, is he also a "conservative" versus a "liberal"?

Kreeft answers yes and no. These two labels change with time, place, culture, and fashion, and he finds it highly unlikely that Tolkien would be more comfortable with the American brand of conservatism, with its tendency to side with big business and the military and to ignore the poor and the environment, than he would with the American brand of liberalism, with its tendency to side with big government and ignore tradition, religion, morality, family, and the sacredness of individual human life. He is more of a European conservative, or old conservative, a Schumacher *Small is Beautiful* conservative, a Chestertonian distributist. The Hobbits are certainly quintessentially "bourgeois" (the spit word for the Left, as "alcohol" is to pious Muslims). But they are not Babbitts, only peasants.

We could also call Tolkien an anarchist, as well as a monarchist: "My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy (philosophical understood, meaning abolition of control not whiskered men with bombs) – or to 'unconstitutional' Monarchy" (*Letters*, no. 52, p. 63). There is no indication that he ever departed much from this, and the good societies in his fiction tend to be either minimally governed like The Shire and Bree, or benevolent monarchies like Gondor, Rohan and the Elvish and Dwarvish kingdoms (The Shire and Bree are isolated remnants of the old North Kingdom of Arnor).

He went on in the same letter to express himself more forcibly: "I would arrest anybody who uses the word State (in any sense other than the inanimate realm of England and its inhabitants, a thing that has neither power, rights or mind) and after a chance of recantation, execute them if they remained obstinate!"

Tolkien did not appear to respect politicians much. He wrote in World War II: "If people were in the habit of referring to 'King George's council, Winston and his gang,' it would go a long way to clearing thought, and reducing the frightful landslide

into Theyocracy." His tales were set in an ancient world before parliamentary democracy had evolved anyway. In December, 1943, while allied propaganda extolled Stalin as kindly "Uncle Joe," Tolkien referred to him at the Teheran conference of allied leaders as "that bloodthirsty old murderer Josef Stalin inviting all nations to join a happy family of folks devoted to the abolition of tyranny and intolerance! But I must also admit that in the photographs our little cherub W. S. C." [Winston Churchill] "actually looked the biggest ruffian present. Humph."

Anarchists are not usually patriots – but Tolkien was. And the reason was instinctive. It was because his country was to him not an ideological abstraction but a kind of extension of his concrete family, or at least of his pious mother, who, he wrote, "was a martyr indeed...a mother who killed herself with labour and trouble to ensure us keeping the faith." (*The Chesterton Review*, vol. 28, nos. 1 and 2, Feb/May 2002, p. 58.

*Clichés about the influence of devout mothers do not begin to describe the force of inheritance like this...Chesterton was fond of quoting Cobbett on England's loss of medieval Catholicism through the Reformation as resembling one's discovery of one's mother's corpse in a wood...To this extent there is an analogy with Irish Catholic nationalism...Not only had Christ died for you: so had your country...Tolkien writing of his mother's martyrdom, would have felt much as Irish Catholics had...Tolkien had seen his mother dying for his soul with his own eyes (ibid.).*

Tolkien's political philosophy has a name: distributism. Distributism is an economic ideology that developed in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century based upon the principles of Catholic social teaching, especially the teachings of Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum novarum* and Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo anno*. Some Christian Democratic political parties have advocated distributism in their economic policies.

According to distributists, property ownership is a fundamental right, and the means of production should be spread as widely as possible, rather than being centralized under the control of the state (state capitalism), a few individuals (plutocracy), or corporations (corporatocracy). Distributism, therefore, advocates a society marked by widespread property ownership. Co-operative economist Race Mathews argues that such a system is key to bringing about a just social order.

Distributism has often been described in opposition to both socialism and capitalism, which distributists see as equally flawed and exploitative. Thomas Storck argues:

"both socialism and capitalism are products of the European Enlightenment and are thus modernizing and anti-traditional forces. Further, some distributists argue that socialism is the logical conclusion of capitalism as capitalism's concentrated powers eventually capture the state, resulting in a form of socialism. In contrast, distributism seeks to subordinate economic activity to human life as a whole, to our spiritual life, our intellectual life, our family life".

Some have seen it more as an aspiration, which has been successfully realised in the short term by commitment to the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity (these being built into financially independent local cooperatives and small family businesses), though proponents also cite such periods as the Middle Ages as examples of the historical long-term viability of distributism. Particularly influential in the development of distributist theory were Catholic authors G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, the Chesterbelloc, two of distributism's earliest and strongest proponents.

The position of distributists when compared to other political philosophies is somewhat paradoxical and complicated. Strongly entrenched in an organic but very English Catholicism, advocating culturally traditionalist and agrarian values, directly challenging the precepts of Whig history—Belloc was nonetheless an MP for the Liberal Party and Chesterton once stated "As much as I ever did, more than I ever did, I believe in Liberalism. But there was a rosy time of innocence when I believed in Liberals." This liberalism is different from most modern forms, taking influence from William Cobbett and John Ruskin, who combined elements of radicalism, challenging the establishment position, but from a perspective of renovation, not revolution; seeing themselves as trying to restore the traditional liberties of England and her people which had been taken away from them, amongst other things, since the Industrial Revolution.

While converging with certain elements of traditional Toryism, especially an appreciation of the Middle Ages and organic society, there were several points of significant contention. While many Tories were strongly opposed to reform, the distributists in certain cases saw this not as conserving a legitimate traditional concept of England, but in many cases, entrenching harmful errors and innovations. Belloc was quite explicit in his opposition to Protestantism as a concept and schism from the Catholic Church in general, considering the division of Christendom in the 16th century one of the most harmful events in European history. Elements of Toryism on the other hand were quite intransigent when it came to the Church of England as the established church, some even spurning their original legitimist ultra-royalist principles in regards to James II to uphold it.

Much of Dorothy L. Sayers' writings on social and economic matters has affinity with distributism. She may have been influenced by them, or have come to similar conclusions on her own; as an Anglican, the reasonings she gave are rooted in the theologies of Creation and Incarnation, and thus are slightly different from the Catholic Chesterton and Belloc.

Distributism promotes a society of artisans and culture. This is influenced by an emphasis on small business, promotion of local culture, and favoring of small production over capitalistic mass production. A society of artisans promotes the distributist ideal of the unification of capital, ownership, and production rather than what distributism sees as an alienation of man from work.

This does not, however, suggest that distributism necessarily favors a technological regression to a pre-Industrial Revolution lifestyle, but a more local ownership of factories and other industrial centers. Products such as food and clothing would be preferably returned to local producers and artisans instead of being mass-produced overseas.

Distributism does not favor one political order over another. While some distributists, such as Dorothy Day, have been anarchists, it should be remembered that most Chestertonian distributists are opposed to the mere concept of anarchism. Chesterton thought that Distributism would benefit from the discipline that theoretical analysis imposes, and that distributism is best seen as a widely encompassing concept inside of which any number of interpretations and perspectives can fit. This concept should fit in a political system broadly characterized by widespread ownership of productive property.

C.S. Lewis, who also admired this populist, libertarian philosophy, summed it up in this way:

*I believe man is happier, and happy in a richer way, if he has "the free-born mind." But I doubt whether he can have this without economic independence, which the new society is abolishing. For economic independence allows an education not controlled by Government; and in adult life it is man who needs, and asks, nothing of the Government who can criticize its acts and snap his fingers at its ideology...Who will talk like that when the State is everyone's schoolmaster and employer? Admittedly, when man was untamed, such liberty belonged only to the few. I know. Hence the horrible suspicion that our only choice is between societies with few freemen and societies with none (Willing Slaves of the Welfare State, in C.S. Lewis: Essay Collection, p. 338).*

And that is precisely the problem distributism claims to solve, by maximizing the distribution of private property.

This populism is not egalitarianism, however. Egalitarianism is an ism, an ideology. And every ideology leaves out something. Men differs in talent, so there are natural hierarchies as well as unnatural and oppressive hierarchies. Tolkien is not opposed to hierarchy (“unconstitutional” monarchy) and knows that much of our opposition to it comes from envy. Saruman embodies this and reveals it as his deeper motive when he tries to “sell” Gandalf his program of joining with Sauron: “In time, no one will stand higher than ourselves.” (What he really means, of course, is that “no one will stand higher than I.”).

Tolkien’s patriotic populism also embraced an individualistic, or libertarian, tendency at odds with the totalitarianizing tendency of modernity, as did C.S. Lewis: “Two world wars necessitated vast curtailments of liberty, and we have grown, though grumblingly, accustomed to our chains...We are tamed animals...and should probably starve if we got out of our cage.”

*We have on the one hand a desperate need: hunger, sickness and the dread of war. We have, on the other, the conception of something that might meet it: omniscient global technocracy. Are not these the ideal opportunity for enslavement?...*

*Let us not be deceived by phrases about “Man taking charge of his own destiny.” All that can really happen is that some men will take charge of the destiny of the others. They will be simply men; none perfect; some greedy, cruel and dishonest. The more completely we are planned the more powerful they will be. Have we discovered some new reason why, this time, power should not corrupt as it has done before? (ibid., pp. 342-43).*

Or, as Tolkien himself put it, “the proper study of Man is anything but Man; and the most improper job of any man...is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity” (*Letters*, no. 52, p. 64).

Tolkien’s myth of the Ring is not an allegory, but it is utterly “applicable”. He says, “I think that many confuse ‘applicability’ with ‘allegory’; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, the other in the purposed domination of the author” (LOTR, p. xvii). Thus we are free to “apply” the concept of the Ring of power to many things and persons in our own age.



Some of these are obvious, by hindsight: Hitler, Stalin, Mao. But as Kreeft says: “if we are astute enough to understand the warning that there is a ‘soft totalitarianism’, a *Brave New World* as well as a *1984*, we will thank Tolkien for the ability to recognize in new forms the same old ‘one Ring to rule them all, one Ring to find them, one Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.’”

And we may even apply the wisdom we have learned from *The Lord of the Rings* to our own versions of “The Scouring of the Shire”, if any Shire will remain. Political action cannot keep Middle-earth safe for Elves, but it can still keep it safe for Hobbits.

Personally I see the Shire as a place of simple living, something I myself are practicing. We have already seen it promoted in Tom Hodgkinson’s book *Brave Old World*. In the book he argues that labour-saving devices and easy entertainments alienate us from the joy and freedom that are our birthright. We work long hours to pay for it all; our time trickles away in wage-slavery and self-indulgence, and we forget how to live well. In particular, we forget how to be truly idle, an almost mystical notion for Hodgkinson, and one that he defines mainly in terms of gruelling drudgery. “The simple life is extremely complicated and very hard,” he writes. “Toil, endless toil - that is the only way, my idle friends!”

To put this idea to the test, he and his family have moved to a farmhouse in North Devon, where they bake bread, plant vegetables, chop wood, keep bees, make jam and brew what Hodgkinson happily describes as “foul beer”. *Brave Old World* is a primer in these arts, and a meditation on why life has been a dreadful mistake ever since the Reformation brought us paid jobs and the work ethic.

It is no coincidence that Hodgkinson sees idleness as something mystical. Simple living encompasses a number of different voluntary practices to simplify one's lifestyle. These may include, for example, reducing one's possessions, generally referred to as minimalism, or increasing self-sufficiency. Simple living may be characterized by individuals being satisfied with what they have rather than want. Although asceticism generally promotes living simply and refraining from luxury and indulgence, not all proponents of simple living are ascetics. Simple living is distinct from those living in forced poverty, as it is a voluntary lifestyle choice.

Adherents may choose simple living for a variety of personal reasons, such as spirituality, health, increase in quality time for family and friends, work–life balance, personal taste, financial sustainability, frugality, or reducing stress. Simple living can also be a reaction to materialism and conspicuous consumption. Some cite

socio-political goals aligned with the environmentalist, anti-consumerist or anti-war movements, including conservation, degrowth, social justice, and tax resistance.

I enjoy the concept of idleness. With the words of the great Chinese life-philosopher and idler, Lin Yutang, I call myself an apostle of loafing. Look at what the wisdom of the art of loafing has given us. Chinese literary tradition is rife with the jottings of non-achievers – the cultured vagabond, the scholar recluse, the Taoist wanderer. Already in 500BC, the sage Lao Tzu recommended that one should “never be the first in the world”. Only he who is not wanted by the public can be a carefree individual, runs the Taoist adage. The importance of living is peopled with educated dropouts – for instance poets such as Su Tungpo and Tao Yüanming; Su, who sang about “the clear breeze over the river and the clear moon over the mountains”, and Tao, who sang about “the hen, which rested in the top of a mulberry tree”.

After having followed the Beatwriters’ way of living for a period, then these Chinese kinds of dropouts have become the new great source of inspiration in my life.

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 and the growth fanaticism of the self-help industry) - just look at Laurence Sterne on his “sensitive journey”, or at Wordsworth and Coleridge, wandering on foot through Europe, with a great sense 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 for 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.

Look at nature! All nature loafs, while Man alone works for a living!

Today I have retired to Rold Forest, where I participate in the joys of conversation on a moonlit night; to be in the middle of a joyful gathering of happy friends, like in Wang Hsichih’s immortal little essay *The Orchid Pavilion*.

The Orchid Pavilion Gathering of 353 CE was a cultural and poetic event during the Six Dynasties era, in China. This event itself has a certain inherent and poetic

interest in regard to the development of landscape poetry and the philosophical ideas of Chuang-Tze.

The Orchid Pavilion Gathering of 42 literati included Xie An and Sun Chuo and Wang Pin-Chih at the Orchid Pavilion on Mount Kuaiji just south of Kuaiji (present-day Shaoxing in Zhejiang), during the Spring Purification Festival, on the third day of the third month, to compose poems and enjoy *huangjiu* (yellow wine). The gentlemen had engaged in a drinking contest: rice-wine cups were floated down a small winding creek as the men sat along its banks; whenever a cup stopped, the man closest to the cup was required to empty it and write a poem. This was known as "floating goblets."

In the end, twenty-six of the participants composed thirty-seven poems.

The Orchid Pavilion Gathering was an example of what's today called philosophical counseling and cafés.

The Art of Loafing seems to tell something essential about human nature. It is echoed in many cultural connections. It for example reminds about what in ancient Greece was called the symposium, a part of a banquet that took place after the meal, when drinking for pleasure was accompanied by music, dancing, recitals, or conversation. Literary works that describe or take place at a symposium include two Socratic dialogues, Plato's *Symposium* and Xenophon's *Symposium*, as well as a number of Greek poems such as the elegies of Theognis of Megara. Symposia are depicted in Greek and Etruscan art that shows similar scenes.

Epicurus (341-270 b.c.) was a Greek philosopher and Life Artist, who contrary to most other Hellenistic philosophers, was Athenian citizen. His place of birth was however on the island Samos by the seaside of Asia Minor, and on this, and on the other, cultural seen, rich islands in the eastern Aegean Sea, Epicurus came in contact with Philosophical traditions, that hardly was alive in Athens; especially the thoughts of the great philosopher of nature, Democritus.

Epicurus left Samos after having stepped his philosophical child-shoes on the island, and established as philosopher on the island Lesbos. However he was banished from the island because of his viewpoints. In 307 he travelled to Athens with the mental ballast, that he was Athenian citizen; this meant that he, contrary to the other philosophical schools, had the right to own land in Athens itself.

Epicurus established one of two central schools in Athens. It was in constant sharp opposition to the Stoics. I will not go deeper into the philosophical opposites, just mention, that philosophy of nature was central in Epicurus, whilst the Stoics had a

concept of a god, which in them was the central. But both are common in the view of philosophy as an art of life.

The school of Epicurus was called The Garden, and since then the concept "to cultivate your garden" has in European way of thinking been synonymous with living a life retired from the world's ups and downs, to give up all ambitions about social status. This is a completely central aspect in my own way of life.

Epicurus had a real garden, a kitchen garden with vegetables, and to that he retired, and lived of own productions. It was an attempt to avoid the bindings of the world, just like the Stoics, but in quite another way. The Stoics were radically extroverted, and went into Athen's central buildings, where they, among the cloisters, forced themselves speech access to the citizens, whereas Epicurus retired, and avoided all kind of – also political – debate. As he said: "Live in secret!"

In his garden he realized his own life-ideal: together with friends and pupils to live a life in silent peace and joy, in peace to cultivate his garden and his needs, afar from the world's noise and political quarrel. It was a kind of philosophical commune, which stood open for all sections of population and for both sexes, and where the master with his friends practised, what they taught. The teaching of Epicurus is in other words a way of life, a teaching, which puts undisturbed happiness and refined pleasure up as the supreme good.

[The Right to be Lazy](#) is an essay by Cuban-born French revolutionary Marxist Paul Lafargue, written from his London exile in 1880. The essay polemicizes heavily against then-contemporary liberal, conservative, Christian and even socialist ideas of work. Lafargue criticizes these ideas from a Marxist perspective as dogmatic and ultimately false by portraying the degeneration and enslavement of human existence when being subsumed under the primacy of the "right to work", and argues that laziness, combined with human creativity, is an important source of human progress.

He manifests that "When, in our civilized Europe, we would find a trace of the native beauty of man, we must go seek it in the nations where economic prejudices have not yet uprooted the hatred of work...The Greeks in their era of greatness had only contempt for work: their slaves alone were permitted to labor: the free man knew only exercises for the body and mind...The philosophers of antiquity taught contempt for work, that degradation of the free man, the poets sang of idleness, that gift from the Gods." And so he says "Proletarians, brutalized by the dogma of work, listen to the voice of these philosophers, which has been concealed from you with jealous care: A citizen who gives his labor for money degrades himself to the rank of slaves."

(The last sentence a quote from Cicero.). However, Marx himself condemned these ideas.

In his essay [The Abolition of Work](#), the anarchist [Bob Black](#) argues for the abolition of the producer- and consumer-based society, where, Black contends, all of life is devoted to the production and consumption of commodities.

Attacking Marxist state socialism as much as market capitalism, Black argues that the only way for humans to be free is to reclaim their time from jobs and employment, instead turning necessary subsistence tasks into free play done voluntarily – an approach referred to as "ludic". The essay argues that "no-one should ever work", because work – defined as compulsory productive activity enforced by economic or political means – is the source of most of the misery in the world.

Play, in contrast, is not necessarily rule-governed, and is performed voluntarily, in complete freedom, as a [gift economy](#). He points out that hunter-gatherer societies are typified by play, a view he backs up with the work of Marshall Sahlins; he recounts the rise of hierarchal societies, through which work is cumulatively imposed, so that the compulsive work of today would seem incomprehensibly oppressive even to ancients and medieval peasants. He responds to the view that "work," if not simply effort or energy, is necessary to get important but unpleasant tasks done, by claiming that first of all, most important tasks can be rendered ludic, or "salvaged" by being turned into game-like and craft-like activities, and secondly that the vast majority of work does not need doing at all. The latter tasks are unnecessary because they only serve functions of commerce and social control that exist only to maintain the work-system as a whole.

[The Right to Useful Unemployment](#), is a book by the philosopher and Roman Catholic priest, Ivan Illich. Like all revolutionary philosophers, Ivan Illich takes a fresh and searingly critical look at the nature of society, questioning the myth of progress and provoking people into rethinking some of the basic assumptions that underly it. In this postscript to *Tools for Conviviality*, he calls for the right to useful unemployment: a positive, constructive and even optimistic concept dealing with that activity by which people are useful to themselves and others outside the production of commodities for the market. Unfettered by managing professionals, unmeasured and unmeasurable by economics, these activities truly generate satisfaction, creativity and freedom.

All of the above-mentioned ideas are important in my own philosophy of idleness. Especially the Chinese dropouts and the Epicurean attitude became a central inspiration for my own life, my teaching, my kind of philosophical counseling in

Rold Forest. It is a passive way of meditation, a non-acting, receptive receiving, relaxed, enjoying, easy laid-back holyday-like kind of awareness, as when you listen to the birds or the breeze in the trees.

So today I live like a kind of philosophical mendicant friar, in poverty, chastity and obedience to some philosophical principles. I began to ask people the question: What philosophy of life would you choose if money was no object?

As the man who quit money, Daniel Suelo, says: “Wild Nature, outside commercial civilization, runs on gift economy: ‘freely give, freely receive.’ Thus it is balanced. Commercial civilization runs on consciousness of credit and debt; thus it is imbalanced. What nation can even balance its own budget or environment? Gift Economy is Faith, Grace, Love - the core message of every religion. The proof is inside you: Wild Nature is your True Nature, crucified by commercial civilization.”

Following this philosophy of gift economy (freely give, freely receive) all my services (including philosophical counseling and cafés) are free of charge. All my articles and books are available in free PDF Versions.

I earn my living from what people give me (the “freely give, freely receive,” philosophy) and what the society can offer in form of social security benefit (which I see in the light of a kind of “Robin Hood-philosophy”). This is sometimes not very popular, but as I have mentioned, sometimes you have to be a kind of spiritual anarchist, a philosophical rebel, if you want to live in accordance with your calling in life. And not so different from how monks and nuns, or artists, always have lived.

Krishnamurti said, that it would be wise to retire in the age of 40 or 45, or even younger. Not in order to enjoy the fruits of what the world can offer, or what you have gathered of wordly things, but retire in order to find yourself, to think and feel deeply, to meditate and discover reality; because then you would actually be able to help the world in quite another way, because you not are identified with it. An insider in society is namely an outsider in relation to life itself, while an outsider in relation to society, is an insider in life itself.

My art of living is an idle philosophy born of an idle life. And if my life raises the suspicion of lolling, then look at my actions. I am trying to help people, and 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.

All in all: I want to live like a Hobbit in the Shire.

### 3) The Just War Theory

But what should you do when the Shire is threatened by Sauron? How ought one's attitude to war be then? We have already outlined the answer. A bit simplified said, then you namely can have two kinds of attitudes: an ideological and a philosophical.

Much the greater part has an ideological attitude. An ideology is a manifestation of the future. It can be political or religious, and it functions with the implied assumption, that the supreme good lies out in the future, and that the intention for this reason justifies the means. The goal is an idea, an point out in a future, projected by the mind, where the salvation comes in some form – happiness, satisfaction, equality, liberation etc. And the way to get there is to make people into means for this goal. Usually with start in a debate, where you work against each other, seeking to demonstrate each other's flaws, and advocate assumptions as absolute truths.

It is this attitude, which often leads to war.

The philosophical attitude is much more unusual. It works with an ethical attitude where you precisely do not treat people as means, but as goals. For this reason it is in the Now. It uses dialogue, where two or more parts work together towards a common understanding, as well as they uncover assumptions in order to re-evaluate them. This means, that it works with a neutral form of observation, rather than the evaluating attitude, where you all the time justify and condemn.

And hereby it is able to find the thought-distortions which lead to war, for example the dichotomous thinking, where you arrange the world in a pair of opposites, as for example good and evil. This is namely a degraded and one-sided division, and is background for the black and white thinking which classifies all situations, events or things as an example of one of two extremes, when the actual fact is, that between the two extremes occurs a whole spectrum of other possible viewpoints.

But can war not sometimes be necessary? What about when my family becomes attacked? Yes, of course war in such cases can be necessary. But it is still necessary to discriminate between the ideological and the philosophical attitude – otherwise you can use the assumption about necessity as a finished conclusion, and for this reason as an assumption you can use to justify war, also in situations where it is inappropriate. And by doing so war can evolve into the catastrophies we so often have seen.

What about war and democracy then? Do we have to bring about democracy through war? Democracy is the best government we have right now, but if you put notice to

it, then a lot of wars on the surface have been fought in the name of democracy, whilst the fact actual has been an attempt to force through an ideology. The most important work within a democracy is for this reason again this discrimination between ideology and philosophy.

The problem with democracy today is the egoextreme we are in (family-ego, company-ego, religious ego, national ego, armament, pollution, unequal distribution of the food of the earth). In accordance with the laws of energy this imbalance will be contrabanced by crises, diseases, inner mass-psychotic collapses, natural disasters, war. So the greatest work against war you perhaps can carry out, is the work with your own ego. This is much more important than you maybe think at first. *Gnothi Seauton* – know thyself. Those words stood written over the entrance to the Apollon temple in Delphi, where the holy Oracle accomodated. To know thyself is the entrance to all secrets.

The Ego is identified with time, and for this reason it problematizes life itself by comparing with earlier and hoping, desiring or fearing something else. And the more the Ego is identified with the opposites in the images of time, it polarizes life itself by thinking black and white. In this way it throws thought-distortions into the collective, common human dimension of time, which we all are a part of.

The antidote is the philosophical attitude, the neutral form of observation. And here you don't have to do anything else than to begin to observe yourself in this neutral way. And that is precisely the meditative art of life. And obversely that will throw clarity into the collective dimension of time. In other words: it will affect all.

War has always been that function of the State which touches individual human lives most radically. War is literary a matter of life and death. It is the art of killing those who want to kill you – but on a collective scale. Only a State can wage a war, When an individual kills on his own authority, it is called murder.

The two simplest philosophies of war are, of course, pacifism and militarism. Pacifism demonizes war, militarism glorifies it. These are the two easy and obvious philosophies of war, and they are as simplistic as are optimism and pessimism in answering to the problem of whether man is by nature good or evil. Tolkien accepts neither. He subscribes to the Just War Theory, which takes a middle road.

The Just War Theory is a doctrine, also referred to as a tradition, of military ethics studied by military leaders, theologians, ethicists and policy makers. The purpose of the doctrine is to ensure war is morally justifiable through a series of criteria, all of which must be met for a war to be considered just. The criteria are



split into two groups: "right to go to war" (*jus ad bellum*) and "right conduct in war" (*jus in bello*). The first concerns the morality of going to war, and the second the moral conduct within war. Recently there have been calls for the inclusion of a third category of Just War theory—*jus post bellum*—dealing with the morality of post-war settlement and reconstruction.

Just War theory postulates that war, while terrible, is not always the worst option. Important responsibilities, undesirable outcomes, or preventable atrocities may justify war.

Opponents of Just War theory may be either inclined to a stricter pacifist standard (proposing that there has never been and/or can never be a justifiable basis for war) or toward a more permissive nationalist standard (proposing that a war need only serve a nation's interests to be justifiable). In a large number of cases, philosophers state that individuals need not be of guilty conscience if required to fight. A few ennoble the virtues of the soldier while declaring their apprehensions for war itself. A few, such as Rousseau, argue for insurrection against oppressive rule.

The historical aspect, or the "just war tradition," deals with the historical body of rules or agreements that have applied in various wars across the ages. The just war tradition also considers the writings of various philosophers and lawyers through history, and examines both their philosophical visions of war's ethical limits and whether their thoughts have contributed to the body of conventions that have evolved to guide war and warfare.

Ethics is moral philosophy, and The Just War Theory would in my eyes also be the option, if you all the time discriminate between philosophy and ideology, as well as you yourself is in a spiritual practice, where ethics is quite central.

The Just War Theory is *not* a moral compromise between pacifism and militarism; it is just as moralistic, as idealistic, and as absolutistic, as pacifism or militarism. It does *not* believe that "the end justifies the means", or that "all's fair in love and war."

Faramir expresses Tolkien's philosophy of war perfectly when he says to Frodo concerning the Ring:

*I would not take this thing, it is lay by the highway. Not were Minas Tirith falling in ruin and I alone could save her, so, using the weapon of the Dark Lord for her good and my glory. No, I do not wish for such triumphs.*

*I would see...Minas Tirith in peace: Minas Anor again as of old, full of light, high and fair, beautiful as a queen among other queens: not a mistress of many slaves, nay, not even a kind mistress of willing slaves. War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, not the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend: the city of the Men of Numenor; and I would have her loved for her memory, her ancientry, her beauty, and her present wisdom. Not feared, save as men may fear the dignity of a man, old and wise” (LOTR, p. 656).*

Kreeft says that this philosophy was apparently incomprehensible to the movie makers. Why also would they gratuitously change Faramir from heroic, honorable medieval knight to a suspicious, unvertain fool who kidnap Frodo and the Ring (at least temporarily)? Kreeft says that this was the movie’s single most substantial change in Tolkien’s text.

Tolkien’s distinctive contribution to the philosophy of war consists not just in the fairly common achievement of avoiding the two extremes of pacifism and militarism, but in the uncommon achievement of restoring the sense of the glory of a just war. It is not just a dirty job, or an unfortunate duty, it is a glorious thing. It is hard for most of us to feel, with the Roman’s poet, that “it is a sweet and just thing to die for your country” (*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*). But it is hard *not* to feel your heart leap with joy at Theoden’s transformation into a warrior and his “last battle” ride with the Rohirrim to save Gondor:

*Theoden could not be overtaken, Fey he seemed, or the battle-fury of his fathers ran like new fire in his veins, and he was borne up on Snowmane like a god of old, even as Orome the Great in the battle of the Valar when the world was young. His golden shield was uncovered, and lo! It shone like an image of the Sun, and the grass flamed into green about the white feet of his steed. For morning came, morning and a wind from the sea; and darkness was removed, and the hosts of Mordor wailed, and terror took them, and they fled, and died, and the hoofs of wrath rode over them, and the sound of their singing that was fair and terrible came even to the City (LOTR, p. 820).*

As Lewis says in *Mere Christianity*, for the ancients a just war could be glorious, but for us moderns it is just a necessary dirty job, like cleaning toilets:

*The idea of the knight – the Cristian in arms for the defense of a good cause – is one of the great Christian ideas. War is a dreadful thing, and I can respect an honest pacifist, though I think he is entirely mistaken. What I cannot understand is this sort of semipacifism you get nowadays which gives people the idea that though you have*

*to fight, you ought to do it with a long face and as if you were ashamed of it...I have often thought to myself how it would have been if, when I served in the first world war, I and some young German had killed each other simulataneously and found ourselves together a moment after death. I cannot imagine that either of us would have felt any resentment or even any ambarrassment. It think we might have laughed over it (Mere Christianity, p. 107).*

Kreeft says that the ultimate reason for the loss of this vision is cosmological: we have lost (but Lewis has not) the ancient vision of St. John in the Book of Revelation and St. Augustine in *The City of God*, that war on earth is always a manifestation of war in Heaven. The war between Sauron and Gandalf is a battle within the older and greater war between Melkor and Iluvatar.

Modernists would hate these thoughts. We know what Christians have done in the name of God. I also have a problem with these statements. In modern times, Christianity has faced substantial criticism from a wide array of political movements and ideologies. In the late eighteenth century, the French Revolution saw a number of politicians and philosophers criticizing traditional Christian doctrines, precipitating a wave of secularism in which hundreds of churches were closed down and thousands of priests were deported. Following the French Revolution, prominent philosophers of liberalism and communism, such as John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx, criticized Christian doctrine on the grounds that it was conservative and anti-democratic. Friedrich Nietzsche claimed that Christianity fostered a kind of slave morality that suppressed the desires contained in the human will. The Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution, and several other modern revolutionary movements have also led to the criticism of Christian ideas.

The formal response of Christians to such criticisms is described as Christian apologetics. Philosophers like Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas have been some of the most prominent defenders of the Christian religion since its foundation.

Also see my booklet *Karen Blixen – the Devil’s Mistress*, where I have shown an anti-christian attitude.

However, I could agree with these thoughts, again if we remember to discriminate between ideology and philosophy, and uses philosophy as a tool. In other words: war must have a metaphysical and ethical foundation. It should not be based on metaphysics alone. A good metaphysics must be justified in ethics. And ethics is the practical way of living for each of us, ultimately a spiritual practice, an inner alchemy. Ethics must therefore itself be grounded in an absolute metaphysics. Ethics without an absolute metaphysics ends in moral subjectivism, eventually nihilism.

A solution to the tendency to Christian exclusivity (and therefore ideology) would in my view be the ontological pluralism which Tolkien also supports. Tolkien for example believes that there is a proper and honorable place for pacifists even in wartime. He explicitly says so when discussing Tom Bombadil, whom he labels both a contemplative (rather like a monk or mystic) and a pacifist:

*He represents something important...It is a natural pacifist view, which always arises in the mind when there is a war. But the view of Rivendell seems to be that it is an excellent thing to have represented, but there are in fact things with which it cannot cope: and upon which its existence depends. Ultimately only the victory of the West will allow Bombadil to continue, or even to survive (Letters, no. 144, pp. 178-79).*

Notice the difference between this “natural pacifist view” for special cases, like monks and mystics (and Bombadil), and ideological pacifism as a universal moral obligation.

But if we don't like The Just War Theory in C.S. Lewis and Tolkien's version, we could look at another pop culture phenomenon, namely James Cameron's movie *Avatar*. In this movie we see a Just War Theory from another angle which more people probably would agree with, even though it is the same theory. *Avatar* is, with its paradoxical interplay between nature and technology, simple spirituality and greedy materialism, one of the best movies for many years (besides the movie *The Lord of the Rings*), and it is also, with its provocative concluding moral, one of the most revolutionary. I think that the popularity of these movies precisely is the shared anti-modern attitude. People are sick of modernity and postmodernity.

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 the discussions in this book. As we have seen, then Man, with the industrial modernization, has cultivated a mind, which can solve almost any technological problem; that, which the philosopher Habermas calls the instrumental reason. But, as we also have seen, then human problems apparently 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.

And, as we have seen, then 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.

In the same way we can, as also investigated, talk about an instrumental and communicative view of nature. 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. This is precisely the same issue raised in *The Lord of the Rings*.

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 plastic shamanism though. Dream Yoga is 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 Akashic Records, the Dreamtime of the Aborigines 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. But also in Avatar we see an ontological pluralism. In the Blackwell Pop Culture and Philosophy series, Avatar, Jason T. Eberl makes us aware of this.

When human beings first arrive on Pandora, it's obvious that this world isn't meant to be a Garden of Eden for us. We even need oxygen masks just to walk around outside. Colonel Quaritch, proud of the scars he's earned on Pandora, doesn't hesitate to instill an adversary attitude among the new arrivals:

*You are on Pandora, ladies and gentlemen. Respect, that fact, every second of every days. If there is a hell, you might want to go there for some R & R after a tour on Pandora. Out there beyond that fence, every living thing that crawls, flies, or squats in the mud wants to kill you and eat your eyes for jujubes...If you wish to survive you need to cultivate a strong mental attitude. You got to obey the rules. Pandora rules.*

Later on he remarks to Jake while working out: "This low gravity will make you soft. You get soft, Pandora will shit you out dead with zero warning." Quaritch's descriptions leave us wondering how anyone, Na'vi included, could survive – let alone thrive – in such a world. Yet the problem isn't so much the environment as the confrontational stance that human beings have taken toward it, as opposed to the cooperative stance of the Na'vi.

Quaritch may regard Pandora as worse than "hell," but it is Jason T. Eberl's claim, that it is possible to give it just the opposite interpretation. Pandora is an "unfallen" world – a metaphorically Garden of Eden – characterized by a beautiful *harmony* among its inhabitants that's disrupted only when beings who aren't native to that world violently invade it. Eberl says that the most symbolic of the names James

Cameron chose for his characters is Grace Augustine. Augustine of Hippo was a Christian philosopher and theologian who developed an astute and influential account of humanity's "fallen" nature in his theological reading of the story of Adam and Eve. Augustine shares the standard Christian belief that, prior to the fall, the first couple exercised complete "dominion" over the rest of the creation, including other animals in the prelapsarian (pre-fallen) world – "with the power of reason, not by brute force" – which, according to Eberl, is also a strikingly apt description of how a Na'vi "rules" over the animal with whom she's made *tsaheylu* (the bond). Neither violence and cruelty nor the arbitrary use of other animals to cater purposeless human whims were part of the pre-fallen world. Nor did human beings exploit or abuse each other; the first biblical account of violence occurs in the Book of Genesis after human beings were banished from Eden. Were it not for the fall, says Eberl, we would have resembled the Na'vi in our moral attitude not only toward other animals and our environment, but toward each other as well.

Filling in the details of Augustine's account, Eberl continues, Aquinas describes how, before the fall, animals followed the commands of human beings "of their own accord" – as *subjects* following a leader, not as *slaves* obeying a master. He further notes that in the prelapsarian world we didn't need to eat animals to survive. In Genesis, immediately after setting human beings over the other animals, God announces that all plant life has been "given" to human beings and the other animals for food. No mention is made of other animals also having been given to us for food. Genesis implies an initial state of *vegetarianism* that was rescinded later, after the fall, at the time of Noah – apparently as a concession to the violent tendencies of fallen human beings.

Just as greedy and arrogant human beings disrupt the harmonious world of Pandora, the introduction of sin – stemming from human pride and greed – disrupted the prelapsarian harmony of our own world. With their prideful arrogance, the "sky people" feel justified in putting their own needs ahead of those of all other creatures. Moreover, when they attempt to lure the Na'vi with consumer goodies – "lite beer" and "blue jeans" – they play the role of the tempting snake in the Garden. But then Pandora comes to light not only as an unfallen world, but as a world that resists the lures that caused us to fall. According to Eberl, *Avatar* is a Garden of Eden story with a happy ending.

According to Augustine and Aquinas, through the grace bestowed by God by means of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a future restoration of prelapsarian harmony – the coming of the "Kingdom of God" – is now made possible, although it has yet to be realized. Eberl says that there are two important points worth highlighting here.

First, the word *grace* means “gift” and is thus connected not only to the character of Grace Augustine, but also to Pandora itself, whose ancient Greek name means “all-gifts,” and possible “all-giver.” Pandora – personified as Eywa – gives every living thing within its biosphere what it needs to flourish, until its ecological balance is disrupted by onterlopers who didn’t even have enough sense to protect their own world from ecological devastation. As Jake tells Eywa in his heartfelt prayer on the eve of battle, the Earth from which he came can no longer be an “all-giver” to human beings because of the harm they caused by upsetting the ecological balance. Eberl suggests that Pandora could be a “giver” to humanity by providing a model for how we can live in communion with our world. Jake receives the lesson, but unfortunately most of the other human beings on Pandora fail to listen and learn. Grace Augustine, of course, already knows this lesson. Her character thus signifies both the fall that is averted on Pandora and the knowledge that might be the instrument of humanity’s potential renewal.

Second, says Eberl, the “Kingdom of God” needs us to help bring it about. We’re not called to sit passively, waxing nostalgically for our prelapsarian past and hoping that God will grant us a better future. We’re called to *cooperate* with God in making that hoped-for future a reality. Scriptural depictions of the Garden of Eden and of the post-apocalyptic kingdom are signs of what’s possible, standards against which the present order of things must be judged, and reminders that the evils of this world are not part of God’s original purpose. We realize the kingdom by acting now as if it had already come. That means putting our world back in harmony, a key feature of which is ecological balance among all living creatures and in the biosphere as a whole.

The deity of the Na’vi is called Eywa. Here we have the metaphysical foundation. And again this reminds about a lot of spiritual traditions - and with a communicative view of nature. Ontological pluralism. Eywa 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 contrabanced 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.



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 anarchists, 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. This is the ethical part. 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.

As we saw: philosophy contains an element of anarchism. 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 is 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 name for this ideology is relativism.

You could call relativism for the main Matrix philosophy. To explain this further I have connected my version of The Matrix Conspiracy with three other known conspiracies. Here is a short introduction to two of them (I have explained the third – The 666 Conspiracy - in chapter 5, Epistemology, part 2: Sauron's Eye):

## 1. The Bilderberg Group

## 2. Illuminati

### 1. *The Bilderberg Group*

Every year 100 of the most powerful men of the world is gathering in an informal talk about politics and economics. Of these men are 1/3 politicians and 2/3 intellectuals and leaders of multinational companies. Their ideological results? Facts about these are:

- A) The main political tool is economics and Consumer Capitalism.
- B) The main intellectual tool is relativism.
- C) The main management theory is based on psychology, or rather a certain American psychology: Humanistic psychology.

All these support each other in the five education-instruments of Consumer Capitalism; what you also, with inspiration from NLP, could call the five main programming-technologies of the Matrix Conspiracy:

- 1) Management theory (see my article [Management Theory and the Self-help Industry](#))
- 2) New Age (see my article [Six Common Traits of New Age that Distort Spirituality](#))
- 3) Nonviolent Communication (see my article [Nonviolent Communication \(NVC\) is an Instrument of Psychic Terror](#))
- 4) Neuro-linguistic Programming (see my article [Neuro-linguistic Programming \(NLP\) and Large Group Awareness Training \(LGAT\)](#))
- 5) New Thought (see my article [The New Thought Movement and the Law of Attraction](#))

A headline for these technologies could be the concept of personal development. A concept you as a fact see described in EU's project on lifelong learning, education and management theory. A positive sounding concept until you find out what this personal development is all about.

## 2. *Illuminati*

The Bilderberg group is said to be runned by Illuminati, which is a secret society, that goes way back in history. The background is real. This organisation has in fact

existed. The goal was a challenge to for instance the church, working towards a new world order, and with connections to occultism.

Illuminati is said to be an advocate for a scientific world-view, but this has nothing to do with true science. True science can't be connected with certain political views, or occultism. So the "scientific" in Illuminati is rather pseudoscience or scientism. Note that I don't discriminate between the pseudo-science of New Age (demands for "alternative" sciences), and the pseudo-science of reductionism (for instance biologism and sociologism), though these views can disagree in between. They all advocate subjectivism and relativism, and certain occult and/or political views.

Today you can see all this in the New Age movement, which name also clings good with New World Order (Brave New World).

The worshippers 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 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 disgusting 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 has programmed them what to think. They have now 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 surprinsengly 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 scientific, 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 pseudo-scientific theories; what I call the “Illuminati” aspect of the Matrix. One of these “sciences” is for instance the “investigations” of the biology of Western Men; investigations, which sounds like Fascism. 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 NGO's. And when China discover how the "spiritual" education-instruments of the Matrix 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.

Brave New World is a dystopian novel by English author Aldous Huxley. Published in 1932, it propounds that economic chaos and unemployment will cause a radical reaction in the form of an international scientific empire that manufactures its citizens in the laboratory on a eugenic basis, without the need for human intercourse.

Set in a future London, it follows the fortunes of the illegitimate son of a senior governor, who has grown up in America, outside the new empire, and who experiences a dramatic culture-clash when he has to live under its rules. The novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning.

Social critic Neil Postman contrasted the worlds of Nineteen Eighty-Four and Brave New World in the foreword of his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. He writes:

*What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egotism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth*

*would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in Brave New World Revisited, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions." In 1984, Orwell added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In Brave New World, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that our fear will ruin us. Huxley feared that our desire will ruin us.*

Journalist Christopher Hitchens, who himself published several articles on Huxley and a book on Orwell, noted the difference between the two texts in the introduction to his 1999 article "Why Americans Are Not Taught History":

*We dwell in a present-tense culture that somehow, significantly, decided to employ the telling expression "You're history" as a choice reprobation or insult, and thus elected to speak forgotten volumes about itself. By that standard, the forbidding dystopia of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four already belongs, both as a text and as a date, with Ur and Mycenae, while the hedonist nihilism of Huxley still beckons toward a painless, amusement-sodden, and stress-free consensus. Orwell's was a house of horrors. He seemed to strain credulity because he posited a regime that would go to any lengths to own and possess history, to rewrite and construct it, and to inculcate it by means of coercion. Whereas Huxley ... rightly foresaw that any such regime could break because it could not bend. In 1988, four years after 1984, the Soviet Union scrapped its official history curriculum and announced that a newly authorized version was somewhere in the works. This was the precise moment when the regime conceded its own extinction. For true blissed-out and vacant servitude, though, you need an otherwise sophisticated society where no serious history is taught.*

I have told about the tendency of intellectual laziness in my article *Anti-intellectualism and Anti-science*.

In Aldous Huxley's dystopia there are two reductionisms at play: biologism and psychologism, which both in different ways are shared by atheist fundamentalism and New Age. Both are against religion in any form.

Today, when you bring human problems of existential character on for discussion, most people today believe, that it is something a psychologist must take care of. We have forgotten, that such problems are of philosophical nature.

Psychologists have their function, but this must not be overriding, as it is today, where everything is being psychologized, and where social problems are seen as personal problems with adapting to society. Psychology, and all its therapeutical branches, has in that way become a kind of thought-police, which control people like a totalitarian state; just like Orwell's novel 1984, and just like Huxley's novel *Brave New World*. The whole thing happens through coaching, personality-developing courses and management theories. It is impossible to live and work in our society today without being forced to accept these images of life.

Psychologists help patients to adapt themselves to society, and to become usefull citizens. They treat the abnormal cases and don't try to create humans, who are beside the usual, as for instance Life Artists. It is not their function. Psychologists are therefore not engaged in the total development of Man, but only in a certain aspect of his complete being. It can be necessary to heal a certain aspect but if we don't understand the complete process of Man, and are using a more communicative kind of reason, we can cause new forms of sickness. Psychologists do for instance not help the patient with getting rid of the current civilization's confusion and misery.

But as Huxley claims, then humans still have one weapon left, and that is the protest.

The philosopher's function is to create a complete new social order, a world where there are no wars, where there no hostility is, and no desire to compete. But not in the way The Matrix Conspiracy works. All these impulses and obsessions are namely creating a society, where the environment develops abnormal humans. If the only thing you want, is to help the individual person with adapting himself to the existing patterns of society, here or elsewhere, then you preserve one of the causes of the frustration, the confusion, the misery and the destruction. And that is precisely what is happening.

In a certain sense the philosopher also is a healer. Many philosophers make as a doctor a diagnosis and suggest a treatment. So did Buddha, and so did Kierkegaard. But what they were treating were the human problems, therefore problems common to all mankind. The sickness unto death, which for instance Kierkegaard's script *The Sickness Unto Death* has as subject, is the despair. The despair is here presented as a sickness in the self, and the condition for healing is to become yourself. In the same way in Buddhist philosophy, where the sickness is the suffering common to all mankind, and the treatment is meditation, and the recovery is enlightenment.

The philosopher is seeing, that human beings everywhere in the world are in the same situation, and that the problems of the individual person also are the world's problems, they are not two sharply separated processes. The philosopher is facing the



actual human problem, whether Man lives in the East or in the West; East and West are after all only arbitrary geographical things. The whole being of Man is concerned with God, with death, with the daily bread, the right and happy life, with children and their education, with war and peace. Unless there is an understanding of the whole of this, Man can't be healed from the ground.

A further aspect of, that the instrumental reason has won territory from the communicative reason, is the fragmentation of knowledge in all possible kinds of specialization and specialists. And since everything in the modern life is uncertain, we all try to solve the human problems within our own special area. For instance the economist is trying to solve the economical problem within his own area, and therefore we can never find any solution for it. Also the politician is trying to solve it within his own area, but it will never succeed for him, because the economical crisis, the political crisis, the various problems, which constantly surround us, are connected, and must be solved on a complete other philosophical plane, and it is here, there must happen a revolution.

Most humans are afraid of being alone; they are afraid of themselves to think and discover, afraid of feeling something deep, of exploring and finding out, what everything in life is implying. It is therefore they say they love God, and are dependent of what they call God; but it is not God, the unknown, but their own perspective, the known, which the thinking itself has produced.

In this way the Life Artist doesn't engage in any mediocre faith. Mediocre faith has no meaning at all for a human being, who is searching truth. Mediocre faith is only a kind of secureness, an anchorage, a harbor. A human being, who is searching truth, must navigate on unmapped oceans, like Odysseus. As a Life Artist you have no harbors, no place of refuge, you must go out on the open sea in order to investigate. The faith which leads the Life Artist is wonder and enchantment.

A human being, who is searching truth, is not dependent on authority, neither in books, or in any person. As a Life Artist you are searching for truth, not the authority of a person or of a thought-system. You are seeking to investigate the images of life you already have; that is to say: you are seeking to know yourself. To know yourself is to understand the whole of Man, including the various sides of the being of Man: Man as a historical being, as a rational being, as a desirous being, as a natural being and as a communicative being. And it is to understand how your images come to expression herein, their meaning and consequences. Then you not only have some images of life, but a philosophical life-practice.

A philosophical life-practice is a rebellion against the mediocre moral of society, against all images of life, both your own and the others'. If we shall save our humanity, and our democracy and welfare society, it is absolutely necessary, that we in relation to democracy-parasitic ideologies become philosophical rebels like Socrates, Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Krishnamurti – a kind of spiritual anarchists.

Also Albert Camus had this thought. In his book *The Rebel* he investigates the question of terror on many different levels, and have some distinctions, especially the distinction between rebellion and murder. He emphasizes that the rebellion – but not necessarily a violent – is necessary, if the world not shall stiffen, and if we at all shall be able to survive as a human beings. A rebellion can cost human lives, as in the resistance movement during the Second World War, but murder must not be a goal in itself. In that connection he mentions the role of art, which creates a space in the single person where he in a situation of rebellion can orient himself, so that the rebellion not becomes inhuman. The problem with Albert Camus' philosophy is that it ends in subjectivism, which really can't function as ethical foundation.

Personal I constantly make the distinction between ideology and philosophy/human rights. A rebellion must not be ideological, where you treat humans as means for a goal out in the future; that is: you must not treat human problems instrumentally. A rebellion must always be a philosophical revolution, where you treat humans as goals in themselves; that is: where you treat human problems in a communicative way.

In that connection the concept of civil disobedience is important. Civil disobedience describes the situation, where a person offends the law by referring to moral values, which the disobedient puts above all citizens' duty to obey the law. Civil disobedience is therefore closely connected with ethical practice – and *not* the use of violence.

On the constitutional plane civil disobedience can contribute to, that there happens a change of system, and yesterday's disobedience can thereby become the next day's heroic deed.

The concept of civil disobedience as it is known today, was created by the American author Henry David Thoreau in an essay from 1849, wherein he advocated the private conscience's right against the state's demands, for instance the refusal to pay taxes under the war against Mexico.

Civil disobedience is especially known from Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and in the campaign of protest against the Vietnam War. In Denmark it was seen during the Second World War, where some people helped Jews to escape to Sweden.

The reason why civil disobedience is a necessary political tool is, that any political ideology in some way is offending the human rights by making humans into means for a goal projected out in the future by the mind of the ideologist, and that the end therefore, with Niccoló Machiavelli's famous and notorious words, justifies the means (Machiavelli's work *Il Principi* is a textbook in statesmanship, and have been source of inspiration for, for instance, Hitler).

Ideology of any kind, political or religious, is - to cut a long story short - a psychic disease, a malfunction in the human mind.

The correct understanding of the human rights is healing this malfunction. The human rights deal with the idea about the individual human being's autonomy and dignity: You shall treat the other **not as a mean, but as a goal**. Therefore the exact opposite of Machiavelli's preachings.

## 10. Ethics

Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. The branch of philosophy axiology comprises the sub-branches of ethics and aesthetics, each concerned with values.

Ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. As a field of intellectual enquiry, moral philosophy also is related to the fields of moral psychology, descriptive ethics, and value theory.

Three major areas of study within ethics recognized today are:

- 1) Meta-ethics, concerning the theoretical meaning and reference of moral propositions, and how their truth values (if any) can be determined.
- 2) Normative ethics, concerning the practical means of determining a moral course of action.

3) Applied ethics, concerning what a person is obligated (or permitted) to do in a specific situation or a particular domain of action.

In the previous we have focused on the war between the Wholeness and reductionism and in ethics this continues as the war between moral absolutism and moral relativism.

Ethics is certainly the most practically important division of philosophy, and the one most people think of first. But Kreeft says, and I agree, that the most important part of ethics is not the one most people think of first. It is not the ethics *of* anything but the foundations of ethics. Foundations are the most important part of any building, as roots to a tree. We thus first turn to what might be called “the metaphysical foundations of morality”.

Morality is like the marching orders in the war between good and evil. Tolkien strongly side with the traditional “natural order law” view that this war, this distinction, and this goodness are objectively real. But is evil also objectively real, and, if so, is it equally real and equally powerful compared to good?

### **1) The Metaphysical Foundations of Morality**

The first principles are God and the Great Vision (the Good, the True, and the Beautiful). Let us summarize:

The Indian philosophy claims, that the movement of time in itself is a negation-power (Asat, Avidya, or Shabda-Brahman, the self-sacrifice). In Christian terms this would be called Logos or the Christ principle. Time is one great negation (self-sacrifice) of the Now’s unmoved being (Atman), which is the unmanifested, the actual source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Or said in Indian terms: a sacrifice of pure being (Sat) pure consciousness (chit) and pure joy (ananda).

In this way, the future arises, and an outgoing creative movement; a movement, which can be compared with what they within science call The Big Bang (but it is not the same). In the outgoing movement, the great vision becomes, because of the negation-power, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision. Hereby the manifested world is created and with this, the ego. In this way, the past arises, and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested. And then a destructive backmovement is created.

In that way, the movement of time consists of two universal movements, which we could call the outgoing movement and the backmovement. Future and past, creation

and destruction. These two movements are reflected throughout the universe in a multiplicity of different lifecycles; they are Samsara's wheel of up-cycles which are followed by down-cycles and vice versa (for example life and death, success and fiasco, joy and sorrow) – all this which lie behind the law of karma and rebirth. In Western theology: original sin.

So the images in the movement of time are shattered reflections of the great vision of the universe. Because of the negation-power the images in time are coming only to exist in relation to their negation. For example, images of the powerful, the perfect and the good, only exist in relation to the powerlessness, the fiasco and the evil. So, all images contain a structure of opposites. The most universal images include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures or yantrafields. The more collective and personal images expel their polar partners. However, this is in accordance with the logic of the images not possible, and the result is contradiction and division (suffering).

As the Buddhist philosopher, Nagarjuna, said, then the Now's lawfulness around the function of the negation-power, is due to, that energy works as streams and divisions 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.

The more you, through the Ego's will-power based 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. Shortly said: the Ego and its will to power is the root of all evil.

Such a symbol is (as mentioned in chapter 3, Philosophical Angelology, part 1: *Angels and Symbols*), a telescoping, a representing quintessence of the informationquantities, which the Wholeness in a universal image contains. The Divine Being will in that way canalize information to you from the universal image, which, together with the whole of the universal vision, constitutes the dreaming tracks and the songlines in the artwork of your life. The Divine Being (angels, or other symbols from the universal images) will in that way help you to compose, to

synthesize and interlock, what your inner thinker (the ego and the will to power) in the waking state has divided. But it is very important to understand that this nothing has to do with the channeling phenomenon, which belongs to the collective images. In order to receive help from a Divine Being you must be very close to enlightenment yourself.

In this way we have the metaphysical foundations for morality. We must work our way back towards the great vision. In that way we are on a Quest, a Pilgrimage.

## **2) The Nature of Evil**

Therefore: let us return to the question: is evil objectively real, and, if so, is it equally real and equally powerful compared to good? This is something I have investigated in my article [The Philosophy of Karen Blixen](#), in my book [Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story](#) and in my Ebook [Karen Blixen – the Devil's Mistress](#).

When we work our way back towards the Great Vision we'll meet a Guardian of the Threshold. The "Dweller of the Threshold" (or "Guardian of the Threshold") is a literary invention of the English mystic and novelist Edward Bulwer-Lytton, found in his romance *Zanoni* (1842). Shortly after publication of the book, the term gained wide currency in theosophical circles.

The Guardian of the Threshold is a spectral figure and is the abstract of the debit and credit book of the individual. "It is the combined evil influence that is the result of the wicked thoughts and acts of the age in which any one may live, and it assumes to each student a definite shape at each appearance, being always either of one sort or changing each time."

"This Dweller of the Threshold meets us in many shapes. It is the Cerberus guarding the entrance to Hades; the Dragon which St. Michael (spiritual will-power) is going to kill; the Snake which tempted Eve, and whose head will be crushed by the heel of the woman; the Hobgoblin watching the place where the treasure is buried, etc. He is the king of evil, who will not permit that within his kingdom a child should grow up, which might surpass him in power; the Herod before whose wrath the divine child Christ has to flee into a foreign country, and is not permitted to return to his home (the soul) until the king (Ambition, Pride, Vanity, Self-righteousness, etc.) is dethroned or dead."

According to Max Heindel, the Dweller on the Threshold must be confronted by every aspirant—usually at an early stage of his progress into the unseen worlds—and is one of the main causes of obsession.

In Rudolf Steiner's play *The Guardian of the Threshold*, first performed in 1912 and the third in a series of four "Mystery Dramas", the appearance of the Guardian is connected with Lucifer and Ahriman. Steiner explained that the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold as presented in those dramas was to show that a person (man or woman) who had made the soul clairvoyant, must go back and forth across that threshold and know how to be rightly in the spiritual world on the far side, as well as on this side in the physical world. I find that a very precise description, though my concept of Lucifer Morningstar is not based on Steiner, but on Karen Blixen.

Lucifer Morningstar is in that way both my [alter ego](#), and the mirror of you and me. He is illusion incarnate, and raises the question of whether his fake character hides a deeper truth. He is closely connected with the painbody, and the Dark Ancient Inertia. You could also say that he is a manifestation of the dangerous intermediate area of the collective images in time; the area between the personal and universal images.

The One Ring is Tolkien's expression of evil. I have explained that it has two energetical directions: one into the ego (will to power) and one out towards the others in ideology. I have shown how this is exceptionally described in Thoman Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*, where the main character Adrian Leverkühn is based on Nietzsche, and the whole of the novel on a collective plane is about, what the Germans did under The Second World War, where demonical polarized energy spread from Hitler and the secret SS-rituals.

Let us first try to investigate these movements in relation to the Devil, the King of Evil, and hereafter see it in relation with Tolkien.

Energy will tend to dance in a polar mandala around people, who have broken through to the polarity of the collective images. Whether this energy comes into sight as music, as art, as religious love or as wisdom, then the energy will seek to stream out and spread out in polarized circles around the Source. The more knowledge, that exists about this, the larger the pedagogical effect after all can be. But with knowledge follows choices. When these structures become conscious, then people partly themselves can decide, which forms and which motives, should be the definitive.

As observations of the great spiritual teachers show, then the possibility for unselfish use constantly seems to be neighbour to the possibility of Ego-reinforcing use. The same energy, which freely can be given to others as growth, the giver himself can

take to intensification of his own isolating particularity. The choice seems to be dependent of the level of realization work and ethical practice.

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

The collective time 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 images, which work in opposites; energy, which originates from sexuality.

In individual persons, who pass on an unrealized transmission of energy and consciousness, the opening to the collective time today often lies around that to be well-known or famous.

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 equally true, but they are not equally 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/value criterion is, whether something is interesting or boring. Eternal values such as goodness, truth and beauty fall more and more away.

Around the so-called "celebrities" - rockstars, movie stars, models, royals, - there are therefore today formed energy-mandalas, which transmit the forces from the collective time; powers which release, and manifest, collective images, and therefore behaviour. Just try to notice, in what degree "the celebrities" make people behave, dress, act and believe.



But the energy-mandala can also form itself around ordinary people, who, for one or the other reason, through transformed sexuality, have accomplished an opening to the collective time, and who, by turning the energy in through the Ego-structures (the will to power), develop themselves into super Egos, political leaders and popular seducers such as Hitler and Stalin.

In the wars and collective orgies, which such people bring about (the movement out in ideology), there also are triggered, and manifested, different collective images, which always are polarized in opposites such as for example hate and love, good and evil.

And the energy, which brings about this, builds on transformed sexuality. Ordinary sexuality is saved against, and closed, in relation to the collective time. But not entirely though. Underneath the common sexuality smoulder the depths. Underneath lie the fantasies and the images, all the tabooed and suspected desires.

These backgrounds have, in our time, clearly become visible in pornography, in brothel-activity, in the sex advertisements of the daily newspapers. But the whole of this underlying sexual astrality is precisely characterized by being split from the respectable accepted prescribed sexuality. There are many reasons for this: anxiety, condemnation, sin-conceptions, society repression.

The Western civilization has from Christianity inherited and taken over a very characteristic religious worldimage. Sex is sin. Sex is in the highest a necessary evil, which you in the safe, god-guaranteed and eternal-made institution of marriage have to give way to. And God is good. God is creative.

Therefore the destructive, the subversive, has become overlooked. It doesn't belong to the productive nature of God. But because it is such evident a fact (the cycles of nature), you have to do something about it. We have then suitably handed the destructive over to the Devil, who is a fallen angel, an outcast and unhappy, without possibility for salvation and redemption. Unfortunately we have in this religious worldimage got the Devil, the evil, the destructive, *and* the sexual weaved together. And this enormous complex can we basically not do anything about. Of course. Since it after all constitutes half of the world and reality. God maintains the creation every moment. But what or who is then the great power, which every moment breaks down? Is that not created by God? And unless it is created by God, then God is after all not almighty. The whole of this world-image seems insufficient.

Since the destructive (aggression, breakdown, violence) not belongs to God, then it is of evil. But life on our planet is however build up in that way, that all higher forms of

life live by destroying, eating and breaking down and digesting other life! So, if life itself, in its nature, is of evil, then there is no meaning of life.

In order to rescue this scheme of things you either end up in Manichaeism or heresy. Either there are two worlds and two gods: the one god is good and creative and loving. Opposite this god there then exists a dark, destructive and evil devil. The children of the light, who eternally are fighting and leading wars against the children of darkness. A war-crazy religiousness.

Or you end up, Christian seen, in heresy by being led to believe the following:

1: God is also destructive and is responsible for breakdown, death and dissolution and entropy.

2: The Devil is therefore a repressed, outcast unhappy redemption-needing structure.

Sexuality, as the most direct urge of life, is not sin, on the contrary sexuality is a holy and creative activity. This, Christian seen, heretically outlook on life can however rescue the meaning and connection in cosmos and in the inner and outer reality of Man.

Because when the destructive and the sexual also belong under the divine, then Man has the possibility for, in religious spiritual openness, to take the responsibility for his part of the sexual, and his part of the destructive.

The danger is, that when sexuality and destruction are excluded from the divine – and herewith from the spiritual dimension – then people are tempted, in powerlessness, to run away from their responsibility. And that is precisely what mankind do. Wars, torture, anger, atomic bombs, chemical war, plague-weapons. No one have the responsibility. All of it makes it difficult to assign responsibility. And the result is, that no responsible is taking care of destructivity. It rambles restless around, unreleased, demonized. Everybody is afraid of this destructive evil, but no one takes the responsibility for his own anger.

Therefore it becomes so, that the opposites in the collective time (right/wrong, good/evil, light/dark) constantly slide over in each other. They can't be separated. What you believe is good, shows suddenly to have evil consequences. This we learn again and again.

And it all originates from transformed sexuality. Practically all people have contact with some kind of sexual fantasy based on a primordial image. It can shine through in

daydreams, masturbation-images, pornographic fascination or similar. It is concealed. Often unspoken. Frequently people play an inner video at the same time as their intercourse. And as a rule these hidden and blacked out fantasies and stimulations are not open, nothing the partners dare to tell each other about. Sometimes these astral images are shining through in the nightly dreams. But the usual is, that these hints are not explored, nor integrated in the partners' normal life together. If they are realized, they live a fantasy-life. These desires and wantings are maybe fulfilled through novel-magazines, through pornography or lived through afar from the daily life in the sexworlds of the large cities, with their specialities and offers.

Hereby the shadowy and wild growing underground of sexuality, are split from the more accepted love-life. The so-called perverted or romantic-fantastic images and desires, are excluded from the space of love. And when these dark fantasies and desires are excluded, they become darker, more distorted, more repressed, more perverted. In the collective image of the good, the right, there is build up energy, and finally the energy will swing over in its opposition, the evil, the wrong, in order to balance an imbalance.

The astral sexuality contains the backside of the Ego and of the desire. This collective shadow is repressed to the sexual subconscious.

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. Together with the 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 (the background for this is the so-called postmodern intellectualism).

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*.

Daphne Patai is the inspiration for my thesis about the development of a new Puritanism, where traditional religious confession-techniques have been transformed into psychotherapy (see my article [Feminism as Fascism](#)). This new Puritanism has from Christianity inherited and taken over the above-mentioned characteristic religious worldimage, that 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 suitably 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.

There are namely a painful irony in the fact, that our days feminists so uncritical have affiliated the methods, which psychotherapists and hypnotists pretend can uncover repressed memories from childhood about sexual abuse and more bizarre things such as satanic rituals, cannibalistic orgies, alien abduction, past lives etc. In this way they paradoxically come to remind about earlier times’ Christian inquisitions, a kind of psycho-religious 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.

The Ego wantsss (Gollum). The backside of this Egocentredness is radical Ego-sovereignty (Sauron). 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 dealt with the corset tight Victorianism. And of course Karen Blixen. Today we perhaps see the works of Tim Burton as a respond to our time's Puritanism.

When you in that way 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.

The magical mean, which can raise the mind's hypnotic fascination of the primordial images of desire, of power game and of Egoism - is religion and supporting exercises, including the monastic vows about poverty, chastity and obedience. Religion and supporting exercises consist in realizing the collective time, not opening up for it, not living through it, as psychotherapy wants it, but in realizing the nature of the demonic primordial images of desire, violence and Egoism. The keyword is comprehension.

Why the vows about poverty, chastity and obedience?

Because falling in love (and having a sexual relationship) with another human being depends on images, partially collected from the more collective depths of time, partially from your personal images, and therefore from your growing up conditions. However the original images of falling in love (sexuality) are coming from the deepest and most universal images of time. These images are, like mandalas, composite by opposites, therefore a kind of syntheses. As Aristophanes claims in Plato's *Symposium* (which is about love itself), then Man in his original mythological state was a double being. However, when the Ego is coming in contact with such an image, then the Ego divides it in pieces in order to analyze it, understand it. And by doing so you get all the comparisons with earlier and the hopes/fears of something else, and the separated opposites such as subject and object, love and hate, male and female.

In this way a female gets an inner male image. A man gets an inner female image. Concerning homosexuality, then the circumstances, which constitute the lifesituation of the individual, have created another situation, but the inner image will under any circumstances reflect a longing after unification with an opposite pole, therefore a longing after wholeness. Falling in love (sexual turn on) arises when these images become projected on another human being.

That way falling in love, and sexual turn on, implies a fount of contradictions. Falling in love is for example dependency. The other side of dependency is anger and fear and powerlessness over being so dependent. Furthermore the inner images can

themselves be split. This can imply, that you cannot turn on sexually upon types you fall in love with, and vice versa. The man's inner female image can for example be divided up in the madonna/whore type. The woman's inner male image in the hard/soft type.

And since falling in love, and sexual turn on, depends on images, then reality will gradually uncover these illusions, and then the alienation and apartness appear, and therefore the mistrust. Concerning sexual turn on, you therefore have to create new, more and more extreme, images, in order to have an ongoing turn on.

All this lies in the collective time as a kind of original sin, and it is therefore almost impossible for the individual person, for the personal time, to dissolve this, at the same time as you are in a sexual relationship. Especially in the Egoextreme of our time.

There is a fascinating inner tantric element in *The Lord of the Rings*, namely in the love story of Aragorn and Arwen. This explains the absence of sex in the book.

Within the New Age-ideology the concept of Tantra is admittedly very popular; that is: where you speak about transforming sexual energy into spiritual energy through relations with one or several sexual partners. There is no doubt about, that Tantra in its original form in monasteries in India, has produced enlightened masters, but the Tantra, which I see widely-spread in modern Western forms - often mixed with psychotherapy, and a bit of "wisdom" from the New Age-movie *The Secret* - is, in most cases, thoroughly stupid. Here it is of course the Ego, which invents one of its usual tricks in order to get its primordial image (sexual wishes/fantasies) satisfied: "It is God himself, who justifies my sexual wishes/fantasies, and that I therefore have to live them through!"

I have in my philosophical counseling-practice talked with many people, both men and women, who have practised tantra. All the men I have talked with, directly admit that they exclusively did it for, either to have sex with one, or preferably several, beautiful women. When it comes to the women I talked to, then the admission is not so directly. But it is evident, that especially women, in Tantra, gets a justification of being able to get some sexual fantasy's primordial image satisfied; that is to say: to practise sophisticated sex, both with one partner, but also with many different men.

Many of these tantra-movements, and their rituals, therefore in a remarkable way remind about the rituals in swinger clubs and sequences from porno movies, where they also seek to get sexual fantasies' primordial images satisfied.

But in true Tantra the shadowy and wild growing underground of sexuality doesn't become split from the more accepted love-life. The so-called perverted or romantic-fantastic images and desires are not excluded from the space of love. And therefore these dark fantasies and desires don't become darker, more distorted, more repressed, more perverted.

This is because that it becomes justified through the combination with some spiritual concepts, such as meditation. That is of course fine enough, but in its Westernized form there is a lot of spiritual self-deceit involved in it, because it is the Ego, which controls the process. Also because of the postmodern intellectualism in New Age, where very few people actually have an ongoing and continuous spiritual practice, but go shopping from master to master, teaching to teaching.

The ordinary Ego-consciousness functions by being identified with the physical world, with instincts, sexuality, emotions and collective ideals. Religion and supporting exercises work through these aspects by means of for example the essence, 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 Westernized form of Tantra can, as far as I can see, bring about this. On the contrary the Ego uses it as a trick of self-assertion.

But it also has to be mentioned, that religion and supporting exercises necessarily must develop into an art of life, where you actually are working with realization and ethical practice – or else you end up as a hypocrite. And that we also have seen many examples on.

In our time, where the Ego-structures are in a maximum, the astral caricatures of Egoism therefore also are in their maximum. In our time, which is characterized by a consumerism, where all deeper values have been split off, and where everything is measured after if it is boring or interesting, sexuality has got an exaggerated big importance, because it maybe is the only experience we have of something deeper. But sexuality works, just like all energy, in wave movements and pendulum movements. In order to be able to get a sexual ignition and experience, it requires that you build sexual energy up in a wave. This wave then breaks in the sexual experience. Hereafter follows a trough of the waves. But in our growth-fanatical consumer culture, we don't accept the valley. We want the peak experiences, the rises, but we complain over the valleys, the falls. Therefore we all the time try to maintain the rise by providing it with new sexual images, fantasies etc. If the energy laws were really understood, we would accept the trough of the waves as well as the wavecrests.

And these, the Ego's images of desire and of sexual pleasure, will, because of, that energy also functions as pendulum movements, gradually begin to switch over in their demonic primordial images, which we have repressed to the collective time - they begin to become more and more extreme and therefore perverted.

And because we have got the Devil, the evil, the destructive *and* the sexual, weaved together, this also begins to appear in a rise of aggression, violence and pollution. The outer pollution corresponds in that way to an equivalent dark collective inner pollution. The outer war-crazy armament, corresponds to an inner astral tension in power, aggression and anxiety. That which caused, that the wise old of the East termed our time Kali Yuga, the dark age.

Most obvious these dark primordial images manifest themselves in acts of war. Beside the actual acts of war, which never can be said to be true, but always distorted and perverted, the sexual energies - which you have got tied together with destructivity - are triggered in the soldiers, who rape and plunder the conquered women and towns.

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. And the archetypical popular seducer is, as already suggested, of course Lucifer.

Everywhere we see a tendency to that the images of the Ego-extreme (which is about becoming something, to get success, to conquer a place on the top, to become a winner) have begun to switch over in their demonical primordial images. The dark images in the collective time have begun to manifest themselves. We see it in the medias, in movies and in books. We see it in the popularity of series and movies depicting the occult, interdimensional gates, and monsters popping up everywhere. We are witnessing an increase in spiritual awakenings in form of crises such as The Dark Night of the Soul, and Ego-inflation.

Behind the whole of this midnighttrambler-complex in the individual, a collective image shows itself. The complex exposes itself as an emanation of evil, of the Devil.

In one of Rolling Stones' masterpieces *Sympathy For The Devil* the text goes:

Please allow me to introduce myself  
I'm a man of wealth and taste  
I've been around for many a long, long year  
I've stolen many a man's soul and faith



I was around when Jesus Christ had his moments of doubt and pain  
 I made damn sure that Pilate washed his hands and  
 Sealed his fate.

I stuck around St. Petersburg  
 When I saw it was time for a change  
 I killed the Tzar and his ministers  
 Anastasia screamed in vain  
 I rode a tank, held a gen´ral's rank  
 When the blitzkrieg raged and the bodies stank  
 I watched with glee while your kings and queens  
 Fought for ten decades for the Gods they made  
 I shouted out, "Who killed the Kennedy's?"  
 When after all it was you and me.

Pleased to meet you  
 Hope you guessed my name, oh yeah  
 But what's puzzling you  
 Is just the nature of my game  
 (Woo woo, who who)

Just as every cop is criminal  
 And all the sinners, Saints  
 As heads is tails, just call me Lucifer  
 "Cause I'm in need of some restraint."

So if you meet me, have some courtesy  
 Have some sympathy and some taste  
 Use all your well-learned politesse  
 Or I'll lay your soul to waste.

In "Sympathy for the Devil" Mick Jagger seems to have sensed these connections. At some of the concerts, where this tune was played and sunged, there was triggered off rape, ordinary sexuality, murder and births. The song is the hell preacher's hint of the only way out. The Ego has to descend down into the deep of evil, has to take it seriously, see it in the eyes, realize and feel, that evil is in there. The Ego has to learn to get on with its complex, instead of avoiding/ignoring it as the New Thought movement is advising people to do.

The complex is there, it requires a name, it wants voice, time, awareness. If not, it destroys the consciousness and drowns the world in pollution and violence.

According to Kreeft, then Tolkien's classical Christian theology avoids two opposite errors, two oversimplifications. One is the Rousseauian optimism: the denial, or ignoring, of evil's reality and power, and consequently a kind of spiritual pacifism, the denial of spiritual warfare. This is a view which is completely exaggerated in New Thought. The other would be the Manichean error, the idea that evil has the same kind of reality as goodness, equally powerful and equally substantial – in fact, that evil is, in the last analysis, a second God, or an equal, dark side of. This has led to the moral relativism of New Age, for example based on a misinterpretation of the Indian view that Shiva the Destroyer is forever equal to Vishnu the Preserver, or of the Taoist view of Yin and Yang.

For half a century our culture has been as embarrassed by words like "sin", "wickedness", and "evil" as a teenager is embarrassed at being seen with his parents in a mall.

Some of our Deep Thinkers think that evil is only a temporary evolutionary stage, a hangover from ancient barbarisms of race, class, or gender that we will grow out of as we grow out of diapers. As Kreeft says: "We are still waiting for the toilet training to take place".

Others say that evil is just ignorance, and therefore curable by education. After a century of universal education, we are still waiting for the cure to take place. A study of which Nazis were most willing to kill Jews in Hitler's death camps revealed that this evil was indeed related to education, but not in the way expected: the more educated they were, the more willing they were.

Some say that evil against others is only the acting out of a lack of positive self-esteem. So Hitler did not esteem himself *enough*. That's what a New Thought promotor would say.

Kreeft says that most of our culture actually admires Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous nonsense that "we have nothing to fear but fear itself." It sounds somehow healthy and even pious.

And then we saw the events of 9/11. In the chorus of voices that filled our media for the next few months, one was conspicuously silent from the babble: the psychobabble of New Thought. Where had all the gurus gone? The head gurus who all are Americans. Because in their view 9/11 was the American's own fault. The Americans must have had attracted 9/11 through negative thinking, and therefore the New Thought gurus also must have attracted this.

Kreeft says that Tolkien's Christian theology told him that since the good God is the only creator of all beings, therefore all beings are ontologically good. But that theology also told him that God had given man free will and man had fallen into sin, which corrupts goodness and therefore corrupts beings (since being is the place where goodness can be found). Finally, his theology also told him that a man may, through evil choices, go to Hell, where he is hopelessly and forever evil.

The first of these three doctrines – ontological goodness - grounds Tolkien's "optimistic" cosmology; the other two - man's sinfulness and the reality of Hell - ground his "pessimistic" psychology. Both are shocks to secular philosophies: How can mud, mosquitos, and even haemorrhoids be good, and how can we be so bad?

Kreeft says that though Tolkien takes evil very seriously, he is not a pessimist, even about human nature. In fact, it is his moral optimism, his faith and hope in divine grace and in the triumph of good over evil, that deeply offends the modern secular critic. These critics label the heroes of *The Lord of the Rings* as simplistically moral, yet the antiheroes of most modern novels are much more simplistically immoral or amoral. According to Kreeft it is the critics who are one-sided; Tolkien sees both the good and the evil sides better and deeper than they do. He is like a giant with both arms outstretched, one into the heights and the other into the depths. He scandalizes some small, simplistic souls by his glimpses of Heaven and others by his glimpses of Hell.

The vision of life as a spiritual warfare between good and evil is the vision of life presupposed in every great story. For any great story must take both good and evil very seriously in order to generate great drama; and the fundamental theme of every great story is always this spiritual warfare between some particular good and some particular evil. The conflict between good and evil is the source of all conflict between character – it is the internal conflict between good and evil *within* each character.

But Tolkien is not a Manichee: this war is not between equally powerful powers. It is not even between equally *real* powers. It requires a little philosophical clarification to make this point clear. Kreeft says:

*Good and evil are not equally powerful, because they are not equally real – even though evil appears not only equal to good but even stronger than good (“I am Gandalf, Gandalf the White, but Black is mightier still”). But appearance and reality do not coincide here, and in the end evil will always reveal its inevitable self-destruction (although often after a terrible price is paid: e.g., Napoleon, Hitler,*

*Stalin). The self-destruction of evil is not just something to believe in and hope for, but to be certain of. It is metaphysically necessary, necessary because of the very kind of being evil has by its unchangeable essence. For evil can only be a parasite on good. It depends on a good host for it to pervert. "Nothing is evil in the beginning" or by nature: Morgoth was one of the Ainur, Sauron was a Maia, Saruman was the head of Gandalf's order of Wizards, the Orcs were Elves, the Ringwraiths were great Men, and Gollum was a Hobbit. And whenever a parasite succeeds in killing its host, it also kills itself. So if evil succeeds, it fails; it commits suicide.*

The philosophical argument for evil being a parasite on good is simple: evil can exist only in some being, and all being is ontologically good, good for something, desirable somehow. Evil is the perversion of some version, the unnatural twisting of some nature; and all nature is good. Logically evil is thought distortions, it is falsifiable and invalid. Existentially evil is becoming, which is non-being. Evil is suffering.

We have seen that The Danish philosopher Niels Thomassen examines suffering under the following five categories: unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness. These five categories constitute together the suffering, which in this way is a part of your lifesituation. Like this suffering has a past and a future. The past and the future form an unbroken continuum, unless the Now's releasing power is activated through your aware presence: Meditation as an Art of Life. Behind all the different circumstances which constitute your lifesituation, and which exist in time, there in other words exists something deeper, more essential: life itself, your being in the timeless Now itself. If you activate this deeper dimension you will get the opposite categories: reality, co-operation, movement, safety and meaning.

The argument for all being being good, in turn, is simply that "good" means "desirable", and everything real is desirable for something. Even the murderer's shot must be a good shot; moral evil can happen only by using ontological goodness.

Kreeft says that the theological argument for the same conclusion is that every being is either the good God or a creature of this good God Who, being totally good, cannot will or create anything evil (though He can allow it, for a greater good, as He allows human sin in order to preserve human free will).

Yet though evil is not as real as goodness, it is real, terribly real; and life is spiritual warfare – there are snakes in the grass. And they come not just from the next yard. They come not from earth but from Hell. "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers" (Eph 6:12). You do not need to commit the sin of allegory to see who the Black Riders are: "They come from Mordor," said Strider in a low voice. 'From Mordor, Barliman, if that changes

anything to you” (LOTR, p. 165). Strider’s laconic: “They are terrible!” (LOTR, p. 162) is more suggestive than any detailed description could be.

More evils come from Mordor than we think. “All those arts and subtle devices for which he [Saruman] forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor” (LOTR, p. 542). And so did the little vocal evils in the Shire that had to be “scoured”:

*“This is worse than Mordor!” said Sam. “Much worse in a way. It comes home to you, as they say, because it is home, and you remember it before it was all ruined.”*

*“Yes, this is Mordor,” said Frodo. “Just one of its works”* (LOTR, p. 994).

Tolkien certainly believes in the goodness of goodness and the badness of badness. He is not a moral relativist. But that does not make him a legalist or a fundamentalist. A common but indefensible error of some critics is to see *The Lord of the Rings* as morally “simplistic”, as a “white versus black, good guys versus bad guys” story. Kreeft says that this is so far from the truth as to be literally absurd. With the exception of Tom Bombadil, there is hardly a character in *The Lord of the Rings* who is not tempted by evil. The war is not just external, between the white chess pieces and the black, but within every single piece of the board, even while there is an external war going on between two sides that really but imperfectly represents the good (the Fellowship) and the evil (Mordor). Tolkien certainly would approve Solzhenitsyn’s famous remark about the line between Good and Evil not dividing nations or cultures or ideologies but running through the middle of every human heart.

Tolkien is not a psychological absolutist but a moral absolutist: no person is absolutely good or evil; but goodness and evil themselves are absolutely distinct. He believes that “there’s a little good in the worst of us and a little bad in the best of us”; but *not* that there’s a little good in evil and a little evil in good. He believes in human moral complexity but not in logical moral complexity. He believes in the law of noncontradiction, in the goodness of goodness and the badness of badness. If that is his offense in the eyes of the critics, that tells us little about Tolkien but much about the critics.

Indeed, moral doubleness or “relativism” in the concrete does not contradict, but presupposes, moral singleness or absolutism in the abstract. I have explained this paradox many times. Relativism is a totalitarian point of view in the abstract. It becomes totalitarian in the very fact that it is not able to see itself as claiming an absolute truth. It can’t see this because it doesn’t allow the absolute. There are

different versions of relativism. There is an individual version, subjectivism. And there is a social version, cultural relativism.

Some relativists are quite open about their relativism, others deny it. Both Hegelianism and Marxism, for example, claims that all viewpoints within their systems is relative points of views, and are going hard after anyone who claims another absolute truth than their own systems.

There is also the soft Ken Wilber version:

Wilber: *Everybody can be right because some views are more right than others. None are wrong.*

Relativism in a nutshell, though not in the version of being equally true (this is why Wilber obvious thinks that he isn't a relativist). But there are different versions of relativism, for example in the version that no views are wrong, but some views are more "interesting/fascinating/aesthetical" than others.

Wilber: *some are simply more inclusive, more encompassing, more holistic, more integrative, more depthed, more transcending-and-including—endlessly. But the fact that molecules are more inclusive than atoms does not mean that we can get rid of atoms, or that atoms can be jettisoned, or that atoms have no real truths to offer just as they are. To be a partial truth is still to be a truth.*

Yes, a partial truth within Wilber's integral absolute truth. Disguised self-contradictory nonsense (see the Matrix Dictionary on [Ken Wilber](#), where I have made a description of his almost troublesome way of trying to relativize all views except his own without ending up with the label of being a relativist).

Relativism is self-contradictory and self-refuting. If good and evil are not objectively real and absolutely distinct essences in the abstract, then the judgment that a concrete character is partly good and partly evil becomes meaningless.

What drives many relativists is of course the value of pluralism, a value I fully share, and which is solved with the concept of ontological pluralism. Ontological pluralism allows the discrimination between good and bad, true and false, beautiful and ugly, and avoids the troubles relativists have with self-contradictory and self-refuting arguments. The absolute truth in the form of ontological pluralism I have presented is in the end the Wholeness, which is undescribable since it can't be put in opposition to anything (a complete Otherness in relation to everything we know). This allows for different names to be attached to it: God, Brahman, the Source of everything, Tao,

the enlightened consciousness, etc. It allows moral absolutism in different versions, and, on the foundation of absolutism, it also allows a critique of invalid and bad points of views.

Relativism doesn't allow moral absolutism and is therefore not at all pluralistic, though it claims to be. Usually this comes to expression in that it has difficulties of openly saying that something can be wrong, false and evil. It is clear that New Age and positive thinking therefore find relativism attractive. When it says that all viewpoints can be right, this implies that these viewpoints must accept that they are relative. Viewpoints can only be accepted as long as they convert to moral relativism. Ergo: it is self-contradictory. It doesn't allow all viewpoint to be right. Moral absolutism is a wrong viewpoint. Moral relativism is a correct viewpoint.

In fact, pluralism can't be connected to moral relativism at all, as Brian C. Stiller correctly writes in an article in Huffington Post called [Don't Mistake Pluralism for Moral Relativism](#) (03/08/2013).

Relativists' inability to see relativism's abstract claim of absolute truth is the reason why it develops into ideology, and therefore evil. Relativism considers *all* views as relative, and therefore equally good, *only* as long as they are relativistic. Not if they are absolutistic. Relativism is therefore 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 truer 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.

But worse: relativism has absurd consequences. If you for example preach relativism and believe that everything is relative and for that reason equally 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.

Moral absolutism is an ethical view that particular actions are intrinsically right or wrong. Stealing, for instance, might be considered to be always immoral, even if done for the well-being of others (e.g., stealing food to feed a starving family), and even if it does in the end promote such a good. Moral absolutism stands in contrast to other categories of normative ethical theories such as consequentialism, which holds

that the morality (in the wide sense) of an act depends on the consequences or the context of the act.

Moral absolutism is not the same as moral universalism (also called moral objectivism). Universalism holds merely that what is right or wrong is independent of custom or opinion (as opposed to moral relativism), but not necessarily that what is right or wrong is independent of context or consequences (as in absolutism). Moral universalism is compatible with moral absolutism, but also positions such as consequentialism. Louis Pojman gives the following definitions to distinguish the two positions of moral absolutism and universalism:

*Moral absolutism: There is at least one principle that ought never to be violated.*

*Moral objectivism: There is a fact of the matter as to whether any given action is morally permissible or impermissible: a fact of the matter that does not depend solely on social custom or individual acceptance.*

Ethical theories which place strong emphasis on rights and duty, such as the deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant, are often forms of moral absolutism, as are many religious moral codes.

Moral absolutism may be understood in a strictly secular context, as in many forms of deontological moral rationalism. However, many religions have morally absolutist positions as well, regarding their system of morality as deriving from divine commands. Therefore, they regard such a moral system as absolute, (usually) perfect, and unchangeable. Many secular philosophies also take a morally absolutist stance, arguing that absolute laws of morality are inherent in the nature of human beings, the nature of life in general, or the universe itself. For example, someone who believes absolutely in nonviolence considers it wrong to use violence even in self-defense.

The Euthyphro dilemma is found in Plato's dialogue Euthyphro, in which Socrates asks Euthyphro, "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?"

The dilemma has had a major effect on the philosophical theism of the monotheistic religions, but in a modified form: "Is what is morally good commanded by God because it is morally good, or is it morally good because it is commanded by God?" Ever since Plato's original discussion, this question has presented a problem for some theists, though others have thought it a false dilemma, and it continues to be an object of theological and philosophical discussion today.



Aquinas never explicitly addresses the Euthyphro dilemma, but draws a distinction between what is good or evil in itself and what is good or evil because of God's commands, with unchangeable moral standards forming the bulk of natural law. Thus he contends that not even God can change the Ten Commandments, adding, however, that God can change what individuals deserve in particular cases, in what might look like special dispensations to murder or steal.

Moral absolutism supports deontological ethics. In moral philosophy, deontological ethics or deontology is the normative ethical position that judges the morality of an action based on rules.

It is sometimes described as "duty-" or "obligation-" or "rule-" based ethics, because rules "bind you to your duty". Deontological ethics is commonly contrasted to consequentialism, virtue ethics, and pragmatic ethics. In this terminology, action is more important than the consequences.

The term deontological was first used to describe the current, specialised definition by C. D. Broad in his book, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, which was published in 1930. Older usage of the term goes back to Jeremy Bentham, who coined it in c. 1826 to mean more generally "the knowledge of what is right and proper". The more general sense of the word is retained in French, especially in the term *code de déontologie* "ethical code", in the context of professional ethics.

Depending on the system of deontological ethics under consideration, a moral obligation may arise from an external or internal source, such as a set of rules inherent to the universe (ethical naturalism), religious law, or a set of personal or cultural values (any of which may be in conflict with personal desires).

Moral relativism may be any of several philosophical positions concerned with the differences in moral judgments across different people and cultures.

Descriptive moral relativism holds only that some people do in fact disagree about what is moral; meta-ethical moral relativism holds that in such disagreements, nobody is objectively right or wrong; and normative moral relativism holds that because nobody is right or wrong, we ought to tolerate the behavior of others even when we disagree about the morality of it.

Not all descriptive relativists adopt meta-ethical relativism, and moreover, not all meta-ethical relativists adopt normative relativism. Richard Rorty, for example, argued that relativist philosophers believe "that the grounds for choosing between

such opinions is less algorithmic than had been thought", but not that any belief is as valid as any other.

Moral relativism has been debated for thousands of years, from ancient Greece and India to the present day, in diverse fields including art, philosophy, science, and religion.

Moral relativism supports Utilitarianism, an ethical theory that states that the best action is the one that maximizes utility. "Utility" is defined in various ways, usually in terms of the well-being of sentient entities. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, described utility as the sum of all pleasure that results from an action, minus the suffering of anyone involved in the action. Utilitarianism is a version of consequentialism, which states that the consequences of any action are the only standard of right and wrong. Unlike other forms of consequentialism, such as egoism, utilitarianism considers the interests of all beings equally.

Proponents of utilitarianism have disagreed on a number of points, such as whether actions should be chosen based on their likely results (act utilitarianism) or whether agents should conform to rules that maximize utility (rule utilitarianism). There is also disagreement as to whether total (total utilitarianism) or average (average utilitarianism) utility should be maximized.

Though the seeds of the theory can be found in the hedonists Aristippus and Epicurus, who viewed happiness as the only good, the tradition of utilitarianism properly began with Bentham, and has included John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, R. M. Hare, David Braybrooke, and Peter Singer. It has been applied to social welfare economics, the crisis of global poverty, the ethics of raising animals for food and the importance of avoiding existential risks to humanity.

Critics propose that moral relativism fails because it rejects basic premises of discussions on morality, or because it cannot arbitrate disagreement. Many critics, including Ibn Warraq and Eddie Tabash, have suggested that meta-ethical relativists essentially take themselves out of any discussion of normative morality, since they seem to be rejecting an assumption of such discussions: the premise that there are right and wrong answers that can be discovered through reason. Practically speaking, such critics will argue that meta-ethical relativism may amount to moral nihilism, or else incoherence.

These critics argue specifically that the moral relativists reduce the extent of their input in normative moral discussions to either rejecting the very having of the discussion, or else deeming both disagreeing parties to be correct. For instance, the

moral relativist can only appeal to preference to object to the practice of murder or torture by individuals for hedonistic pleasure. This accusation that relativists reject widely held terms of discourse is similar to arguments used against other "discussion-stoppers" like some forms of solipsism or the rejection of induction. Ideologists therefore love relativism.

Philosopher Simon Blackburn made a similar criticism, and explains that moral relativism fails as a moral system simply because it cannot arbitrate disagreements.

The moral relativist might respond that their conception of morality is more accurate given the provided cross cultural data and that it seems to hold true regardless of the counter arguments of the position's objectors. They also might argue that most moral arguments are a form of the logical fallacy "Begging the Question" because it assumed that the moral position being argued is already good and moral and people who argue to "prove" their moral position are assuming that the cultural moral norms that they already have are already true. The critics, however, maintain that their conception of morality is, for that exact reason, inadequate. Ultimately critics can do little more than to invite moral-relativists to re-define "morality" in practical or morally realistic terms.

Catholic and some secular intellectuals attribute the perceived post-war decadence of Europe to the displacement of absolute values by moral relativism. Pope Benedict XVI, Marcello Pera and others have argued that after about 1960, Europeans massively abandoned many traditional norms rooted in Christianity and replaced them with continuously evolving relative moral rules. In this view, sexual activity has become separated from procreation, which led to a decline in the importance of families and to depopulation. As a result, currently the population vacuum in Europe is filled by immigrants, often from Islamic countries, who attempt to reestablish absolute values which stand at odds with moral relativism. The most authoritative response to moral relativism from the Roman Catholic perspective can be found in *Veritatis Splendor*, an encyclical by Pope John Paul II. Many of the main criticisms of moral relativism by the Catholic Church relate largely to modern controversies, such as elective abortion.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American Buddhist monk, has written: "By assigning value and spiritual ideals to private subjectivity, the materialistic world view ... threatens to undermine any secure objective foundation for morality. The result is the widespread moral degeneration that we witness today. To counter this tendency, mere moral exhortation is insufficient. If morality is to function as an efficient guide to conduct, it cannot be propounded as a self-justifying scheme but must be embedded in a more comprehensive spiritual system which grounds morality in a transpersonal order.

Religion must affirm, in the clearest terms, that morality and ethical values are not mere decorative frills of personal opinion, not subjective superstructure, but intrinsic laws of the cosmos built into the heart of reality."

The latter should confirm that Buddhism, nor any other spiritual tradition is in for moral relativism, or subjectivism. Moral relativism contradicts the concept of spirituality all together. It is always bordering to nihilism. It also shows that I'm right when claiming that idealism (subjectivism) goes hand in hand with materialism, as the two main metaphysical theories today.

Tolkien's moral absolutism contradicts the worldview of modern post-Christian moral relativism. But it also contradicts the pagan pre-Christian religious relativism. To see this, consider Tolkien's primary pagan source, Norse mythology. Odin, their supreme god, is not morally good, like the God of the Bible. He is addicted to power, like Sauron. The Vikings would never have understood the philosophy that "power corrupts." In fact, all the pagan gods, Northern (Germanic) or Southern (Mediterranean) are, like us, partly good and partly evil. They are "divine", or superior, not in goodness but only in power – in fact, in three powers: power over nature by a supernatural or "magical" technology, power over ignorance (cleverness, farsight and foresight), and power over death (immortality). (Exactly modernity's superiority over the past! If that is all divinity means, we are now approaching divinity.) The Jewish and Christian claim that the one God is totally good and not evil was as much of a shock to the old paganism as it is to the new.

### **3) The Ring and the Devil**

Evil is formidable. Its power shocks us. We are surprised to hear Gandalf say; "I am Gandalf the White, but Black is mightier still" (LOTR, p. 489).

And, from the same Gandalf, after the great victory in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, these words:

*"Hardly has our strength sufficed to beat off the first great assault. The next will be greater. This war then is without final hope, as Denethor perceived. Victory cannot be achieved by arms...I still hope for victory, but not by arms"* (LOTR, p. 860).

Evil is in fact immortal, since Satan is immortal. Like Ransom in *Perelandra*, we can defeat only the temporary bodily forms that evil uses, the Un-men or Nazgul or Orcs or evil Wizards. We can break the swords not the Swordsman. As Kreeft say: "Only One can bruise his head, and only by being bruised in His heel."

All our victories against evil in this world are only temporary. This idea of progress, central to modernity, is simply false. We have not progressed in virtue or wisdom, only in power and cleverness. Good and evil are like odd and even integers; science and technology are only their exponents. They multiply whatever they are given, good or evil, odd or even. This is empowered by the very fact that all talk about the existence of good and evil are being made ridiculous, both by modernists and postmodernists.

The Ring is so powerful that no creature can overcome it. But as we have seen: the religions teach that sin and negative karma are so powerful that no creature can overcome them. Only God, Christ, Buddha, the enlightened consciousness, can. And this divine source takes on our original sin, cleanses it for us, and forgives. Kreeft says that only God can do this, and only by His own death. This is shown in the act of taking on, and forgiving, sin.

*If the Ring represents Sin, then we would expect that its destruction would be impossible without the help of grace, and that is indeed what we find in The Lord of the Rings...Frodo is, of course, saved by an apparent accident, for Gollum bites the Ring from his finger and falls into the Fire. This is in fact the consequence of Frodo's earlier (and freer) decision to spare Gollum's life...Thus in the end it is not Frodo who saves Middle Earth at all, nor Gollum. It can only be God himself, working through the love and freedom of his creatures. The scene is a triumph of Mercy. (Stratford Caldecott, "The Horns of Hope", in *The Chesterton Review*, vol. 28, nos. 1 and 2, Feb./May 2002. P. 37).*

Let us explore the power of evil more exactly. The Ring has two powers: it enhances whatever natural powers its user already has, and it gives him the new power of invisibility. What is the connection between these two powers?

If you need deceptions to be powerful, then you need invisibility. If the Ring gave you power *without* invisibility, your evil would be known, and you would be caught and punished by having your power taken away. So the power of deception, which is over others' *minds* (symbolized by the invisibility given by the Ring), is an essential complement to the power over others' *bodies* and lives and actions, which is also given by the Ring. Machiavelli and Hitler both understood that principle; that's why they knew that propaganda was an essential part of war. The evil empire that controls modern worlds media knows that too, though its aim is not political conquest (like Machiavelli) or military conquest (like Hitler) but the far more apocalyptic spiritual and religious conquest of conscience, of souls.

Invisibility also means isolation. God alone can endure this (as Kreeft says: “and only because He is a Trinity of persons, a society in Himself). He is God alone; there is no other. Yet He is other in Himself and never alone. God *is* a community. That is why He needs no community, as we do.

The Ring cuts us off from community, and contact. We are alone with the Eye. There is no room for two I’s. there is no We in the I, no room for an Other in the One Ring.

This is why the Ring surrounds emptiness. If We-ness, or Relationship, or love, or Trinity is the name of ultimate reality, then the Ring makes us unreal by isolating us. It plunges us into its own emptiness, like a black Hole. Its circular shape is an image of that emptiness: it encloses nothingness with its all-encompassing circle of power. Idealism is the clearest philosophical position that leads us to the One Ring. It is solipsism (only I exist), black enlightenment.

It is not a means to any further end. It is Nietzsche’s “will to power” as itself the end. Machiavelli taught that the end justified the means; Nietzsche taught that the means (power) justified the end. Nietzsche’s nihilism is more demonic than Machiavelli’s pragmatism. This philosophy sees life as a bubble: empty and meaningless within and without; its only meaning is to expand its own inner emptiness out into the outer emptiness, to make all Middle-earth into itself, into Mordor. It is the black version of the Worm Ouroboros, swallowing its own tail, being its own god. It is the unholy icon of the inner life of Satan made visible.

Thus it images the very essence of sin, the first sin, Satan’s sin: “Better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven.” And when Satan tempted Adam (Man, us) with it, Adam too tried to become invisible to God, to hide from the light, to give excuses and pass the blame to the woman, and she to the Devil.

The Ring symbol goes back to Plato, and probably even beyond him. In Plato’s *Republic* we find the same Ring, with the same two powers. Or rather, Gyges does. (Gollum has many echoes of Gyges.) Gyges is a little man but the Ring makes him big. He is able to do anything he wants with impunity, since the Ring makes him invisible. So he murders the king, marries the queen, inherits the kingdom, and fools the people. Is he happy? That is the dramatic question of the *Republic*. It gives us the answer in the abstract; *The Lord of the Rings* gives us the same answer to the same question in the concrete.

Plato uses the Ring as the perfect contrast to Socrates, his Hobbit-like, Frodo-like model for the wise and humble and therefore happy life. Socrates has virtue in his soul, refuses to sell any of it for political power or survival, and consequently is

martyred by evil men to whom his inner goodness is invisible. Socrates has the reality of goodness without the appearances of it or the rewards of it. Gyges, on the other hand, has no real goodness, no virtue, but through using the Ring he gets what he wants, which includes apparent goodness and others' approval. For him, "Image is everything." His injustice is invisible to others; he controls appearances. And thus he is an apparent success. For, as Machiavelli argues, "Appearances are more important than reality for the successful prince. For you alone see what you really are, while everyone sees what you appear to be." In contrast, Socrates is a "failure" – like Christ. Like Frodo. According to Kreeft, Frodo is indeed a "Christ figure". As Plato used the Ring to contrast Gyges with Socrates, Tolkien uses the same Ring to contrast Gollum with Frodo, and ultimately, with Christ.

Plato's great challenge to us in the *Republic* is this: Why should we be good if we can get whatever we want by being evil if we use the Ring of power and remain invisible and unpunished? And his answer is that wanting what you should is better than getting what you want.

But doesn't power make you happy, if it is the power to get whatever you want? Isn't the only gap between us and happiness the gap of power? For if we are unhappy only because we do not have the power to bridge the gap between desire and satisfaction, and if the Ring would give us that power, then it follows that the Ring would make us happy. Thus "injustice is more profitable than justice" if it has a Ring.

The philosophy is profoundly similar to that of Nietzsche's. Gollum is really a small version of Nietzsche's "Overman". Sauron is a big one. It is no accident that Nietzsche called his final summary of his philosophy "The Will to Power". Nor is it a mere coincidence that the artist he found most fascinating was Wagner, the author of that other artistic masterpiece that centers on the Ring – exactly the same Ring. Both Plato and Tolkien write their masterpieces precisely to refute this philosophy. The issue could not be more momentous: nothing less than the meaning of life, the road to happiness.

Kreeft says that evil and injustice seem to be the secret of happiness sometimes, for they seem to give us the power to attain our desires. What is missing in this philosophy, for Plato, is wisdom: the wisdom to know ourselves and our desires. The thief is a fool: he thinks he is a body, not a soul, and that he will be happy by spending stolen money, ignoring his conscience. Tolkien would agree with this, but he goes farther. He knows something else that is missing in this Nietzschean philosophy: the power of weakness, the thing Nietzsche despised the most, especially in Christianity. For Tolkien, as for the saints, strength manifests itself most powerfully not in grasping and using power but in renouncing it, mortifying desires,

yielding, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom. “The greatest examples of the action of the spirit...are in *agnegation*” (*Letters*, no. 186, p. 246).

Plato’s answer to Gyges was philosophy, the love of wisdom, abstract knowledge- Tolkien’s answer to Nietzsche is sanctity, the sacrificial love of persons, concrete acts of charity. That is why it is sufficient for Plato to *prove* his point in the abstract (with great brilliance and accuracy, let it be added); but Tolkien must *show* it concretely in the story that we see as *our* story.

The weakness of evil is that it can’t conquer weakness. No matter how much power evil has, it is always defeated by the *free, loving renunciation* of power. It can be defeated in Middle-earth as it was on Calvary: by martyrdom. Kreeft says that Scripture’s image of the last battle between good and evil is a battle between two mythical beasts: *Arnion*, the meek little Lamb. And *Therion*, the terrible dragon beast. And the Lamb overcomes the Beast by a secret weapon: His own blood.

Evil is limited to power; it cannot use weakness. It is the one extreme pole in a pair of opposites, always limited by its opposite pole. It is limited to pride; it cannot use humility. It is limited to inflicting suffering and death; it cannot use suffering and death. It is limited to selfishness; it cannot use selflessness. But good can. Evil will be defeated by compensatory karma, by Nemesis.

It takes selflessness to give birth, whether biologically or artistically. You let yourself be used as a birth canal, or an an instrument of divine inspiration. Evil cannot create, or give birth. For “nothing is evil in the beginning” (LOTR, p. 261). “Trolls are only counterfeits, made by the Enemy in the Great Darkness, in mockery of Ents, as Orcs were of Elves” (LOTR, p. 474). “The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make” (LOTR, p. 893).

And “in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and beauty for ever beyond its reach” (LOTR, p. 901).

As Rabindranath Tagore said: ”The light is young, the eternal ancient light; the shadows are a brief moment’s matter, they are born aged.”

“Only a small and passing thing”? asks Kreeft. “But this Shadow is Satan, the one who succeeded in killing God for three days!” Who but a Christian could possible plumb the depths of evil, and therefore, by hard-won right, of good – as in Corrie Ten Boom’s shattering confession in *The Hiding Place* from the antechamber of Hitler’s Mordor in Ravensbrook: “This darkness is very deep, but our God has gone deeper still. When you have been to Calvary, even Ravensbrook looks small.”



One reason the powerful Ring makes you weak rather than strong is terrifyingly relevant to our own lives, dependent as they are on our many smaller rings of technologies. (Are we sure there is no one ruling Ring behind them all?) Tolkien explains:

*The Ring of Sauron is only one of the various mythical treatments of the placing of one's life, or power, in some external object [technically this is "fetichism" – note that it is nearly identical with technologism!], which is thus exposed to capture or destruction with disastrous results to oneself. If I were to "philosophize" this myth, or at least the Ring of Sauron, I should say it was a mythical way of representing the truth that potency if it is to be exercised, and produce results, has to be externalized and so as it were passes, to a greater or less degree, out of one's direct control. A man who wishes to exert "power" must have subjects, who are not himself. But he then depends on them (Letters, no. 211, p. 279).*

This is an example of Hegel's famous "master-slave dialectic": the slave does not need or depend on his master, but the master needs and depends on his slave; therefore the master is really the slave to his slave or, rather, to his own need for his slave, while the slave is free. This is another example of compensatory karma.

We do not have slaves because we have substitutes for them: machines. The Industrial Revolution made slavery inefficient and unnecessary. But our addiction is the same whether the slaves are made of flesh, metal, or plastic. Kreeft says that we have done exactly what Sauron did in the forging the Ring. We have put our power into things in order to increase our power. And the result is, as everyone knows but no one admits, that we are now weak little wimps, Shelob's slaves, unable to survive a blow to the great spider of our technological network. We tremble before a nationwide electrical blackout or a global computer virus. Only hillbillies and scouts would survive a nuclear war. In our drive for power we have deceived ourselves into thinking that we have become more powerful when all the time we have been becoming less. We are miserable little Nietzsches dreaming we are supermen. Precisely what New Age directions such as Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) and New Thought want us to dream. But in gaining the world we have lost our selves.

Who dares tell such a "reactionary" truth today? Tolkien does, like the little boy in "The Emperor's New Clothes". And we can't help listening to the prophet when he says, "You can't fight the Enemy with his own Ring without turning into an Enemy; but unfortunately Gandalf's wisdom seems long ago to have passed with into the True West" (Letters, no. 81, p. 94).

This is why we never see Sauron's face in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is because we do not see our own. We have forged a Ring. Ours is not the supernatural technology of Sauron's magic but natural technology. But, though the means are different, they serve the same end.

Kreeft says: "And the critics call this 'escapist fantasy'!"

The most terrifying thing about the power of evil is that it is not external but internal. It works only by our cooperation. It removes our freedom, but only freely; we forge the cords of our slavery with the strength of our freedom. The Ring's temptation, in one word, is "addiction". This is also how Plato analysed injustice and tyranny in the *Republic* enslavement to the master passion for power.

Freud was wrong; it is not pleasure but power that we want most demandingly. Kierkegaard saw this and wrote, "If I had a humble servant who, when I asked him for a glass of water, brought me instead the world's costliest wines blended in a chalice, I would fire him, to teach him that true pleasure consists in getting my own way." (Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, ed. Robert Bretall (New York: Modern Library, 1936, p. 34).

Pleasure is only the sugar on the bait of power. Any addict knows that. "I've got to have it" is his philosophy. Not I but it is the Master. Gollum is believable because we know him; he is, as Kreeft says, every drug addict. In fact, he is every addict, which means every man. For we are all addicted to something that we cannot part with that is less than God.

We are weak because we no longer understand the power of weakness; we no longer understand that the greatest power is self-abnegation, renunciation, and martyrdom. According to Kreeft even Catholics no longer use words like "mortification" or even "detachment". But our heart still understands this power; that's why we recognize it when we meet it in Tolkien, or Buddha, or Lao Tzu, even after the Christian teachers stopped teaching it to us in the name of Jesus.

Tolkien makes clear the connection between addiction and technology in the strategy of temptation. We scientific magicians demand not only gratification but instant gratification.

*The Enemy, or those who have become like him, go in for "machinery" – with destructive and evil effects – because "magicians"...use magia for their own power...The basic motive for magia...is immediacy: speed, reduction of labour, and reduction also to a minimum (or vanishing point) of the gap between the idea or*

*desire and the result or effect...if you have command of abundant slave-labour or machinery (often only the same thing concealed) (Letters, no. 155, p. 200).*

Self-righteousness and egotism are another part of the temptation. Denethor is supposed to be Gondor's steward (caretaker, servant). But he identifies Gondor with himself; when he despairs of victory for Gondor, he commits suicide. Gandalf, in contrast, is the exact opposite of a suicide: he is a martyr. He dies for his companions in the Mines of Moria. Gandalf says to Denethor, "The rule of no realm is mine, neither of Gondor or any other, great or small. But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care...For I also am a steward. Did you not know?" (LOTR, pp. 741-42).

In his book *The Good Life* the Danish 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 Divine Comedy* 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 personal development movement. 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 lives 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 (the paradox) in the different forms of self-assertion is that it leads to an unreal life.

I begin my book *Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story* by quoting Rolling Stones' masterpiece *Sympathy for the Devil*, and I quoted it above. It is the hell preacher's hint of the only way out. The Ego has to descend down into the deep of evil, has to take it seriously, see it in the eyes, realize and feel, that evil is in there. The Ego has to learn to get on with its complex, instead of avoiding/ignoring it as the New Thought movement is advising people to do. In short: you need to understand the nature of the game. And the nature of the game is the paradoxical.

Mick Jagger had a sense (at least intuitively) of the paradoxical in the Devil's game, and are therefore not completely identified with it. But people who have been caught up by the Devil's game (or are identified with the game) could be called paradoxers. You could also call them Matrix Sophists, because they use thought distortions as a way of getting on in the world.

In ancient Greek philosophy the Sophists were teachers of rhetoric, who 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 (Socrates is the archetypal philosopher). In this they used thought distortions. Thought distortions are rooted in the paradoxical.

In this way there are a whole host of philosophical issues surrounding the Devil. There are metaphysical issues regarding the existence and nature of the Devil, Hell, and evil; epistemological issues concerning knowledge and belief in the Devil and other immaterial beings, logical issues pertaining to the Father of All Lies who tricks and deceives people into believing false claims and fallacious, irrational reasoning; ethical issues about devilish behaviour, resisting the Devil, and even the possibility of a demon remaining a demon while abiding by moral principles; issues on political philosophy having to do with devilish democracies and the wickedness of injustice.

There are straightforward as well as subtle distinctions that can be made between the Judeo-Islamic-Christian conception of the Devil and Satan – and other demonic, evil figures – as many have done throughout history. For example, the German bishop and theologian, Peter Binsfeld (around 1540-1603), divied up demons according to the seven deadly sins: Lucifer as the demon associated with pride; Satan with anger; Beelzebub with gluttony; Asmodeus with lust; Leviathan with envy; mammon with greed; and Belphegor with sloth. And most of us have heard of, and read, John Milton's (1608-1674) *Paradise Lost* (1667) where he equates Satan with Lucifer, who's aided by other demons such as Beelzebub, Belial, Mammon and Moloch. In most cases the Devil, Satan, and Lucifer refer to the same being. This is not quite so.

Therefore, when dealing with the Devil, it's a good idea to *know* who you're dealing with. Comprehension is the keyword. When you start thinking about all the names we use to identify his Royal Evilness – Satan, Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies, Lucifer, just to name a few – it's easy to confuse them. In fact, you might even get them wrong! After all, if you simply *must* sell your soul for talent, fame, sex, or some other fun (though fleeting) amusement, you wouldn't want to make the mistake of selling it to one of his low-level minions (which actually are the ones we have equipped with the most scary features). So pick up your fiddle, put on your fire-resistant undies, and let's figure out who exactly is who downstairs. Because in naming them, we might come to know their nature – for better or worse!

Keep in mind that we're dealing with a pretty powerful idea. Sometimes we forget what power names have. We're told that summoning a demon requires knowing its name (not that that ever goes well!). But even just in our day-to-day lives think about how powerful a name can be. If you have access someone's name, you have access to *them*. So, as we consider these names, we have to realize that names are somewhat fundamental – they determine what something *is*.

In fact, I'd be willing to argue that what name we use for the devil determines whether or not he's a good guy, or a bad guy. In chapter 8, Philosophy of Language, we have already looked at the power of names.

There's also the question of where the different categories of demons live. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) wrote *The Divine Comedy*. The only part of the book that anyone seems to care to remember is the "Inferno." In the *Inferno*, Dante writes that he is given a tour of Hell, which has nine levels. Each level corresponds to worse and worse sins starting with Limbo (which isn't as fun as it sounds) and ending with Treachery, the worst of sins. Between the two you find Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Anger, Heresy, Violence, and Fraud. And in each level of Hell, sinners are found being tormented in the way most appropriate. Those who indulge in lust, for example, are eternally buffeted by a horrible storm representing their inability to control their naughty urges. Today, Dante's *Inferno* most often brings to our mind a pretty awesome video game where Dante has to battle the demons of Hell to save his lost love.

The original Dante's *Inferno* gives some interesting information about its demonic inhabitants. In the Eighth Level the Malebranche (Evil Claws) can be found – you'll love this – keeping the politicians boiling in a lake of super-heated tar. The leader of these demons is named Malacoda (meaning "Evil-Tail," which is a good deal less intimidating a name that one would hope for an archdemon). Malacoda and his evil troop are pretty darned evil and they do their damndest to trick Dante and his guide Virgil, hoping to capture them in Hell for eternity. Thankfully, our heroes manage to escape.

Peter Binsfeld, the German bishop, put together his classification of the big bad guys according to the seven deadly sins. These seven princes of Hell, answering to the Devil himself, tempt humans with the sins.

Notice that many of the names Binsfeld uses are names that we generally treat as interchangeable with "The Devil." But back in the day different names were often used to identify different entities. For example, the Hebrews did not identify the serpent of the Garden of Eden with the Devil, and they did not believe in Hell in the same way many Christians do today. Satan was, to the Hebrews, often described as "the adversary." We assume that means God's adversary. But many Hebrews believed it was the role the angel was given, to be our adversary. Basically, you could think of Satan as the prosecutor in God's trial of your life. That actually explains my own puzzle over the nature of Hell, when I was a seven year-old boy, starting in school for the first time. Why fear Hell if you are good? The Devil's doesn't punish the good, he punishes the evil. If the Devil was in fact evil, Hell would function in the opposite way. But of course, there are other names for the Devil. I will therefore advice you, my reader, to follow this thread.

Surely naming can't have an impact on our view of incarnate evil. Well, I beg to differ! If we can find a way to make a mass-murdering, genocidal, slave-trading maniac (Christopher Columbus) a national hero, we can find a way to make our red-bottomed foe not such a bad guy. We've already hinted at one way doing this. The Devil, to the Hebrews, was known as "the adversary." He didn't choose to take up the mantle of prosecutor (or persecutor); he was appointed that task as an angel. The Hebrew translation of Satan's name makes him sound far more like our opponent than the incarnate evil opponent of God. In fact, it makes him sound like the guy who's doing God's bidding by prosecuting those who deserve it.

But the naming problem gets even worse. "Lucifer," today, is synonymous with the Devil, though it has not always been. The translation of Lucifer means "bringer of light." It was a reference to the morning star that comes right before the dawn. The "Lu" in "Lucifer" shares with it words like *luminous*, *luminescent*, and *lumens*, all words meaning "light." If we look at the book of Genesis, the fall of Lucifer is the verbal equivalent of "light-bringing." And what happens as a result of Lucifer's fall? Well, we're all damned, but also, we're granted knowledge: tremendous knowledge of Good and Evil. In other words, the darkness of our minds is *illuminated*! I would guess, seen in that light, that the truest name of the Devil is:

*Lucifer Morningstar.*

So, the ego's complex is there, it requires a name, it wants voice, time, awareness. If not, it destroys the consciousness and drowns the world in pollution and violence.

Remember: Who killed the Kennedys? When after all it was you and me. The Devil is never doing the evil, he tempts us, etc., but it is us who do the evil (in the same way as his discarnate low-level minions, which just are some lowly imps compared to the arch demon himself). And in every case where Lucifer is accused of temptation, he's really just imploring humans to act freely rather than submitting always to the will of some kind of authority.

So, maybe it's yourself you need to look into, when seeking the name of the Devil?

I guess this is Karen Blixen's message with her Luciferian work. She often said to Aage Henriksen that she had found peace in the Devil. But there must be a ruling name for evil then? Let's investigate it.

The way Christian theology has always painted things, you have to start out talking about the other guy, the anti-God if you will, and this is probably because God

created him in the first place, as well as because the bad guy always needs to be contrasted with the good guy.

Satan was viewed as a really bad guy throughout most of medieval Christian history. The traditional Devil, the guy from feudal times was a rebel against his liege lord. He's broken his covenant and was going to pay for it.

Then, somewhere in the 1700s, Satan started to look kind of coolly rebellious and "Romantic." By the times of the French and American Revolutions, the idea that Satan has rebelled against his Lord actually turned from a minus to a plus. This idea of Satan culminated in the Romantic era, an intellectual, literary, and artistic movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century and advocated emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience – a reaction to the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions.

During this Romantic period, Satan is envisioned as rebelling against the supreme tyrant, the great king God who wouldn't change for anything even if you were being starved to death by some earthly tyrant that He'd placed there to be your king. After all, God had created the Great Chain of Being and placed the King and the nobles up near the top, and a little tin snipper like you down on the bottom. You were above all most of the animals and plants, to be sure, but still pretty far down there, so you shouldn't be mouthing off to your betters. If you're good and do what you're told by your betters, you'll be able to sing God's praises for eternity in the heavenly choir.

Against this tyranny, the Devil is a romantic rebel, fighting the power, a loner against the unjust order of the world. He's a rebel and he rebels against anything that blocks the way of progress to liberty, beauty, and love, like the King and God. The status of a lot of people, including literary and religious characters, changed in the revolutions. The medieval poet Dante had placed that assassin Brutus down in the sixth circle of Hell where Satan munched on him for eternity. The revolutionaries turned him from an assassin and traitor into a revolutionary hero. He's killed the tyrant Caesar! Call this version of the Devil, Satan the Rebel.

William Blake (1757-1827), who was really good at turning a phrase and is widely considered one of the fathers of Romanticism, said that we really need religion somehow or other and if we don't have the religion of Jesus, we'll have the religion of Satan. Blake, like the other Romantics, liked Milton but the problem with *Paradise Lost* (1667) was that the Devil comes out far better than God. Blake wrote:



*The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it.*

Milton himself was a rebel, a soldier in the army of Satan, in rebellion against tyrants in Heaven and Earth. On Earth he helped the folks who separated Charles I's head from his body. Blake has both takes on Satan – the rebel-hero and the asshole who just wants to replace God – but then for Blake God or “Nobodaddy” is really just an asshole Himself.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) read Milton's *Paradise Lost* and re-created Satan as the romantic hero. Satan, the romantic rebel has inspired countless Heavy Metal bands and kids who like to dress in black outfits and talk about how meaningless it all is as they rebel against “the Man.” This is repeated in countless vampire movies with their incredible sexy vampires. (Of course the new sparkly vampires are much nicer but also less awesome). Dracula's given a tragic past where he's lost the woman who would have made him a very nice guy had God not stolen her away in death. The 1979 *Dracula*, for example, had the tagline: “Throughout history he has filled the hearts of men with terror, and the hearts of women with desire.” How can you not be drawn to such dark, tortured, coolness? Satan rebels against the tyrant God just as humanity rebels against the tyrant kings, and he's sooooo misunderstood.

So here's the question: Why should we have sympathy for the Devil? I mean, we're clearly fascinated by the guy, we write a book like this, endlessly pondering his motivations and the morals we ought to take from his story. And with that endless pondering comes a shift in our view of the Devil from a boring old baddie to something far more complex and interesting.

Modern representations of the Devil – whom I refer to with his proper name of Lucifer Morningstar – believe it's in Lucifer's prime motivation that our sympathy is centrally located: Lucifer's desire is simply to have free will in a world determined to prevent free will. That desire is so quintessentially human, it engenders sympathy even for the guy who tried to storm Heaven and dethrone God.

Meanwhile I mean, that the concept of free will and free choice can be unfortunate concepts. In my understanding, and in Blixen's, the will is the will to power, and belongs to the Ego, which makes its choices on background of the past, and which therefore is determined by both its personal and collective history. Therefore the Ego always strives towards being something else than what it is, it imitates others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and its actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. A more fortunate concept would in my understanding be the freedom that lies

in the existential concept of being yourself; that is: where you live in accordance with your own artistic nature and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action; that is: the ability to use your will on that part of the energy, you can steer yourself, and steer it towards your artistic nature; the Luciferian movement where you finally have to give up your will and in self-forgetful oneness with nature become one with its creative power) - instead of towards career, worldliness, self-unfolding, as for example New Thought does.

Anyway, roughly speaking, free will is the capacity to govern oneself and not be restricted by any mediocre (human made) moral authority, and autonomy is when one uses that capacity. If someone is being coerced, perhaps with violence or threats, or if someone is enslaved outright, then they clearly lack autonomy. Conversely, when someone chooses to value something without any external pressures from a mediocre moral authority, and then is allowed to pursue that thing without hindrance, then that would be a clear-cut case of autonomy. Anyone who values the idea of pursuing life, liberty, and happiness without interference from any mediocre moral authority clearly understands the desire for autonomy.

The idea that Lucifer personifies the desire for free will might seem odd. We know the Devil for his rebellion against Heaven, his hubris, and his willingness to do anything to get what he wants, but we're often hazy on the motivations. Why does Lucifer try to overthrow God? Is he just a jealous prick, or are there legitimate reasons for his actions? This is where modern representations of Lucifer in various storytelling mediums have done us a great service, by clarifying something that ancient authors either couldn't quite see or were afraid to write: why Lucifer did what he did. These modern authors have found the consistent line that exists in all the myths about Lucifer, and that line is the passionate desire to break free from God's overbearing plan (as depicted by a mediocre human made authority) and to act from a place of real autonomy – to be a real person, not a puppet in someone else's show. This is the paradox in Blixen's concept of humans as marionettes, which she turns upside down, so that humans are seen as the puppets in nature's hand.

Consider in the Bible that Satan is mostly only used as a plot device rather than as a character, and so his motivations aren't really discussed. However, if we look at Lucifer's actions in the Bible through the lens of valuing free will above all else his actions appear not only reasonable, but possible even *commandable*.

As the serpent in the garden, Lucifer contravenes God's authoritarian command and encourages Eve to exert her free will and make her own choices, whether God likes them or not. He facilitates the first act of human free will. Note that I also think that the serpent in the garden, and God's warning about it, could symbolize a warning

against a wrong use of energy – (the opening of the third eye causing a top-down Kundalini awakening) – which is a central issue in this book. But in the context of free will Lucifer is to free will as Prometheus is to fire, bringing autonomy down to human beings from on high, against the orders of upper management.

Furthermore, he isn't exactly urging Adam and Eve to do some unspeakable evil with their free will. All he does is urge them to eat of the tree of knowledge, which to me seem like a good thing, not something that should get you banned from paradise. It ends up feeling as if God's an overbearing authority figure and Lucifer is the more mature alternative, encouraging humans to think for themselves and not just blindly follow God's commands. If not for Lucifer's influence, humans would still be ignorant automatons, living in Paradise but with no self-awareness. Viewed in this light, I find it difficult to see anything Lucifer does in the Garden as evil. But we need to remember that we here speak about God and Paradise as these are depicted by humans (the mediocre moral authority), not about god himself. Blixen saw God himself as one and the same as nature, and Lucifer as the movement towards becoming one with this creative power.

In the book of *Job*, Lucifer takes a bet with God over whether Job will maintain faith in God's super-secret divine plan even in the face of extreme suffering. I have no idea what God is doing making bets with Lucifer, but it's easy to see why Lucifer would bet the way he does. He really wants to see Job, and all of humanity by extension, reject a God who makes people suffer both for his secret plan and, in this particular case, just to prove a point. It's no wonder that the story of Job doesn't get as much play these days, as the Adversary seems like the only reasonable and humane person in the whole debacle.

This is what Karen Blixen meant with her Luciferian self-forgetful and surrendering mystical movement.

As I write in the end of The Devil's Preface to my book *Lucifer Morningstar* – a Philosophical Love Story:

*All for now. Well played, my dear reader! Pleased to meet you. Thank you for your sympathy, taste, and well-learned politesse. You are free to go! But you are also free to stay. Make your choice!*

- "LCF"

If I finally should present a precise overall image of evil (besides the Ring) it would be the concept of the Antichrist. Again: the name says it all: anti-love and anti-existence.

At the nadir of the moral worlds stands pride, usually counted as the deadliest sin, the sin of Satan. Pride always includes the self-deception of self-righteousness. The lowest of all moral states believes it is the highest. The more this wrong dominates you, the more passionately do you insist that you are in the right. The weaker you *are*, under your drug, the more powerful you *feel*. The manifestation of this self-delusion and self-righteousness is self-destruction, literally: Denethor kills himself because he insists that he is right and reality is wrong: “I would have things as they were all the days of my life....But if doom denies this to me, then I will have *naught*” (LOTR, p. 836). This is the philosophy of pride: my way or the highway, my will or nothing. It is the philosophy of the totally spoiled child. It is the philosophy of those on their way to Hell. It is the unforgivable sin: impenitence. It cannot be forgiven because it *will* not be forgiven. And it will not be forgiven because it will not repent. It insists that it cannot be wrong, that reality must be wrong, whenever it and reality, desire and satisfaction, do not coincide.

The thing we want the most is life, and therefore the thing we fear the most is death, so the temptation to have power over even death is the greatest temptation. And that, according to Tolkien himself, is the central theme of *The Lord of the Rings*: “death and the deathless”. The false immortality that the heroes must renounce comes from the false magic of the Ring, which is the unlimited power and thus even the power over death. Power over death is the power to extend your present self and will indefinitely, not only into space (conquering all Middle-earth and the wills of all its inhabitants) but also into time (conquering even death). You’ll find all this in Nietzsche and the New Thought movement, the modern and postmodern expression of Antichrist. The Ring turns God’s good gift of life into the object of an evil addiction.

The Ring, of course, gives only a false immortality – that of the Undead, the Nazgul – just as it gives a false power and a false magic, for ultimately the Ring is the false Christ, the Antichrist. He is the world’s ultimate drug dealer.

#### **4) Tonglen – Rediscovering Love**

Self-abnegation, humility and love will defeat evil. Evil has no power over these sovereign life-expressions, because it denies them, avoids them, fears them. Evil’s nature is an escape from them over in their oppositions.

As I have mentioned: the most important aspect of ethics is the practice; that is: ethics is something you ought to practice. In Tibetan Buddhism there is an exercise for the heart, which directly trains the stream of love. It is called Tonglen.

Tonglen trains the heartfulness. Awareness seems to be a quality of the Now, but since the complete existential presence in the Now is equivalent with self-forgetful openness and absorption in life itself, then love *also* is a quality of the Now. It is the heart's cooperation and spontaneous openness, which give practice the right direction. The emphatic feelings: gratitude, compassion, faith, and devotion - are the steering, which – combined with Hara's grounding - secure, that the awareness-training do not end up in the head and becomes an intellectual or mental thing. And the heartfeelings are the instance, that leads the released energy away from the relaxationprocess, away from sleep and away from the Ego, towards compassionated openness in the Now.

Again it ought to be emphasized, that the heart in this connection has nothing to do with a chakra (psychical centre). Here I think of *Anahata*. This shall again be emphasized, because there also in a part of the temporal New age ideology rules the idea, that the heart is a bodily focus-spot in line with those Chakras, which you find in the Tantric yogis' description of, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots.

This would mean, that the heart should be a centre on the ladder towards something even higher? No, the heart has existential-ethical meaning, and functions, in cooperation with the relaxfullness and the awareness, as a tool, which opens your consciousness in towards the Source, and therefore also out towards life itself.

Where the Hara meditation is about creating an entrance into the Now by concentrating and focusing the consciousness in Hara, then the Heart meditation briefly is about training the self-forgetful openness in the Now itself. This self-forgetful openness is the same as a consciousness, which is completely de-focused – a pure awareness, which seems to be a quality of the Now, and therefore of life itself. In the spiritual traditions, the essential consciousness is focused in the heart. And this is precisely love. Awareness and love flows in this way into each other in an essential *being*.

The actual spontaneous appearance and stream of heartfeelings is therefore the crucial indication, that your training-intention has become *existential* reality. Heartfeelings are in other words not an entrance into the Now, as Hara is. The heartfeelings are coming from the Now, or rather, from the actual Source (the Soul, the Enlightened Consciousness, God, Christ, Buddha), because the consciousness is

open. When the consciousness is open it is de-focused, and this is again connected with, that it both is directed into yourself, and out towards the world. It has become bi-directional, *spacious*, all-inclusive. And this spaciousness is the same as silence. And it is in this wordless silence that the great wonder arises; the wonder in which you ask the philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way.

In connection with the Heartmeditation you can in this way talk about wordless prayer. The wordless prayer is a philosophical questioning after the source of the heartfeelings. In the heartfeeling you open yourself in wonder and silence, not only out towards the heartfeeling and it's object, but also in towards the source of the heartfeeling. You are therefore not only wordless open in the direction the heartfeeling flows (towards the object, the suffering person, the love-partner, God), but also wordless open towards the Source from where the heartfeeling is coming. It could also be called bi-directional consciousness. It is something that the training of neutral observation (Hara Awareness) by itself develops into. It can all briefly be described as silence. You can't understand it by analysing or thinking. Don't do that! You have to experience it.

It is a bit misleading to call heartfeelings feelings, because they rather have something to do with space, being and clarity. It is necessary to emphasize this because you must never confuse heartfeelings with sentimentality, daydream, excitability etc. These things namely often rise direct from thought-distortions (the head). In my philosophical practice I have met incredibly many people, whose spirituality has become distorted by such things. People, who contrary to their ideas about themselves, can be a direct nuisance to their surroundings. It has nothing to do with the "getting-in-touch-with-feelings" ideology of psychotherapy.

One of the most common traits in our idea- and mentality-history, is a constant change between a priority of the rational, the harmonical well-arranged, the controlled, and, on the other hand, the emphasize on the value and right of the feelings: Rationalism and the Age of Enlightenment are followed by the sensitive time and by Sturm und Drang (1700-1800). Realism, positivism and faith in the rational improvement are followed by symbolism and irrationalism (1870-1900).

As the Danish philosopher Mogens Pahuus asks: "Should the right not be the Golden Mean – the successful synthesis of the rational and the emotional?" Pahuus mentions, that we earlier in our culture-history has met this idea. Already in ancient Greece was formulated the thought about a combination of the Apollonian and the Dionysian – a thought which came into expression in the organization of the Apollon temple in Delphi, which – under impression of the Dionysian fertility cult, that victorious forced itself forward from Asia Minor – was changed into a temple, which one half

of the year was devoted to Apollo, the god of sun, light, order, control, and the other half of the year to Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility.

A such synthesis of reason and feeling is precisely to be found in *Meditation as an Art of Life*, where you, by combining the philosophical question's self-inquiring practice with supporting exercises, gradually achieve to see complete with the mind and the heart; which means: where awareness and passion constitute a oneness.

Such a synthesis you can also find in Herman Hesse's novel *Guldmund and Narcissus*, where Hesse pictures two friends which are pure examples of respectively a man of reason, and a man of feelings: Narcissus and Guldmund, the theorist and the dreamer, the thinker and the artist. Two human beings, whose life's without each other are characterized by absence and unreality; the one of them conscious evaluating, the other of them unconscious dreaming. The one of them conscious by experiencing himself as a theorist in relation to his own life. The other of them unconscious by being beside himself in experiences and intoxication. Only in synthesis they can become real and present, by learning something of each other.

So heartfeelings are not feelings in ordinary sense. They are rather, as Løgstrup says, sovereign and spontaneous life-expressions. The sovereign life-expressions are, among other things: love, mercifulness, faith and the openness of the speech. Being together breaks without faith, speech is being distorted without openness and becomes superficial or insincere.

The sovereign life-expressions are, according to Danish philosopher and theologian Løgstrup, spontaneous in the sense, that they are unforced and without ulterior motives. There can't be given reasons for them and they can't be made into means for something else. They are sovereign in the sense, that the actions of the life-expression are not determinated reactions, but precisely actions where you intervene actively in, and change the situation. They are also sovereign in the sense, that in them you are spontaneous in accordance with yourself. In love you fill yourself in full.

Moreover Løgstrup characterizes the sovereign life-expressions as definitive, which means: they have an explicit character. Furthermore should be added, that they are good in the sense, that they always are aimed at taking care of the Other's life. Moreover he says, that they are anonymous. They are nobodys, which means: no one can make them into theirs, and use them towards others in power struggles. No one has privileges in relation to them. We are all equal for the expression of life.

The sovereign life-expressions are, according to Løgstrup, given with the human life. If we want to understand ourselves, then we must start with them. The expressions of

life are given with *life itself*. You may say, that they belong to our nature, if you thereby mean the metaphysical nature.

The sovereign life-expressions are a direct goodness in our life. In them we both are spontaneous and ethical. The ethics are standing firm by force of these given life-possibilities, not by force of our choices, as for example Sartre believed.

In the sovereign life-expressions you clearly meet something, which arises as richness, gift or mercy in your life, something you have not created yourself, but which at the same time are the actual and carrying in all kinds of being together. Løgstrup says, that the sovereign life-expressions are coming from the Universe, and that Man therefore not is the Universe irrelevant, not is self-dependant, but is connected with the Universe. Løgstrup claims in this way, that we must interpret the Universe and the sovereign life-expressions as created.

So the training of the heartfeelings is actual not about training the heartfeelings in themselves (because you don't have them in your control), but about training the openness for them, and this is what the Heartmeditation is about. In this openness they then come by themselves as a gift of grace.

You have to be completely relaxed. In the start most people will have trouble with the exercise, since the heart most often is closed by tensions, blockages, sorrow, traumas etc. The main practice of the Heartmeditation is the so-called Tonglen-practice, which origin from the Tibetan Buddhism. The same elements can however be retrieved in different forms in all great wisdomtraditions. We have already described how divine providence functions in connection with the painbody, and how all enlightened master of this Earth are doing the same: taking on and purifying original sin and forgiving it. It is precisely the same you practice in Tonglen.

Tonglen, which in Tibetan means "give and receive", is one of the most useful and strong heartmeditations that exists. This give and receive also corresponds with the whole of creation as explained in the beginning of the Metaphysics chapter; that is: creation as God's self-sacrifice, and, as we shall see in the last part of this chapter: it also corresponds to gift economy and the final sacrifice of the Ring.

When you feel closed inside yourself, Tonglen opens you for others' sufferings. When the heart is blocked, Tonglen spoils the powers, which causes this. And when you feel alienated towards the person, who suffers in front of your eyes, or are bitter or agonized, Tonglen helps you to find, and lay bare, your true nature's loving, expansive emanation. No other exercise is equally effective in destroying the Ego's



self-assertion, which is the root to all our suffering and hard-heartedness. Therefore there also are a lot of stories about Tonglen's miraculous ability to heal.

Before you can practise Tonglen, you must be able to evoke compassion in yourself. This is more difficult than we often think, because the source of love and compassion mostly is hidden for us, and we might perhaps not at first have access to it.

Heartfeelings is in my context a spectrum, which includes gratitude, compassion, faith, love, care, gentleness, openness, devotion and affection. You have to be able to feel them as a concrete influence in the heartregion; in the beginning often as a pang in the heart, or as a contract in the breast. If there come tears, just let them come.

Below are shown some simple techniques, that can help you:

- When you have negative feelings for other people (or life itself), then try to think about people, who really have shown *you* love, your mother and father, your grandmother or grandfather. Then let the heartfeeling arise in your heart, so that you are being filled with gratitude. Open your heart and let the love flow out and expand towards people whom you have negative feelings for, or towards life itself.
- When you have negative feelings for other people, then try to think about, that they are as yourself, have the same feelings as yourself, the same wish about happiness, the same fear of suffering. Then let your heart open itself towards them.
- When you experience, that you are indifferent towards others' suffering, or direct experience malicious pleasure when someone is suffering, then unhesitatingly put yourself in the place of the person concerned, try to imagine, how *you* would feel. Then let your care unfold and set free the heart's compassion.
- When you see someone suffer, and you are indifferent, then try to imagine, that it is someone you really love, a brother, a daughter, a mother, a best friend. Let the compassion, which your heart now has set free, flow out towards the person.

Also use the everyday life to evoke the heartfeelings: a person in the street, something you see on TV etc.

When you are in contact with the heartfeelings, you can begin the actual Tonglen practice, where you train yourself in using your personal suffering to increase the compassion – which means: where you mentally receive and give.

The exercise is usually about, that you receive *others'* suffering in your heart. Here you let it dissolve in the light of compassion, whereon you give the compassion on to these others.

Call up for your inner eye, as living and intensively as possible, someone you are worried for, and who is suffering. Think of the person, and imagine the suffering of the person concerned. See the situations in which the suffering person is. Then imagine the suffering of the person concerned, as a black flowing tar, which you receive and let absorb in your heart. In the heart you imagine the black mass as a fuel for the healing light of compassion. Then you let the compassion flame up, and spread out from your heart. Now you give the compassion to the person, or those, who are suffering, by letting it radiate out to them, embrace them, fill them and clean them.

It is a good idea to use the breathing as medium for the exercise. You receive the suffering in an inhalation, and in the pause between in- and exhalation you let the compassion swell up. In an exhalation you now give the compassion to those who are suffering.

In the start the exercise probably will feel artificial, sluggish, unpleasant; you'll also maybe experience soreness in the muscles around the heart. This is because, that you in Tonglen directly are confronting and transforming the Ego, and the painbody's negative feelings. Therefore keep on doing the exercise, it is a natural purification process. Don't be afraid, that the exercise hurts you. The only thing you can be sure of, is, that there only is *one* thing Tonglen can damage, namely the thing which also has hurt *you* the most: your own ego, your own self-assertive and self-centred mind, which is the root to all suffering. We have talked about the meeting with the resistance: the Dark Ancient Inertia. You will also meet it while doing Tonglen.

Once Tonglen has become natural to you, it will fill you with amazement. Then you only need to receive the suffering in your heart with a simple breathing, and the heartfeeling will spontaneous fill you with release and joy.

In the beginning it is perhaps a good idea to use the exercise on yourself. To create a compassionated mind in relation to yourself has not anything to do with self-pity, as long as the exercise evokes heartfeelings. However your own suffering will much

easier could be transformed, if you use the exercise on others. Then your own suffering becomes a kind of substitute for others' suffering.

The complete unique about the exercise's healing effect on yourself is namely, that it gains strength, the more self-forgetful open you are towards, and engaged in, other people than yourself. The openness namely opens the whole of your being, and therewith also all tensions, knots, and wounds. Moreover it also works healing on these *other* people. You will not only experience inner fulfilment, you'll also experience, that you receive help from outside, that things in strange ways begin to succeed for you, that your problems are solved one after one: divine providence, progressive karma. However, not in a way that your ego perhaps wants it.

The Wholeness works balancing, and the more self-forgetful open for, and engaged in the Wholeness, you are, the more the balance of the Wholeness works cooperative through you. And it is exactly this, which Tonglen promotes. But the more self-circling closed against the Wholeness you are, the more the balance of the Wholeness works divided, and therefore compensatory (suffering-creating), through you.

But try to imagine your own problem (or problem-situation) as an object of suffering (you can also imagine the suffering of life as such). Now receive this suffering in your heart as a black flowing mass. Let the compassion burst into flame, and then give the light of compassion back to the problem, or the problem-situation, regardless if it only is something you purely mentally imagine, for example in the past or the future. It could also be a physical problem.

This holy secret from Tonglen is known by all the masters and saints of the wisdomtraditions. And by living it and incarnating it with the renunciation and glow of true wisdom and compassion, it fills your life with joy.

Briefly: begin the meditation with yourself and your own problems. Then expand it to your nearest. Finalize with people, or situations, which at first seems irrelevant to you, yes, which you perhaps direct feel dislike towards.

Practise it at any time.

## **5) Friendship, Gift Economy and Self-sacrifice**

*The Lord of the Rings* is a genius example of ontological pluralism. Gandalf is both Odin, a guardian angel, and a Christ figure. We have seen that Tolkien either *is* an Elf, or at least, he must have Elvish blood in his veins. But Tolkien not only loves his Elves, he also loves his Hobbits, "he is one", as Kreeft says. That's what ontological

pluralism allows. Tolkien said: “I am in fact a *Hobbit* (in all but size)” (*Letters*, no. 213, p. 288).

Among the Hobbits it is not even Frodo but Sam, the humble servant, who is the most heroic. Tolkien, several times in his letters, insists that Sam is “the chief hero” of *The Lord of the Rings*. But Sam at the beginning seems only a comic figure, and throughout the narrative his importance seems merely relative to Frodo, as Frodo’s servant and gardener – by definition a secondary character. Very much in the style of the God he believes in, Tolkien raises up the lowly to put down the lordly. Kreeft says that *The Lord of the Rings* is the perfect illustration of Mary’s “Magnificat” (see Lk 1:46-55):

### *Mary’s Song*

46 And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

50 His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful

55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors.”

Sam’s exaltation into hero is believable because Sam is Sam, and not just servant. He is more than his role. There are fixed roles, and hierarchy, in his pre-modern society; yet there are also real individuals. (Perhaps we should say, “*Therefore* there are real individuals.”) Sam has enough independence to conspire to go with Frodo out of the Shire and to stay with him when the Fellowship breaks up at Amon Hen, though both times Frodo tried to “escape”. He is also more open-minded, Elf-loving, and

adventurous than most Hobbits. He even dreams of seeing an Oliphaunt! Though clearly “bourgeois”, Sam is not petty.

But Sam is “hobbit”. The “lowly” that Tolkien is exalting here is not merely the physically small or the poor but the provincial, the bourgeois, the unheroic, the small-minded (see Ps 131). Sam is like your uncle.

Kreeft says that God did the same sort of thing as Tolkien did over and over again in history. He used the most unpromising material. The act of creation is the supreme example, because the material there was nothing at all. Then the people He chose were more like Hobbits than like Wizards or Elves. Abraham and Sarah were old beyond childbearing, and God made their descendants as numerous as the stars. Jacob was a schemer, and God made him Israel. Joseph was the spoiled child, and God used him to save Egypt and the Jews from starvation. Moses was a stutterer, and God made him His biggest “mouth” (the literal meaning of “prophet”), who gave the world its Commandments. David was a child with sheep and a slingshot, and God made him Israel’s greatest king. The twelve apostles were Hobbit-like peasants, and God made them saints. And the greatest example of all, His supreme revelation of Himself, was a tiny embryo, then a baby born amid cow dung who grew up to become an unemployed wanderer in a hick town and a crucified criminal. “The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps 118:22-23).

Furthermore: If there is one single thing that was most responsible for the success of the Fellowship, it was the fellowship, their friendship, especially between Frodo and Sam. That literally carried the Ring to Mount Doom:

*I said I’d carry him, if it broke my back,” he muttered, “and I will!”*

*“Come, Mr. Frodo dear! Sam will give you a ride...”*

*Sam staggered to his feet; and then to his amazement he felt into the burden light. He had feared that he would have barely strength to lift his master alone, and beyond that he had expected to share in the dreadful dragging weight of the accursed Ring. But it was not so (LOTR, p. 919).*

Of course not: “He ain’t heavy; he’s my brother.”

In this Sam fulfilled to the letter his promise at the beginning:

*“It is going to be very dangerous, Sam. It is already dangerous. Most likely neither of us will come back.”*

*“If you don’t come back sir, then I shan’t, that’s certain,” said Sam. ‘Don’t leave him!’ they said to me. ‘Leave him!’ I said. ‘I never mean to. I am going with him, if he climbs to the Moon, and if any of those Black Riders try to stop him, they’ll have Sam Gamgee to reckon with, I said.’”*

And Merry and Pippin too: “You can trust us to stick to you through thick and thin – to the bitter end...But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone, and go off without a word. We are your friends, Frodo” (LOTR, p. 103).

And because friendship is so close to the whole meaning of life, that is why it is self-sufficient, why its fruit is joy, even if everything else is lost. After Gollum fell into the Crack of Doom liberating Frodo from the Ring, Sam was totally happy, even though all other hopes seemed totally gone:

*“Well, this is the end, Sam Gamgee,” said a voice by his side. And there was Frodo, pale and worn, and yet himself again; and in his eyes there was peace now...*

*“Master!” cried Sam, and fell upon his knees. In all that ruin of the world for the moment he felt only joy, great joy. The burden was gone. His master had been saved; he was himself again, he was free...*

*“I’m glad you are here with me. Here at the end of all things, Sam” (LOTR, p. 926).*

According to Kreeft, Frodo is a Marian figure. His *fiat* (“I will take the Ring though I do not know the way” [LOTR, p. 264]) is strikingly similar to Mary’s (“Let it be to me according to your word” [Lk 1:38]). They are opposite sides of the same coin: Mary consented to carry the Savior of the whole world, the Christ, to birth, to life; and Frodo consented to carry the destroyer of the whole world, the Ring, the Antichrist, to its death. Mary gave life to life (Christ); Frodo gave death to Death (the Ring).

We all, like Frodo, carry a Quest, a Task: our daily duties. They come *to* us, not from us. We are free only to accept or refuse our task – and, implicitly, our Taskmaster. None of us is a free creator or designer of his own life. “None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself” (Rom 14:7). Either God or fate or meaningless chance has laid upon each of us a Task, a Quest, which we would not have chosen for ourselves. We are all Hobbits who love our Shire, our security, our creature comforts, whether these are pipeweed, mushrooms, five meals a day, and local gossip, or Starbucks coffees, recreational sex, and politics. But something, some authority not named in *The Lord of the Rings* (but named in *The Silmarillion*), has decreed that a Quest should interrupt this delightful Epicurean garden and send us on an odyssey. We are plucked out of our Hobbit holes and plunked down onto a Road. That gives us

our fundamental choice between obedience and disobedience. And if life is war, obedience is essential. It is the first virtue for a soldier.

Let's look at the view of life as a pilgrimage, by looking at our dreams. Dreams namely expose the fundamental metaphysics we have discussed: that Life is a pilgrimage, both through the Outer Side and through the Inner Side. There are spirits all around us, all of the time. The spiritual practitioner realizes this on some level and can see, feel, or sense spirits in most places. A fairly skilled spiritual practitioner will also naturally draw spirits to him due to his practice, which has awoken him from sleep to dream. Simply put, he notices them, and so they notice him.

To understand this we must again use the image of the Inner Side. Let's imagine a nightlight. We have our normal everyday reality (the Outer Side), which most of us can perceive. We will think of this as daylight. But in reality we have many worlds, many layers compressed on top of one another that would be considered the spiritual realms: the Inner Side. We can liken the Inner Side to nighttime. As a spiritual practitioner, you are a nightlight in this spiritual dark, a physical being who operate not only in the everyday reality, but to some level on the Inner Side.

How bright, or awake, of a nightlight we are depends on the depths of our spiritual practice. If we are mildly skilled, we may be a very small nightlight. If we are moderately or highly skilled, we are a bigger and brighter nightlight, meaning that we both perceive more in terms of spiritual abilities and spirits and the spiritual realms notice us more – in general, the brighter nightlight we are, the more open and able we are to perceive and the more others perceive us.

Along with moderate skilled spiritual practitioners come deep spiritual understandings. This can be like the mildly skilled, in which there is a heightened noticing or looking for messages or synchronicities (progressive karma, divine providence, spirit help) that have special meaning. The moderate skilled may also notice some of the patterns and symbols that shape our world. This can also be understandings about the nature of the universe, the human condition, healing, plants, animals, artwork, or many other topics. Whereas mildly skilled individuals seek out material and recite books, teachers, and the messages of others, the realization (awakeness) of the moderate skilled stem from self – from meditations and direct experience of being someone in the world with spiritual abilities.

One of the major indicators of being a moderately skilled spiritual practitioner is the number of dreams people in this category experience, and their intensity. Although intense dreams can certainly be an indicator of too much intake of food, drink, drugs,

or physical/psychological issues in anyone, in the moderately skilled practitioner, the dream quality and sensations associated with the dreams are quite different.

The practitioner may find themselves having dreams about lands, times, or events that have no connection to their inner psyche. They be like a filmstrip or flashes of images, sounds, and memories that do not stem from their experiences. It is also likely, to link to the above-mentioned quest theme in *The Lord of the Rings*, that there will be quest dreams, meaning that there is a specific goal in mind for the dream. The inhabitants of quest dreams may or may not be you or concern you at all.

Dreams are also likely to involve spiritual teachers, healing sessions either given or received, or interactions with energy, spirits, beings, or creatures of all types. This is , of course, generally predicated on how spiritual the individual is: the more intense the dreams, the more open or advanced the practitioner typically is. Once the practitioner is skilled, they will be able to work with their dreams, protect themselves if necessary while they are dreaming, or simply call for a night off from having intense dreams.

Dreams are a primary indicator of moderately skilled spiritual practitioners because they represent the night aspect, the Inner Side, of our waking world. We are more open to freely interacting in dreams, and it is more rare that we would block ourselves, or know how to block ourselves, from receiving input, symbols, or other meanings during dreamtime. We are free from our physical bodies and are our true essence; this means that we do not have to concern ourselves with the physical restraints of our physical bodies, and what we think to be true about them. We also do not have the rigid ideas of what is commonly referred to and can be seen as the “real” or agreed-upon world and can be ourselves without wearing a mask.

Dreams are also a meeting ground. It is a space where worlds meet, and it is easier for spirits and other energies to get through. As spiritual practitioners, we not only gain access to our subconscious in dreams but also to other energies, dimensions, and worlds. It is here you most obviously can experience help from spirit guides. It is typical for the moderately skilled practitioner to have a great deal of difficulty with their dreams in an unskilled state, either feeling as if they want to constantly sleep and never feeling rested due to “traveling” or being unable to sleep due to disruptive dreams or energies in or around them.

Dreams are the gates between the Outer Side and the Inner Side, and both traditional Shamanism and Tibetan Dream Yoga, are practices that aim at training the individual in navigating in dreams. The fascinating perspective is that we all seem to be in the same kind of enchanting quest as in *The Lord of the Rings* (about dreams, see my article [What is Dream Yoga?](#))



Tolkien's Middle-earth, you could say, is in the same way as quest dream filled with many dangers, and after the newly-formed Fellowship leaves the comforts of Rivendell, the participants are beset by snowstorms high atop Caradhras, and orcs within the Mines of Moria. Before they escape the Mines, the members of the Fellowship suffer their greatest loss, as their guardian wizard and mentor Gandalf falls into darkness at the bridge of Khazad-dûm. But just when all seems lost for the weary band of travellers, they reach Lórien, a magical forest where elves live and sing in the treetops. Like Rivendell, Lórien is a place for spirits to rise. It is the safe haven of the Now. The highly skilled spiritual practitioner knows that such places also exist in the world of dreams, which also is the worlds we meet after death.

Tolkien believes that meaningful happiness does not come from ignoring the dangers but from facing the pain and still affirming life. As we read Tolkien's famous essay on the author of "Beowulf," we get the distinct impression that Tolkien might be speaking of himself. He discusses the artistic impulse, "looking back into the pit, by a man learned in old tales who was struggling as it were, to get a general view of them all, perceiving their common tragedy of inevitable ruin, and yet feeling this more *poetically* because he himself removed from the direct pressure of its despair."

Living through two world wars, Tolkien himself had seen his share of despair and ruin. *The Lord of the Rings* was written during the years 1936-1949, among the darkest years in England's history.

Galadriel has a darker side to her as well. Galadriel had tried to make Lórien "a refuge and an island of peace and beauty, a memorial of ancient days," but she was now "filled with regret and misgiving, knowing that the golden dream was hastening to a grey awakening." What has so filled the strong and seemingly ageless Lady of the Wood so with regret?

Perhaps the cause of Galadriel's growing unhappiness is that she remembers too much. She never really forgets the curse hanging over her from ages long gone. Though Frodo and Sam see only settled bliss, Galadriel feels the burden of being a stranger in a strange land. She can never be fully happy in Lórien, because she can never entirely let go of the past. Tolkien judges this clinging to the past to be an "error," a futile attempt to "embalm time." Holding on to perfection in an imperfect world is an ultimately tragic attempt by the elves to "have their cake without eating it." As long as Galadriel harbors an irrational desire to turn back the clock, her songs are mournful and slow. Her curse reminds about Karen Blixen's fate.

We have looked at The mythologist Joseph Campbell's theory of the monomyth (The Hero's Journey). And as we have seen, Campbell is in the same way exceedingly conservative and founded on a deep nostalgia: for him, the cure for modern problems is found by returning to earlier notions of spirituality and moral virtue. In promoting a "living mythology," Campbell harkens back to a lost "golden age" from which we have fallen, but to which we can return with effort and guidance of a "sage." This might have to do with the inspiration from Jung. It is a reductionism, a psychologism. And herewith there is the danger of ending in idealism, and the same psychologizing, emotionalizing and therapeutizing ideology of our society, which New Age and Self-help stand for.

I have therefore supplied this with my own metaphysical naturalism, and with this a philosophical principle, namely to examine, whether the karmic 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, Jung, 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.

The genuine karmic structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which works 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 lives, 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 practice yourself.

The existence of Elves, or something like Elves, is widespread in pre-modern cultures. (And over half of the world's most literate nation, Iceland, still believes in them; that's why their wilderness roads take sudden turns, to avoid disturbing them.) When the word is used today, most people snicker. But most pre-modern accounts are far more angelic, more transcendent, more wonderful, more *formidable*, than the silly Tinkerbells of modern literature.

Tolkien writes that "they represent really Men with greatly enhanced aesthetic and creative faculties, greater beauty and longer life, and nobility – the Elder Children, doomed to fade before the Followers" (*Letters*, no. 144, p. 176). Nobility, but not perfection. In *The Simarillion*, the Elves' history, like ours, is mainly war, tragedy,

and darkness. They envy us our mortality, as we envy them their immortality. (Kreeft believes that envy is one of the stupidest of sins, the only one that never caused a single moment of even false joy.) Though Tolkien is both temperamentally and politically conservative, the Elves are bad conservatives: they want to embalm the present. Seeing the downward slant of the present, they try to preserve the past. They are not *evil* like Sauron, who always wants to sing “I Believe in Yesterday”. We too are foolishly Elvish when want to hold onto our youth, or the initial experience of falling in love, or when we seek the enoughness of eternity that we innately long for in places where it can never be, somewhere in time.

The progressive karma, our special providence, is our inner light. And that is also the bright side of Galadriel, her rational and wise side. Tolkien teaches us to trust that inner light and be strong enough to leave old problems behind. That’s the anarchist side of Tolkien. When Frodo freely offers Galadriel the One Ring to rule them all, the very Ring that Galadriel has coveted throughout the ages, she refuses, knowing full well that with the refusal comes her own demise. Though the Lady of the Wood has stayed too long, she can still find happiness by remembering who she is, while walking away from the pronouncements of her past. “‘I pass the test,’ she exclaims. ‘I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel’”.

More than any other character in the tale, with the possible exception of Tom Bombadil, Lady Galadriel is imbued with the philosopher’s affirmation: *Think for Yourself!* As Frodo leaves the friendly borders of Lórien, she presents him with the symbolic light, a crystal phial, and says:

*“Farewell Frodo Baggins, I give you the light of Earendil our most beloved star. May it be a light to you in dark places when all other lights go out.”*

And perhaps that is all that is meant by Tolkien’s imaginary elves. The elves find happiness when they trust in themselves. This self-confidence helps them sing throughout the darkest night, and leave the shores when the music ends.

Gift giving is a moral virtue, the actualization of charity. But it is also a practical necessity. Many of the gifts given to the Hobbits save their lives and save the Quest, from the mithril coat Bilbo gave Frodo to the Phial of Galadriel, in which was trapped the light from the Silmarils. Even a simple thing like Sam’s rope, given to him by the Elves in Lórién, twice saved them: in descending a cliff and in capturing Gollum.

A gift economy, gift culture, or gift exchange is a mode of exchange where valuables are not traded or sold, but rather given without an explicit agreement

for immediate or future rewards. This contrasts with a barter economy or a market economy, where goods and services are primarily exchanged for value received. Social norms and custom govern gift exchange. Gifts are not given in an explicit exchange of goods or services for money or some other commodity.

The nature of gift economies forms the subject of a foundational debate in anthropology. Anthropological research into gift economies began with Bronisław Malinowski's description of the Kula ring in the Trobriand Islands during World War I. The Kula trade appeared to be gift-like since Trobrianders would travel great distances over dangerous seas to give what were considered valuable objects without any guarantee of a return. Malinowski's debate with the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss quickly established the complexity of "gift exchange" and introduced a series of technical terms such as reciprocity, inalienable possessions, and prestation to distinguish between the different forms of exchange.

According to anthropologists Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, it is the unsettled relationship between market and non-market exchange that attracts the most attention. Gift economies are said, by some, to build communities, and that the market serves as an acid on those relationships.

Gift exchange is distinguished from other forms of exchange by a number of principles, such as the form of property rights governing the articles exchanged; whether gifting forms a distinct "sphere of exchange" that can be characterized as an "economic system"; and the character of the social relationship that the gift exchange establishes. Gift ideology in highly commercialized societies differs from the "prestations" typical of non-market societies. Gift economies must also be differentiated from several closely related phenomena, such as common property regimes and the exchange of non-commodified labour.

Anthropologist David Graeber has argued that the great world religious traditions on charity and gift giving emerged almost simultaneously during the "Axial age" (the period between 800 and 200 BCE), which was the same period in which coinage was invented and market economies established on a continental basis. These religious traditions on charity emerge, he argues, as a reaction against the nexus formed by coinage, slavery, military violence and the market (a "military-coinage" complex).

The new world religions, including Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity and Islam all sought to preserve "human economies" where money served to cement social relationships rather than purchase things (including people).

Charity and alms-giving are religiously sanctioned voluntary gifts given without expectation of return.

In his book, [Sacred Economics: Money, Gift, and Society in the Age of Transition](#), Charles Eisenstein says:

*[...] Of all the things that human beings make and do for each other, it is the unquantifiable ones that contribute most to human happiness. You might, for instance, quantify leisure time and assign it a dollar value to calculate a society's well-being, but how is that leisure time spent? It could be spent mired in an addiction, in mindless entertainment, in intimacy with another person, or in telling stories to children. And even if we somehow accounted for these distinctions, could we quantify how present someone is when they are telling those stories? Can we quantify how anxious someone is when at work? If public policy is guided by the maximization of a quantity — be it GDP or some other measure — the most important things will surely be left out.*

*Quantifiable needs are also finite — another reason to question a money system predicated on the infinite growth of finite demand for finite resources. Qualitative needs are different: they are neither quantifiable nor finite. It is in this realm that the ideology of Ascent finds its true spiritual motivation. Growth, on one level, might end-the growth of the monetized realm, the growth of our appropriation of nature — but another kind of development will continue: the growth of the human spirit, with its infinite need for beauty, love, connection, and knowledge. A zero-growth future is not a stagnant future, no more than a human life stagnates when a teenager grows her last inch at age sixteen.*

*Money, which facilitates the meeting of our quantifiable needs, will have a place in human life for many centuries to come. It will occupy a diminished role, however, as I described in the chapter on degrowth. Instead of obsessively fulfilling and overfulfilling our finite needs to the present degree of obscene hypertrophy, we will turn our energy to the unmet qualitative needs that so impoverish us today.*

*To meet our unquantifiable needs, we need nonmonetary circulation. When the qualitative is matched with the quantitative, the infinite to the finite, then the former is debased. The exchange of beauty for money, intimacy for money, attention for money — all smell of prostitution. The distaste of the artist for the world of commerce is not just an egotism that says he is above it all. When money tries to buy beauty, love, knowledge, connection, and so forth, either the buyer receives a counterfeit, or*

*the seller, having sold the infinitely precious for a finite sum, is exploited. It is really quite simple; as the Beatles put it, “Money can’t buy you love.”*

*That is why we need other ways for our gifts to circulate [...] (Chapter 16, Transition to Gift Economy).*

Bilbo gave up his hoard of dragon gold, and also his home and possessions to Frodo. Frodo follows the same path, giving up his life in the Shire both at the beginning, when he leaves, and at the end, when he finds that “you can’t go home again”. Most important of all, he gives up the Ring.

Giving the Ring away, of course, is the supreme act of giving, because the Ring is unlimited power and can get you anything you want. Only three succeed in doing this, and they are all Hobbits: Bilbo, Frodo and Sam. Hobbits are good at giving: on their birthday they do not receive gifts but give them. Their happiness shows what Jesus says: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Even Gandalf’s gift of fireworks, while not “serious”, is symbolically appropriate because fireworks give us joy only by their “dying”.

Unlike all other Quests in the world’s literature, the whole point of the Ring Quest is not to *get* something (e.g., Jason’s Golden Fleece, Odysseus’s wife and home, Gilgamesh’s immortality, or even Adam’s [Milton’s] Paradise Lost); but to give something up: to give this “gift” back to its maker and origin (thus destroying it), thus reversing the process of greed, materialism, idolatry, fetishism, and externalization that it symbolizes.

Frodo sacrifices not only the Ring but himself. He has no hope of surviving the journey; and when he does, he has no peace in Middle-earth. *The Lord of the Rings* ends with Frodo’s “death” at the Havens – a real leave-taking, though not an ordinary biological death but a Mary-like “assumption into Heaven”.

On September 2, 1972, Tolkien also went into the West, but he gave us Middle-earth. He will be remembered as we remember Homer, Dante and Shakespeare.

By penning *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien set a framework for fantasy literature that countless authors have attempted to recapture over the years. The creation of Middle-earth, from its languages to its poetry to its rich cultural history and varied peoples, was an astounding feat of imagination that no one had managed before with such detail and ardent care.

It denotes a particular status as a writer to have your name instantly associated with an entire genre, and indeed, it is impossible to call up the names of science fiction and fantasy authors and not include Tolkien. He intended with his works to create stories that entered our mythic consciousness, a feat that he accomplished in every sense. Though we may never glimpse Rivendell, Lorien, or the peaceful Shire for ourselves, it is enough that he left his world to us, and that we will always be able to journey there... and back again. May it be a light to us in our own dark places.