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# **The Dark League Behind The 2020 Presidential Candidacy of Marianne Williamson**

The New Age guru, Marianne Williamson, didn't make the stage for the third round of the Democratic debates (2019), but that doesn't mean we should underestimate her influence. Williamson is a supporter of the American New Thought movement, and so is Donald Trump. Trump was probably just a better practitioner.

In this Ebook I will investigate the "dark league" behind Williamson, which has created the "spiritual" mantra: "Fake it Till You Make It", and which is in progress with a redefinition of all the original wisdom traditions.

I will investigate how it is that we today have a global elite that manipulates us to believe that spirituality is about denying reality, telling lies and worshipping your ego. I will show that it has its roots in a demonical turn in Western occultism that started with the scientific revolution, and the development of scientism.

The book is also an attempt of showing our Western karmic lines, which lead back to Greco-Roman philosophy and the beginning of Christianity. It is an attempt of showing the necessity of understanding our collective painbody, and finding a Western path of enlightenment.

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	2
A Course in Miracles (ACIM).....	7
Oprah, Neoliberalism and The American Dream.....	17
From Love to Self-love.....	20
Donald Trump and the "Fake It Till You Make It" mantra .....	22

New Thought and the Danger of Subjectivism.....	27
From Storytelling to Confabulation.....	30
Jean Houston and the Reduction of Ancient Mystery Schools to Psychotherapeutic Role-playing Games.....	35
The Mythology of Authenticity.....	37
Nondual Bias.....	42
Ego-inflation.....	46
Nietzsche and the Antichrist.....	48
The History of the American Dream.....	55
The Influence from Occultism.....	60
The Conspiracy of the Third Eye.....	69
Black Enlightenment.....	79

## **Introduction**

Golden Globes host Seth Meyers stood before Oprah Winfrey, who was set to receive the Cecil B. DeMille award January 7, 2018 and was sitting in the very front of the room. As Meyers opened the awards show, he mentioned his 2011 White House correspondents' dinner gig, the one where he joked about Donald Trump not being qualified for president.

“Some have said that night convinced him to run. So, if that’s true, I just want to say: Oprah, you will never be president! You do not have what it takes. And Hanks! Where’s Hanks? You will never be vice president. You are too mean and unrelatable. Now we just wait and see.”

Winfrey burst into laughter. But an hour later, she took the stage to deliver an incredibly rousing speech that was both personal and a universal call to action. “I

want all the girls watching here and now to know that a new day is on the horizon,” she said to thunderous applause.

She brought the crowd at the Beverly Hilton to its feet. On social media, chatter built about her presidential prospects.

“It’s up to the people,” her longtime partner, Stedman Graham, [told the Los Angeles Times](#) on Sunday. “She would absolutely do it.”

Her best friend, Gayle King, told the outlet: “I thought that speech was incredible. I got goose bumps.”

That night, [the Los Angeles Times told](#) Winfrey that “the Internet is saying Oprah for president in 2020. What does Oprah say?”

“I say, I’m just glad I got through the speech!” she answered. “I thought a lot about it. I wanted this to be a meaningful moment.”

But would she consider a 2020 presidential run? “Okaay!” she reportedly responded.

[CNN](#), citing two anonymous individuals, said Winfrey’s confidants have been urging her for months to run for office. Brad Anderson, the Iowa state director for President Barack Obama’s reelection, [tweeted](#), “Call me Oprah. I’ve got some Iowa county chairs who would love to hear from you.”

In a certain way we have heard from her, because one of her associated, Marianne Williamson, is running as one of the candidates of the 2020 Democratic primaries, though she has little political experience.

Marianne Williamson is a New Age self-help guru and author who worked for Oprah Winfrey. Her previous run for office was in 2014 when she ran for the US House of Representatives, where she lost, coming in 4th place. Nevertheless, she has done this because she believes that the United States needs a moral and spiritual awakening. She joined the primary on January 29, 2019. She gained a big following on Reddit by capitalizing on the meme culture surrounding it. Initially, her Reddit subscribers totaled only 36, but it ballooned to around 2,400 after the Democrat debate. Additionally, after the debates, she became the top searched candidate on Google for two nights. Though she holds several reasonable left-wing views such as supporting Medicare for All, DACA, the Green New Deal, taking climate change seriously, and tuition-free college while also believing she can counter Donald Trump's culture of fear with love, she also holds problematic views including anti-vaccine views and

some New Age views (some which appear to bolster her anti-corporatist and anti-elite views). She also has no clear policy plans, though she has outlined some of her ideas on her campaign site.

Williamson started her New Age career by regurgitating the 1976 book of alleged channelings known as *A Course in Miracles* with her own commentary in the book, *A Return to Love* (I will return to that).

Williamson, while not hard-core anti-vaccine, appears to be at least sympathetic to the anti-vaccine movement. This has caused that most newspapers don't take her quite serious. As for critics, she warns, "Laugh at all this at your emotional peril." I tend to agree with her warning, not that I believe she could be president, but because of her enormous influence in popular culture, an influence that goes under the radar of most political journalists.

Williamson believes that vaccine mandates are "Orwellian" and "draconian". She has compared vaccine mandates to abortion, that the mandates interfere what people want to do with their bodies. Appeal to personal choice is a common anti-vaccine refrain that neglects children's health and, newsflash, measles don't care about principles of bodily autonomy, and people in general, especially immunocompromised ones, don't really like having diseases spread to them. This has caused worldwide anti-vaccine reactions, which has been very serious. Here we can see just how much influence she has.

She later walked back on those remarks, however, though she still does not take a strong stance against the movement by stating something along the lines of "I think vaccines save lives but concerns about drugs are valid because Big Pharma" and believing that public safety has to be balanced with personal choice ("individual choice" again, is a common anti-vaccine buzz word and neglects those that don't have that luxury, children, people who were previously infected with measles and chicken pox and have to suffer long-term damage after the disease is gone, and immunocompromised people). She also, back in 2011, made a vague post in Facebook, "I understand the controversial aspects of vaccinations, and I share many of the concerns". During a 2015 segment with Bill Maher, she said that she believes that the "skepticism" is healthy and that while vaccines do protect against measles, she is rather concerned about the "overload" of vaccines ("too many, too soon" gambit by anti-vaxxers) and how Big Pharma apparently covers up results of studies of vaccines they don't like.

Williamson doesn't like glyphosate, believing that it can cause cancer (no evidence has been shown to establish a link) and that it helps Monsanto. This is despite

Monsanto's patent for glyphosate having expired in 2000. And since she links to Center for Food Safety, a site that heavily promotes GMO labeling, we're predicting that her views on GMOs aren't really stellar either (source: RationalWiki).

All this could be taken from an Oprah Winfrey show. Newsweek featured an article by Weston Kosova and Pat Wingert (5/29/09), [Why Health Advice From Oprah Could Make You Sick](#) that deconstructs the world according to Oprah.

The late critical thinker, Robert Carroll, writes:

*If this article is a sign of what the newly revamped magazine will be like in the future, sign me up. I suggest Larry King be the next woo-woo promoter to be featured by Newsweek!*

*One should be very careful to criticize Oprah Winfrey. You won't be popular. Nobody in the mass media goes after the all-powerful Oprah. Newsweek deserves beaucoup props for exposing "the most dangerous woman in the world." Her medical advice alone could namely be killing and maiming thousands daily.*

*In Oprah's world, vaccines don't prevent children from suffering, they cause autism. In Oprah's world, you can cure cancer with happy thoughts. In The Oprah's, Suzanne Somers and Jenny McCarthy are medical experts. In Oprah's world, Rhonda Byrne and Marianne Williamson are philosophers.*

*In Oprah's world, injecting hormones will keep you forever young. In Oprah's world, the HPV vaccine kills people. In Oprah's world, cancer-causing sexually transmitted diseases can be prevented by eating healthy foods. In Oprah's world, thyroid dysfunction is an energy blockage caused by "a lifetime of 'swallowing' words one is aching to say."*

*In Oprah's world, if you're hypothyroid you should take iodine supplements and drink soy milk. In Oprah's world, all you need for a quick face-lift without having to worry about side-effects is a needle and thread, or radio waves. In Oprah's world, psychics who claim to get messages from the dead are not exploiting grieving people, they are helping them through the grieving process. In Oprah's world, feelings always trump reason, intuition always trumps science, and hope always trumps fact. In Oprah's world, wishful thinking is considered science.*

*In Oprah's world, if you want to be thin and healthy, all you have to do is hang around thin, healthy people. If that doesn't work, and it obviously doesn't, try regular exercise and eating sensibly. If that doesn't work, sit on the couch and watch Oprah.*

*Wait until she brings on an expert who will explain why her world of magical thinking is so appealing to millions of her fans. You may not end up healthy, but I guarantee that you will end up very thin.*

Please read [the article by Kosova and Wingert](#) in Newsweek.

Journalists might not take people like Williamson and Oprah serious, but, as I said, you will make a serious mistake of underestimating the power of popular culture. Watkins Mind Body Spirit is a quarterly esoteric magazine published by Watkins Books in London. Like the famous bookshop, the magazine covers a wide range of subjects from contemporary spirituality to self-development and mysticism to Eastern philosophy.

Watkins' [Spiritual 100](#) is a list of the 100 most spiritually influential living people – spiritual teachers, activists, authors and thinkers that change the world.

Watkins claim that there are several factors that were taken into account when compiling the list. The main three criteria are:

- 1) The person has to be alive when the list is created.
- 2) The person has to have made a unique and spiritual contribution on a global scale.
- 3) The person is frequently googled, appears in Nielsen Data, has a Wikipedia page, and is actively talked about throughout the Internet. Watkins claims that by taking into account the amount of times that a person is googled or how many times their Wikipedia profile is viewed, the list gains a highly democratic and transparent parameter [this is hardly a parameter on credibility and authority. On the other side, it says quite a bit about the development – see my article, [The Return of the Sophists](#)].

Additionally, Watkins claim they were highly selective in creating this list and did their best to remove candidates who spread messages that were hateful or intolerant [this is of course necessary, but the question is if this also eliminates cultural critics and other critical thinkers – see my article [Thou Shalt Not Critizice!!!](#)]. Ultimately, this list is meant to celebrate the positive influence of today's spiritual teachers.

If you take the [spiritual 100 list for 2019](#), you will discover that Oprah Winfrey is listed as number 2 after the pope, Eckhart Tolle is number 4 after Dalai Lama, and Rhonda Byrne is number 6 after Desmond Tutu. Marianne Williamson is number 34. Both Oprah Winfrey, Eckhart Tolle, Rhonda Byrne and Marianne Williamson are New Thought teachers. Now, if you take the whole list (I don't know all the names),

you will find out that the New Thought movement, and New Age as such, represent far the largest influence.

It's tempting to think of a conspiracy here, but I prefer facts. The fact is that being an American (or thinking like an American in a neoliberal political correct way – I will return to that) is an advantage in itself. American values are globally accepted as the touchstone of truth. Secondly, there is the problem of the internet, and social medias such as Google and Facebook, which also are taken as sources of truth. Thirdly, New Age is without doubt supported by the enormous American publishing industry, which is thinking in American values. New Thought is the gospel of the American Dream. I will return to this in the chapter called, *The History of the American Dream*.

### **A Course in Miracles (ACIM)**

*A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles* (1992) is the first book by Marianne Williamson, and concerns the 1976 book *A Course in Miracles*. Williamson describes it as a self-study program of “spiritual psychotherapy.” One thing that struck me, while reading *A Return to Love*, is that Williamson never reveals who have written *A Course in Miracles*. The same is the case with her book *The Gift of Change*. Why? Does she simply see it (as it often is described) as the third testament of the bible (with no more explanation needed), or is it just carelessness? When writing books which are based on one book, one should at least explain the basic facts about that book.

*A Return to Love* contains Williamson's reflections on ACIM and her thoughts on finding inner peace through love. Amazon.com describes its theme as "how we each can become a miracle worker by accepting God and by the expression of love in our daily lives."

ACIM claims to be *The Third Testament*. Essentially ACIM is claimed to be the words of an inner voice, given to an American clinical psychologist, Helen Schucman. Schucman believed that voice to be the voice of Jesus. The original text of the book as first widely published was edited by two other American psychologists (William Thetford and Kenneth Wapnick).

In my article, [A course in Miracles \(ACIM\) – A Critique](#), I write that ACIM is the most extreme example of what I have called The 666 Conspiracy. We shall later see that especially psychologists play a central role in this conspiracy. This 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?

The relevance of this conspiracy has five aspects:

- A) That some of the subjectivistic and relativistic theories on the universities, which seek to undermine truth (and for instance philosophy and science) are so absurd, that there is nothing behind them than chaos.
- B) That ideology is a malfunction in the human mind.
- C) That there is introduced a false spirituality where the main worship is the Ego, contrary to the traditional spiritual directions, where the main goal is the elimination of the Ego.
- D) That occultism within New Age creates spiritual misguiding, often with deep spiritual crises as a result.
- E) That the Ego-extreme according to the true spiritual traditions will be contra-balanced by the laws of energy (hybris-nemesis, karma, the will of God, etc.) This will happen through crises, illness, natural disasters, etc.

I claim that ACIM is the ultimative example of the 666 Conspiracy, since it deals explicit with a direct turning the teachings of Christ upside down. Ultimately, since it it does this in the most ingenious way I have encountered until now. I will also suggest that this could be due to the possibility of the involvement of especially two spiritual crises:

- 1) Channeling. The ability to make contact with divine creatures and levels of consciousness, which is thought to possess information of spiritual value for people, and through the body mediate communication from these levels.
- 2) Possession states. An experience of, that your mind and body (it can also be things or places) have become invaded and are controlled by a being, or an alien energy, which can be of divine or, most known, demonic kind. Often with inexplicable bodily manifestations.

If this is not the case, the whole thing could also be due to a hoax. Creating deliberately history revisionist hoaxes, is namely a popular activity in New Age. I will return to that.

ACIM, or ACIM-inspired views of spiritual life have come into mainstream popular culture, particularly through the writings of Williamson. Those ideas have now extended to a new generation of spiritual teachers, particularly strong in what's known as "the spiritual but not religious" community of seekers in North America. It



is an idea which can't be understood without an understanding of the anti-intellectual climate in USA. But as anything coming from USA, it is being taken at face value all over the globe.

The back story of the writing of the text is a bit complex and quite fascinating actually ([see history here](#)). As the critical thinker Robert Carroll says: "ACIM is Christianity improved: Jesus wants less suffering, sacrifice, separation, and sacrament. He also wants more love and forgiveness."

ACIM as a thought-system can be categorized alongside the teachings of the "New Thought" cluster of quasi-Christian church groups founded in the late 19th century descending down to today (including Unity School of Christianity, Church of Religious Science, Church of Divine Science, et al.). ACIM itself is not organized centrally into a religion or a church but functions more like a movement.

To begin with: ACIM is a piece of pseudohistory. Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of isn't history at all.

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

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

It is a tendency which seems to stem from theosophy, and Helena Blavatsky's way of writing books: namely to create a hodge-podge of plagiarism, occultism, pseudoscience and pseudohistory, which she claimed to receive in trance states from the "Masters of Mahatmas of Tibet". Gary Lachman suggested that by reading Blavatsky's cosmogonical claims as a literal account of history, "we may be doing it a disservice." He instead suggested that it could be read as Blavatsky's attempt to formulate "a new myth for the modern age, or as a huge, fantastic science fiction

story". Blavatsky was demonstrable an imposter and fascist from the very start, but is considered a guru by her admirers. She set a standard for New Age.

So, the popularity of Schucman's book gives testament to the attractiveness of New Thought's revisionist biography of Jesus as wanting more love and forgiveness (positivity), and less suffering and sacrifice (negativity). In looking at the suffering in the world ACIM says that this world cannot be created by a God. Heaven awaits us all and there is no hell; that is: the prompting to deny and ignore suffering and negativity. This is probably the best trick an Antichrist could impose in us: that hell and evil don't exist. An example of the paradoxical nature of the Devil's game, which I have investigated in my book [Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story](#).

It is important to understand that the New Thought movement, and therefore ACIM, is building on Berkeleyan subjective idealism. Subjective idealism, or empirical idealism, is the monistic metaphysical doctrine that only minds and mental contents exist. It entails and is generally identified or associated with immaterialism, the doctrine that material things do not exist. Subjective idealism rejects dualism, neutral monism, and materialism; indeed, it is the contrary of eliminative materialism, the doctrine that only material things, and no mental things, exist. On page 97, in *A Return to Love*, Williamson writes:

*Only love is real. Nothing else actually exists. If a person behaves unlovingly, then, that means that regardless of their negativity – anger or whatever - their behavior was derived from fear and doesn't really exist. They're hallucinating. You forgive them, then, because there is nothing to forgive. Forgiveness is discernment between what is real and what is not real.*

Instead of just swallowing this rhetoric raw, try to do some critical thinking on this. Behavior done from fear doesn't really exist! You are to forgive those who have wronged you because *there is nothing to forgive!* Since they are perfect just as you are, evil does not exist. This news would hardly be welcomed by those who endured the holocaust; nor would it be good news to the young woman who has been raped, or the mother to the child who has been molested.

Like the whole New Age ideology as such, this kind of Western idealism is confused as being identical with the Eastern concept of Maya (the world as illusion). The same confusion is seen in the notion that Eastern philosophy and spiritual practice must be integrated with [reduced to] Western psychology and psychotherapy.

With this strongly Western idealist metaphysics and psychological reductionism, ACIM denies as "unreal" obvious empirical-level experiences such as physical laws, sickness, tragedy, death, personal weakness ("sinfulness"), etc.

Even ACIM's posited goal state-- the refined soul being part of a multitude of souls who have let go the illusory dream of fear, guilt and separative ego-- still feels like something of an exalted heaven-realm, not the "beyond-the-heavens" Awakeness of Infinite Divinity, to which the greatest sages of India and elsewhere all point in unison, from the Upanishadic sages and the Buddha onwards.

ACIM's God is similar to George Berkeley's concept of God. A convinced adherent of Christianity, Berkeley believed God to be present as an immediate cause of all our experiences. This conception of God (the good, the true and the beautiful) is invalid, because it has no foundation for, that the cause of our sensations not as well might be the Devil (the evil, the false and the ugly). The latter might even be a better explanation, if you take the theory seriously, that is.

ACIM confuses Berkeley's concept of God with the Eastern concept of enlightenment. It therefore seems unaware of the possibility for authentic realization of the Supreme God-Self or Atman (though quoting a lot of Eastern sources), this Self is not other than the transcendent, Suprapersonal Divine Reality or Brahman. This incomparable, supernal Reality is what the Buddha independently calls Nirvana, the "Unborn, Uncompounded, Unmade," Awareness-sans-surface (vinnana anidassana).

What ACIM, as well as New Age as such, do, is to place enlightenment in the subject, what would end in metaphysical solipsism, the terrible result of a total metaphysical subjectivism. You could term it "Black Enlightenment." I will return to this terrible concept in the end of the Ebook. There seems to be a quite central demonical power directing all this.

The Eastern notion of enlightenment is the direct opposite. So also this is turned upside down. The Eastern notion of enlightenment is metaphysical objectivism, or objective idealism (which could be compared to Plato's philosophy). It is the complete experience of reality itself, or the complete absence of the subject. You could also say that the subject has been made transparent in objective light. The subject is open like a Lotus flower for the sun. So, even the Eastern idealists have this as an end goal. Their idealism is founded in this, wherefore they don't end in solipsism. ACIM is founded in *subjective* idealism.

Now to the problems ACIM is creating. In the following are two central ACIM claims:

*“Fear is the opposite of Love.”*

This is the core claim of ACIM. As already said: the claim is based on subjective idealism, a view I don't agree with. Fear is certainly not a bad dream. Anybody who have experienced fear, and maybe even panic anxiety, knows that if anything is real, it is this. It's no illusion. Just think about someone who is in anxiety, and then someone else claims: "Well, you're just living in an illusion." Besides that you have been marked as a victim of anxiety, you are now also marked by two other victimizing things: a victim of illusion, and a victim who is in opposition to love. ACIM and Williamson's work is blaming-the-victim put in system.

Fear is simply an aspect of human existence as a sensory, emotive, incarnate being. Realize this and the neat and tidy metaphysical system of strict separation between love and fear begins to blur and break down. The Course chooses to deny its reality and try to route around it. It therefore does not undo fear so much as skips over it.

*“The ego is literally a fear-based thought.”*

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

The human body is a feeling mechanism. The human organism feels and senses moment to moment. It feels and senses the environment, other beings, and its own internal state(s). Sensation is how your nervous system feels. Emotions are how your heart feels. Thought is how your brain feels. And the ego is how the bodymind as a total, single organism feels; that is: the pain-body.

Is this really Jesus the Christ speaking here? I doubt it—more like the mind of Helen Schucman, who says she channeled or “scribed” what she heard from an “inner voice” identifying itself as Jesus from 1965 to 1972, subsequently closely editing it into the ACIM with her colleague William Thetford (1923-84) (a closet CIA agent) and then later with Kenneth Wapnick, a Jewish convert to Catholicism. All are career psychologists with very little sense of a reality outside the psyche.

A clinical and research psychologist by this point in her life, Schucman had been extensively exposed in childhood to Christian Science writings, Theosophy and New

Age metaphysical material by her mother and then by working in her husband's Manhattan bookstore in the 1930s, so this type of material would have been a major part of her subconscious mind's hidden memory (cryptomnesia), easily accessible in the quasi-automatic writing process that ensued from 1965 to 1972. The whole concept of channeling is coming from Theosophy.

As mentioned, I believe Shucman were in a spiritual crisis. I therefore don't think her channeling claims are fake (unless the whole thing is an anti-Christian hoax, a I will return to).

Franciscan Catholic priest Benedict Groeschel learned from Helen that her mother used to daily read to her from Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science material when Helen was a girl. It is also notable that, as Groeschel found out, before she adopted a skeptical social-scientist's worldview for her mid-life career choice, Helen had become secretly baptized a Catholic and for several years attended Catholic mass, recited the rosary and practiced devotion to Mary after a life-changing visit to the Catholic Marian shrine at Lourdes, France. She was also attending Mass during the time she "scribed" ACIM. So her personality was clearly marked by a strange, alternating series of involvements with assimilated Jewishness, New Age thought, Catholic practices, and scientific skepticism.

Groeschel told journalist Randall Sullivan (for his book, *The Miracle Detective*, Grove/Atlantic, 2004): "I decided that *A Course in Miracles* was a fascinating blend of poorly understood Christianity inspired by her visit to Lourdes and poorly understood Christian Science inspired by her memory of Mary Baker Eddy's writings, all of it filtered through some profound psychological problems and processes."

Somewhere in here more needs to be said about William Thetford, Schucman's department head and close colleague, and the one who so eagerly encouraged her to keep scribing "the Voice" in the earliest days. There is nothing surprising in the "psychotherapeutic" methods used in ACIM. It is all standard New Age psychotherapy. In connection with New age psychotherapy cults techniques of propaganda are often referred to as 1) Thought struggle, 2) Brainwashing, 3) Thought reform, 4) Debility, dependency, and dread (DDD syndrome), 5) Coercive persuasion, 6) Mind control, 7) Systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence, 8) Coordinated programs of coercive influence and behavioral control, 9) Exploitative persuasion.

First of all: like Schucman, Thetford grew up in an environment of New Thought. His parents were both regular members of the Christian Science church. According to his

vita (as some have sleuthed it and posted to an earlier version of the Wikipedia page on Thetford), "from 1951 to 1953 Thetford worked on Project BLUEBIRD, an early CIA mind control program that led to [the infamous] Project MKULTRA. ... From 1955 to 1957 he was an assistant professor of psychology at Cornell University's CIA-funded Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology. ... From 1971 to 1978 Thetford, along with David Saunders, headed the CIA mind control Project MKULTRA Subproject 130: Personality Theory."

Given the ACIM's overt aim, especially in the Workbook, to have its students "unlearn" everything they think they know and be subject to the ACIM's "re-education," Thetford's major role in the editing of ACIM and his prior and later involvement with CIA mind-control work is NOT reassuring.

ACIM pretentiously views itself as the "Third Book" of the Bible, after the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament. This grandiose view of itself and its authoritarian "closed thought system" easily lures many vulnerable persons to read it and adhere to it and be brainwashed by it.

With its strongly subjective idealist metaphysics, ACIM denies as "unreal" obvious empirical-level experiences such as physical laws, sickness, tragedy, death, personal weakness ("sinfulness"), etc.

ACIM's doctrines, like those of numerous New Thought groups, exclusively focus on inner attitude change, and therefore when taken too literally or to extremes can be seen as subversive to the proper functioning of a rational, just society—such as when the Text advises adherents not to bother attempting to change the world, but instead simply to change their thinking about the world.

Why should anyone believe that the words of Helen Schucman are the words of Jesus? Did she give any proof for that claim? Absolutely none. She expects people to believe in her claim and take her for her words. How could we know that she told the truth? We can't. That people without hesitation take her words as being the words of Jesus says something about the authority, which the concept of channeling has within New Age (and psychologists).

Williamson's book, *A Return to Love*, is divided into two main parts, Principles and Practice. The Principles section has chapters entitled "Hell", "God", "You", "Surrender" and "Miracles". The Practice section has chapters "Relationships", "Body", "Work" and "Heaven".

In each chapter, Williamson defines certain concepts. For example, she defines "darkness" as internalized fear. Williamson also provides personal experiences and anecdotes to further explain the concepts. Strong Christian references are woven throughout the book.

The book is written with the understanding that the reader will have a working knowledge of religious concepts. Some of Williamson's explanations are not mainstream Christian theology views. For example, in chapter 3 ("You"), section 2 ("The divine mind"), when referring to Christ she writes "The word 'Christ' is a psychological term. No religion has a monopoly on the truth. Christ refers to the common thread of divine love that is the core and essence of every human mind."

One particular passage from the book has become popular as an inspirational quotation:

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

In chapter 8 of the book, titled "Body", Williamson states the following:

*"God is all that is good. He creates only love, therefore he did not create sickness. Sickness is an illusion and does not actually exist. It is part of our worldly dream, our self-created nightmare. Our prayer to God is that He awaken us from the dream."*

*"Healing results from transformed perception of our relationships to illness, one in which we respond to the problem with love instead of fear. When a child presents a cut finger to his or her mother, the woman doesn't say, 'Bad cut.' Rather, she kisses the finger, showers it with love in an unconscious, instinctive activation of the healing process. Why should we think differently about critical illness? Cancer and AIDS and other serious illnesses are physical manifestations of a psychic scream and their message is not 'hate me, but 'Love me.'"*

*"In the traditional Western medical model, a healer's job is to attack disease. But if the consciousness of attack is the ultimate problem, how could it be the ultimate answer? A miracle worker's job is not to attack illness, but rather to stimulate the natural forces of healing. We turn our eyes away from sickness to the love that lies beyond it. No sickness can diminish our capacity to love. Does that mean that it is a mistake to take medicine? Absolutely not."*

*"When the cure for AIDS is finally found, we will give prizes to a few scientists, but many of us will know that millions and millions of prayers helped it happen."*

*"A friend of mine told me that we're not punished for our sins, but by our sins. Sickness is not a sign of God's judgment on us, but of our judgment on ourselves. If we were to think that God created our sickness, how could we turn to Him for healing?"*

Williamson tries to show that the mind has power over disease and that we do not have to accept what we think is happening to us. She says that AIDS patients can speak to their viruses to reassure themselves that this disease is really under their control. After all, we are the sum of our thoughts, and if we just think rightly, the disease will be brought under the spell of our own power.

Williamson writes that she has used a letter-writing technique in her work with clients. Please read this "conversation" between Steve and his AIDS virus. In context, Steve has written a letter to the virus expressing his fear. In turn, the virus wants to reassure Steve that it (she/he was not out to "get Steve" but rather to teach Steve that he has power over this virus.

The virus is speaking:

*If I was, as they say, out to get you, don't you think you would be dead by now? I am not able to kill, harm, or make you sick. I have no brain, brute strength or great harming force. I am just a virus. You give me the power you should give to God. I take what I can because I don't want to die any more than you do. Yes, I live off your fears. But I die from your peace of mind, serenity, honesty, faith and desire to live.*

*Sincerely, the AIDS virus (page 243)*

So, Steve is told that if he changed his thought patterns the virus would not have power over him. The virus only lives because Steve has fear; but it would die if Steve had peace of mind, serenity and the like. The only reality that exists is his own consciousness.



Let's listen to what another AIDS virus says to Karl, who fears he is dying of the disease.

*I don't understand this any better than you do. I don't mean you and your loved ones any harm. I am just trying to exist, just like you, doing it in the best way I know how. Unfortunately, it ends up hurting people. I just want love, just like you do. I am crying out but no one seems to hear me. Maybe if we try listening to each other and talking to each other, we can find a way to exist in peace of mind without hurting each other. Right now, I feel like you only want to destroy me rather than dealing with whatever it is inside of you that brought me here. Please don't hate me and try to destroy me. Love me.*

*Let's talk and listen to each other and try to live in peace. Thanks*

*Signed, AIDS (page 244-245)*

AIDS, and the threat of death that it brings, is presented here not as an enemy but simply as a part of the collective human consciousness. Indeed, the virus just want to be loved, like we all do. It really does not want to hurt Karl, but is crying out for recognition and personal affirmation. Indeed, if Karl and the virus can listen to each other they could "live in peace."

What is more, the virus was attracted to Karl because of his thoughts. The virus counsels him to deal "with whatever it is inside of you that brought me here." In the end, Karl has retained his godhood after all; the virus is there because Karl attracted it by wrong thinking. And evidently it can be expelled by Karl if only he had different thoughts. But we might wonder, does he really want to get rid of it? According to this scenario, maybe he wants to keep it because he feels sorry for the AIDS virus, because after all, the virus is also just looking for love.

The bottom line: Death and disease are illusions from which we must be delivered; we have to reprogram ourselves to think differently and presto, the virus will be no more.

### **Oprah, Neoliberalism and The American Dream**

This supposedly empowering rhetoric is also a part of Williamson's politic program. It masks a mean-spirited individualism. Williamson, like conservative thinkers, often blame material problems on personal failures. Her ideology may sound airy and inoffensive, but it is ultimately one of neoliberal victim shaming. And it would lead

to harmful policies if she were, by some miracle, to be elected to public office. But, as we shall see below, Trump was elected, and he is actually also a part of the same New Thought movement, and able to perform miracles. If it wasn't so dead serious, it is almost comically to see two politicians, from each political spectrum, trying to think reality away because they practice the same "spirituality".

Williamson is a part of the Oprah phenomenon. 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.

In *The Gift of Change*, Williamson writes:

*When I remember that God's power is unlimited, I stop stressing about how limited mine is.*

*It's all up to me, because it's all inside my head* (page 71).

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, war, etc.) that have determined her life. The external world is her own thought-created illusion. Drought and war are results of her own unhealthy way of thinking.

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, 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.

All in all: postmodernist hard bitten political ideology, dancing with Dawkins's Selfish Gene and an obscure New Thought spirituality.

### **From Love to Self-love**

Besides New Thought, what is the (dark) cultural background for thoughts like Marianne Williamson's? We will examine this in the following chapters. First, let's look at the *Me Generation*.

The "Me" generation in the United States is a term referring to the baby boomers generation and the self-involved qualities that some people associate with it. The 1970s were dubbed the "Me decade" by writer Tom Wolfe. Christopher Lasch was another writer who commented on the rise of a culture of narcissism among the younger generation of that era. The phrase caught on with the general public, at a time when "self-realization" and "self-fulfillment" were becoming cultural aspirations to which young people supposedly ascribed higher importance than social responsibility.

The cultural change in the United States during the 1970s that was experienced by the baby boomers is complex. The 1960s are remembered as a time of political protests, radical experimentation with new cultural experiences (the Sexual Revolution, happenings, mainstream awareness of Eastern religions). The Civil Rights Movement gave rebellious young people serious goals to work towards. Cultural experimentation was justified as being directed toward spiritual or intellectual enlightenment. The mid to late 1970s, in contrast, were a time of increased economic crisis and disillusionment with idealistic politics among the

young, particularly after the resignation of Richard Nixon and the end of the Vietnam War. Unapologetic hedonism became acceptable among the young.

The development of a youth culture focusing so heavily on self-fulfillment was also perhaps a reaction against the traits that characterized the older generation, which had grown up during the Great Depression. That generation had learned values associated with self-sacrifice. The deprivations of the Depression had taught that generation to work hard, save money and not spend it, and to cherish family and community ties. Loyalty to institutions, traditional religious faiths, and other common bonds were what that generation considered to be the cultural foundations of their country. Baby boomers gradually abandoned those values in large numbers, a development that was entrenched during the 1970s.

The 1970s have been described as a transitional era when the self-help of the 1960s became self-gratification, and eventually devolved into the selfishness of the 1980s.

Health and exercise fads, New Age spirituality such as Scientology and hot tub parties, self-help programs such as EST (Erhard Seminars Training), and the growth of the self-help book industry became identified with the baby boomers during 1970s. Human potential, emotional honesty, "finding yourself", and new therapies became hallmarks of the culture. The marketing of lifestyle products, eagerly consumed by baby boomers with disposable income during the 1970s, became an inescapable part of the culture. Revlon's marketing staff did research into young women's cultural values during the 1970s, and the research revealed that young women were striving to compete with men in the workplace and to express themselves as independent individuals.

Central in this environment is the concept of self-love. Self-love is defined as "love of self" or "regard for one's own happiness or advantage", and it has both been conceptualized as a basic human necessity and as a moral flaw, akin to vanity and selfishness, synonymous with amour propre, conceit, conceitedness, egotism, et al. However, throughout the centuries self-love has adopted a more positive connotation through pride parades, Self Respect Movement, self-love protests, the Hippie era, the new age feminist movement as well as the increase in mental health awareness that promotes self-love as intrinsic to self-help and support groups working to prevent substance abuse and suicide.

It was studied by the psychologist [!] Erich Fromm, who studied emotional human behaviour, such as self-esteem and self-worth. In 1956 Fromm proposed that loving oneself is different from being arrogant, conceited or egocentric, meaning that instead caring about oneself and taking responsibility for oneself. Fromm proposed a re-

evaluation of self-love in more positive sense, arguing that in order to be able to truly love another person, a person first needs to love oneself in the way of respecting oneself and knowing oneself (e.g. being realistic and honest about one's strengths and weaknesses).

Erik H. Erikson similarly wrote of a post-narcissistic appreciation of the value of the ego, while Carl Rogers saw one result of successful therapy as the regaining of a quiet sense of pleasure in being one's own self.

Lack of self-love increases risk of suicide according to the American Association of Suicidology. The association conducted a study in 2008 which researched the impact of low self-esteem and lack of self-love and its relation to suicidal tendencies and attempts. They defined self-love as being "beliefs about oneself (self-based self-esteem) and beliefs about how other people regard oneself (other-based self-esteem)". It concluded that "depression, hopelessness, and low self-esteem are implications of vulnerability factors for suicide ideation" and that "these findings suggest that even in the context of depression and hopelessness, low self-esteem may add to the risk for suicide ideation".

Such psychological reductionisms (self-love extrapolated to a philosophy of life) are a central part of the collective ego-inflation we are witnessing right now. This doesn't mean that I'm against using the word self-esteem in concrete clinical situations.

### **Donald Trump and the “Fake It Till You Make It” mantra**

"Fake it till you make it" is an English aphorism which suggests that by imitating confidence, competence, and an optimistic mindset, a person can realize those qualities in their real life. It echoes the underlying principles of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as a means to enable a change in one's behavior. Or in other words: faith in one's self helps one's self improve.

In the 1920s, Alfred Adler developed a therapeutic technique that he called "acting as if". This strategy gave his clients an opportunity to practice alternatives to dysfunctional behaviors. Adler's method is still used today and is often described as "role play".

Again we have a psychological reductionism, that is being extrapolated to a philosophy of life. In the Law of attraction movement, "act as if you already have it", or simply "act as if", is a central concept. In her book, *The Secret*, Rhonda Byrne writes:

*How do you get yourself to a point of believing? Start make-believing. Be like a child, and make-believe. Act as if you have it already. As you make-believe, you will begin to believe you have received.*

Williamson is also supporting the *Fake It Till You Make It* mantra. In *The Gift of Change*, she writes:

*We vastly underestimate the ability of our subconscious mind to support us in creating change. “Fake it till you make it” is often a good advice. When little girls play “house” or little boys play Spiderman, they are following a subconscious strategy of personality development, using their imaginations to prepare for new realms of being. And we need never stop doing this, unless we choose to (page 39).*

It is interesting that she a few pages later is complaining over “a large theft, betrayal by people I thought were honorable...(page 71). Complaining over betrayal, and talking about honesty, are curious statements coming from a person who a few pages earlier advised people in the mantra “Fake it Till You Make It”. In her books, Williamson is writing a lot about how negative the betrayal of others is, and here she is writing a direct recipe in how you yourself can live a life of betrayal. But, of course, her extreme individualism, makes her blind for her own self-contradiction.

Williamson has also promoted prosperity gospel beliefs in her 2012 book, *The Law of Divine Compensation*:

“To whatever extent your mind is aligned with love, you will receive divine compensation for any lack in your material existence. From spiritual substance will come material manifestation. This is not just a theory; it is a fact.”

In a sense, Williamson and Donald Trump are two sides of the same coin: both are self-help gurus, but Trump only intends to help himself. Trump's stated inspiration is from Norman Vincent Peale, one of the progenitors of the prosperity gospel.

After the second Republican debate, when it appeared Donald Trump's lead was finally starting to slip, and Carly Fiorina and Marco Rubio were gaining traction, Trump himself, in typical fashion, appeared to only see positive signs. He told Fox News' Sean Hannity that only the polls (Time, Drudge Report, Newsmax) that showed him having picked up support mattered because they represented “the people who vote.” The happy talk was relentless: After speakers at the Emmy Awards on Sept. 20 ridiculed him, Trump told Politico that the evening had been “amazing.” More recently, Trump berated a news photographer who dared to take pictures of empty seats at one of his rallies, insisting his events were as packed as ever.

In her article, [How Norman Vincent Peale Taught Donald Trump to Worship Himself](#), Gwenda Blair asks: Is this guy for real? She writes:

*Or more to the point, could anyone really possess that much self-confidence? There has been no shortage of explanations—a huge inferiority complex, infantile narcissism, delusional thinking—for Trump’s undying self-assurance. But as I discovered when writing a book about Donald, his father, and his grandfather, if you want to understand what goes on underneath the blond comb-over, you’d do well to look back to two crucial events in the early 1950s.*

*Event No. 1 occurred in October 1952, when a book appeared called *The Power Of Positive Thinking*. Written by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and translated into 15 languages, it remained on the *New York Times* best-seller list for 186 weeks and sold 5 million copies. Donald was only 6 years old at the time and didn’t read the book until much later, but it quickly became important in the large Queens household in which he grew up, and it would play a critical role in his future.*

[...]

*Event No. 2 in the early 1950s—and in the development of Donald’s personality and style—was the emergence of modern branding. At the dawn of the 20th century, most makers of consumer products focused only on selling as much as possible. But by mid-century, manufacturers of everything from laundry soap and baked beans to automobiles and airlines were taking their focus a few steps further: concentrating not just on how much rolled off the assembly line but on polishing and enhancing the aura and attractiveness of the product.*

*From now on, marketers would not simply tout how well a product performed. Instead, they would study how consumers felt about the maker of the product—and they would bend every effort toward making everything associated with that name as positive and compelling as possible.*

As the management theorists say: “It is not facts, but the best story that wins.” Management theory is a central part of The Matrix Conspiracy.

Norman Vincent Peale was an American minister and author known for his work in popularizing the concept of positive thinking, especially through his best-selling book *The Power of Positive Thinking*. He served as the pastor of Marble Collegiate Church, New York, from 1932 until his death, leading a Reformed Church in America congregation. Peale was a personal friend of President Richard Nixon.



Donald Trump attended Peale's church while growing up, as well as marrying his first wife Ivana there. Peale's ideas and techniques were controversial, and he received frequent criticism both from church figures and from the psychiatric profession.

Peale's works came under criticism from several mental health experts. Donald Meyer directly said Peale was a con man and a fraud. These critics appeared in the early 1950s after the publication of *The Power of Positive Thinking*.

Peale's book, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, is, like Williamson's books, full of anecdotes that are hard to substantiate. Almost all of the experts and many of the testimonials that Peale quotes as supporting his philosophy are unnamed, unknown and unsourced.

I have listed testimonials as a thought distortion. Testimonials are central to the whole of the law of attraction movement, and it is also central in Williamson's books.

A second major accusation of Peale is that he attempted to conceal that his techniques for giving the reader absolute self-confidence and deliverance from suffering are a well known form of hypnosis, and that he attempts to persuade his readers to follow his beliefs through a combination of false evidence and self-hypnosis (autosuggestion), disguised by the use of terms which may sound more benign from the reader's point of view ("techniques", "formulas", "methods", "prayers", and "prescriptions"). Meyer called Peale's book "The Bible of American autohypnotism".

A third major criticism is that Peale's philosophy is based on exaggerating the fears of his readers and followers, and that this exaggerated fear inevitably leads to aggression and the destruction of those considered "negative".

I could mention a line of other thought distortions involved, as for example black and white thinking, guilt by association, contradiction and false dichotomies.

False dichotomy is a misleading conception of possible alternatives. A dichotomy is a division in two alternatives. Often seen in the expressions Either/or – If/then, as for example: "Either you are with us, or you are against us" – "if I'm not always a success, then I'm a fiasco".

Similarly, someone who says that you must either believe that God exists or else that God doesn't exist is setting up a false dichotomy since there is the well-known third option of the agnostic.

A false dichotomy appears when somebody sets up a dichotomy in such a way, that it looks like, that there only are two possible conclusions, when the facts actual are, that there are many other alternatives which not are being mentioned. Many inappropriate rules of living and life-strategies are based on false dichotomy. False dichotomy is thinking in extremes, and leads to a false and imbalanced way of life.

In connection with inappropriate basic assumptions such as "If I am not always a success, then I am a fiasco", the false dichotomy is closely related to the development of guilt, shame and depression.

Note, that you can't think in extremes such as I am a success, I am perfect, I am beautiful, without the opposite extreme. That is: if you for example follow the teaching of positive psychology, which excludes all negativity, then you induce in yourself a false dichotomy, because an exclusion of the opposite extreme not is possible.

Williamson's recurring false dichotomy is love versus fear. Either you are a loving person or you are a fearful person. She is also all about how perfect you are. She obviously believes that claiming that you are absolutely perfect is a fantastic positive message. She also seems to believe that lining up such simple dichotomies are a good message which is easy to understand. The problem arises when you realize that you not at all are loving and perfect. Then you are left with the opposite alternatives: namely that you are fearful and a failure. A lot of Williamson's audience are women with a lack of self-esteem, and it is incredible to observe how Williamson is inducing in them one of the very factors behind lack of self-esteem, namely a false dichotomy.

The Law of Attraction is a metaphysical New Thought belief that "like attracts like," that positive and negative thinking bring about positive and negative physical results, respectively. According to the Law of Attraction, the phrase "I need more money" allows the subject to continue to "need more money." If the subject wants to change this they would focus their thoughts on the goal (having more money) rather than the problem (needing more money). This might take the form of phrases such as "I have as much money as I need" or "I have a job that pays very well."

The question is, of course, whether all this is positive. It is interesting that just because an American preacher, Norman Vincent Peale, has written a book about positive thinking, the whole world is taking it as a scientific fact. He is an American you see. Every psychology department today, with respect for itself, must therefore teach "positive psychology". It is supplied with a lot of pseudoscientific nonsense and are hereafter presented as the new psychological breakthrough.

## **New Thought and the Danger of Subjectivism**

The New Thought movement, or New Thought, is a spiritual movement which developed in the United States during the late 19th century and emphasizes metaphysical beliefs in subjectivism. It consists of a loosely allied group of religious denominations, secular membership organizations, authors, philosophers, and individuals who share a set of metaphysical beliefs concerning the effects of positive thinking, the Law of Attraction, healing, life force, creative visualization, and personal power.

It promotes the ideas that “Infinite Intelligence” or “God” is ubiquitous, mind is the totality of real things, true human selfhood is divine, divine thought is a force for good, all sickness originates in the mind, and “right thinking” has a healing effect.

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

The three major religious denominations within the New Thought movement are Religious Science, Unity Church, and the Church of Divine Science. There are many smaller sects under the New Thought umbrella as well.

Thomas Troward, who was a strong influence in the New Thought movement, claimed that thought precedes physical form and that “the action of Mind plants that nucleus which, if allowed to grow undisturbed, will eventually attract to itself all the conditions necessary for its manifestation in outward visible form.”

In 1906, William Walker Atkinson (1862-1932) used the phrase in his New Thought Movement book *Thought Vibration or the Law of Attraction in the Thought World*, stating that “like attracts like.” The following year, Elizabeth Towne, the editor of *The Nautilus Magazine*, a Journal of New Thought, published Bruce Maclelland’s book *Prosperity Through Thought Force*, in which he summarized the principle, stating: “You are what you think, not what you think you are.”

The book *The Science of Getting Rich* by Wallace D. Wattles espouses similar principles – that truly believing in the object of your desire and focusing on it will lead to that object or goal being realized on the material plane (Wattles indicates in

the Preface and later chapters of this book that his premise stems from the monistic Hindu view that God pervades everything and can deliver that which we focus on). In addition, the book also indicates that negative thinking will manifest negative results.

In 1937, author Napoleon Hill published his book *Think and Grow Rich* which went on to become one of the best-selling books of all time, selling over 60 million copies. In this book, he discusses the importance of controlling your own thoughts in order to achieve success, as well as the energy that thoughts have and their ability to attract other thoughts. In the beginning of the book, Napoleon Hill mentions a “secret” to success and promises to indirectly describe it at least once in every chapter of the book. It is never named directly, for he says that discovering it on one’s own is far more beneficial. Many people have argued over what the secret actually is, with some arguing that it was the Law of Attraction. Hill states the “secret,” to which he refers, is mentioned no fewer than a hundred times, yet reference to “attract” is used less than 30 times in the text. Most students of the book claim the secret is hidden in its title: THINK (i.e., thoughts).

By the mid-1900s, various authors addressed the topic and related ideas under a range of religious and secular terms, such as “positive thinking,” “mental science,” “Pragmatic Christianity,” “New Thought,” “Practical Metaphysics,” “Science of Mind,” “Religious Science,” and “Divine Science.”

Author Louise Hay in 1976 released a pamphlet in which she links various diseases and disorders to certain thoughts and states of mind. This list was included in her 1984 best-seller book *You Can Heal Your Life*, in which she promotes positive thinking as a healing method.

In 2006 a film entitled *The Secret*, based on the “Law of Attraction,” was released and then developed into a book of the same title in 2007. The film and book gained widespread attention in the media from *Saturday Night Live* to *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in the United States. The same year Esther and Jerry Hicks (who provided much of the original source material for *The Secret*) released *The Law of Attraction*, which was on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

The Law of Attraction’s modern interpretation, as presented in *The Secret*, is that physical reality is a reflection of inner (subjective) reality, summarized in the quote from *The Secret*, “your thoughts and your feelings create your life.” Author and businessman Kevin Trudeau produced an audio compact disk called *Your Wish Is Your Command* which deals with the same subject of thoughts manifesting reality.

The success of the film and various books led to increased media coverage, both positive and negative. Oprah Winfrey devoted two episodes of her show to discuss the film and the Law of Attraction.

All my work is a warning against subjectivism and relativism, since these are the direct paths into spiritual crises. Already in the introduction to my first book, *Meditation as an Art of Life – a Basic Reader*, I wrote:

*[...] in a postmodern context you consider concepts such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly, as something we have created ourselves, and which therefore don't exist objectively. Therefore claims of objective truth are being rejected as premodern superstition, as expressions of old thinking. And because postmodernism also means individualism, yes, then such a rejection ends up in a global seen unique narcissism, which defends itself with phrases such as: "I have my truth. You have your truth. I want to be allowed to do what I want. You should be allowed to do what you want. Tolerance! New thinking!"*

*However the ideology fails, because truth escapes it, and returns to it as a kind of hubris-nemesis (which indicates, that truth does exist objectively). Two crucial arguments can namely be put forward against it:*

*1) The argument about self-refutation. The theory can in accordance with its own built-in relativism not itself be regarded as true. For that reason it is followed by a long line of self-contradictions.*

*2) The Reductio ad Absurdum-argument: If you preach relativism and believe, that everything is relative, and for that reason equal true, you have thereby accepted, that nazism, fascism, dictatorship, popular murder, terror and violence is as equally great blessings for mankind as democracy, negotiation and dialogue (it's a fact that many totalitarian ideologies, paradoxically enough, today have begun to use relativism as justification of their business). Then you have no basis in order to criticize, because you don't even have a rational frame to begin from. You can't criticize anyone for argumentation-bungling, or to replace arguments with machineguns, because this assumes, that there is a rational ground in your arguments.*

What if the psychopaths, mass murderers, dictators, terrorists, child abusers, etc., etc., got hold of the fact that there has arisen a new philosophy – the Law of Attraction (which famous people and millions of other people worship as the true divine power) – that actually would justify their ideas of what they find positive (their wishes, feelings, and needs)?

There is nothing at all in the Law of Attraction concept that can say that this would not be positive. Focusing on your wishes is per definition positive. The concept doesn't have any other ethical foundation than these two rules:

- 1) There doesn't exist any objective standard for good and evil!
- 2) Moral values are what you subjectively *feel* is good!

### **From Storytelling to Confabulation**

Storytelling is a way of getting in contact with the universal images. We cannot think of abstract universals like "man" without imagining some concrete, particular example of a man. Storytellers like Karen Blixen, Tolkien and Saint-Exupéry, see the universals in 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, philosophy and storytelling naturally reinforce each other's vision. Philosophy makes storytelling clear, storytelling makes philosophy real. Philosophy shows essences, storytelling shows existence. Philosophy shows meaning, storytelling shows life.

As the Nigerian poet and novelist, [Ben Okri](#), writes in his little book, *Birds of Heaven*:

*Philosophy is most powerful when it resolves into story. But story is amplified in power by the presence of philosophy.*

Storytelling is a way in which we can talk about the universal, as for example philosophical questions such as: 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?

Storytelling can concretize the universal. The need of being able to talk concretely about the abstract and universal is as old as mankind itself. And myths are precisely tales that gives abstract topics a visible form. They make an invisible universe visible,

at least to the “inner eye”. In many cultures myths have probably been the only language in which they have been able to talk about the great questions of life.

Storytelling is the oldest form of teaching, and the basic vehicle for the transmission of culture from one generation to another. Jesus taught through parables. The Hindu lives in a culture knit by the great stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Sufi trained through the stories of Nasrudin. All of these great teaching stories are available on multiple levels, simple enough for the child, yet complex enough to engage the deepest levels of reflections.

Ben Okri writes:

*“The African mind is essentially abstract, and their story-telling is essentially philosophical.*

*"A people are as healthy and confident as the stories they tell themselves. Sick storytellers can make nations sick. Without stories we would go mad. Life would lose it's moorings or orientation. Even in silence we are living our stories."*

A central explanation why storytelling today has lost its enchantment, its magic, is precisely because philosophy has been removed and been replaced by psychology. Enchantment is only enchantment, if you can feel a direction towards something otherworldly you haven't created yourself. Psychology is removing enchantment by saying that the whole thing is a creation of your own psyche. There is no magic in the questions: *Am I dreaming or am I awake? Was it real, or was it just a dream?* Psychology says: it was only a dream. Philosophy says: no, it was real. Philosophy is therefore also the instance which makes it possible to discriminate between dream and reality. If you claim that everything is a product of your own mind, you don't have any ability of discrimination.

Critical thinking (kritikos) has to do with three virtues: A) refutation of sophisms (elenchos), B) discrimination (the ability to discriminate between reality and illusion, good and evil, true and false - emphilotekhnein), and C) flexible thinking (learning to see, or rather, think about, things "from above", from alternative viewpoints, and, when doing this, focusing your thoughts on Beauty, Goodness and Truth).

I have called sophisms thought distortions. I introduced the concept of thought distortions in my supporting exercise the philosophical diary, where I described a Socratic inquire technique. Here they especially deal with psychological and personal matters. I have developed them further in my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#).

Critical thinking is mainly about yourself. You should not go out and attack others with this technique, though it of course can be necessary when someone is trying to force you into their own thought distortions. Remember that it is a spiritual exercise. You can use the philosophical diary, but what's most important, it is meant as a way of having a dialogue with yourself.

The interplay between the three virtues ensures the balance between logic and imagination, rational and irrational, philosophy and storytelling.

Today we see a war against critical thinking. A war that reflects the war which the Sophists led against Socrates in ancient Greece. This has resulted in that storytelling has been reduced to confabulation.

What is confabulation? The drive to find personal meaning or significance in impersonal or insignificant coincidences (Subjective validation) may be related to the powerful "natural" drive to create stories, narratives that string together bits and pieces of information into a tale. Of course truth matters most of the time, but many of our narratives satisfy us regardless of their accuracy. This tendency to connect things and create plausible narratives out of partially fictitious items is called Confabulation.

A confabulation is a fantasy that has unconsciously replaced events in memory. A confabulation may be based partly on fact or be a complete construction of the imagination. The term is often used to describe the "memories" of mentally ill persons, memories of alien abduction, and false memories induced by careless therapists or interviewers.

Have you ever told a story that you embellished by putting yourself at the center when you knew that you weren't even there? Or have you ever been absolutely sure you remembered something correctly, only to be shown incontrovertible evidence that your memory was wrong? No, of course not. But you probably know or have heard of somebody else who juiced up a story with made-up details or whose confidence in his memory was shown to be undeserved by evidence that his memory was false.

In my book *A Portrait of a Lifeartist* Confabulation is a central issue. I here show how memories are constructed by all of us and that the construction is a mixture of fact and fiction.



Confabulation is an unconscious process of creating a narrative that is believed to be true by the narrator but is demonstrably false.

Young Earth creationists (YECs) provide an excellent example of Confabulation mixed with Motivated reasoning. To maintain their position, YECs must reject nearly all science and confabulate new laws of nature and rules of logic and evidence, and subject themselves to ridicule for their willful ignorance and irrational adherence to the myths of an ancient, pre-scientific people. The same we see within the postmodern intellectualism on Universities, which therefore justifies the tendency within Management theory and New Age to confabulate stories which are not true.

To repeat the management theorists: “It is not facts, but the best story that wins!”

So, in our time with the spreading of subjectivism and relativism - and therefore Magical thinking - we are seeing how Confabulation somehow gets a justification. There is in fact - as I claim in my article *The Matrix Conspiracy* - a New World Order emerging: the world of Alternative History, Alternative Physics, Alternative Medicine and, ultimately, Alternative Reality.

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

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

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

The new New Age product called the WingMakers Project is an attempt to create an alternative history. It is not directly an example of Confabulation, since the creators of the website hardly believe their story to be true, but it will certainly create confabulation in others (see my article, [The WingMakers Project](#)).

Alternative history or alternate history is a genre of fiction consisting of stories that are set in worlds in which history has diverged from the actual history of the world. Since the 1950s this type of fiction has to a large extent merged with science fictional tropes involving cross-time travel between alternate histories or psychic awareness of the existence of “our” universe by the people in another; or ordinary voyaging uptime (into the past) or downtime (into the future) that results in history splitting into two or more time-lines.

A secret history (or shadow history) is a revisionist interpretation of either fictional or real (or known) history, which is claimed to have been deliberately suppressed, forgotten, or ignored by established scholars. Originally, secret histories were designed as non-fictional, revealing or claiming to reveal the truth behind the “spin”. Today we see how secret history sometimes is used in a long-running science fiction or fantasy universe to preserve continuity with the present by reconciling paranormal, anachronistic, or otherwise notable but unrecorded events with what actually happened in known history; for instance in the fictional time travel theories. The WingMakers story, for example, combines this with the urban legend and alternate history from the Ong’s Hat myth. Though the WingMakers website tries to avoid critique by saying it is a modern mythology (where urban legends are considered as a modern folklore) it also keeps on, precisely as in urban legends, to insinuate that the story is true. It is therefore a piece of pseudohistory.

Pseudohistory is purported history such as Afrocentrism, creationism, holocaust revisionism and the catastrophism of Immanuel Velikovsky. Pseudohistory should be distinguished from the ancient texts it is based on. The sagas, legends, myths and histories, which have been passed on orally or in written documents by ancient peoples are sometimes called pseudohistory. Some of it is pseudohistory, some of it is flawed history and some of isn’t history at all.

Pseudohistory should also be distinguished from historical fiction and fantasy. Anyone who cites a work of historical fiction as if it were a historical text is a practising pseudohistorian. There are also writers of historical fiction who intentionally falsify and invent ancient history. A technique to do this is to claim to find an ancient document and publishing it in order to express one’s own ideas. An example is *The Celestine Prophecy*. A variation on this theme is to claim that one is channeling a book from some ancient being, e.g, *The Urantia Book*, *Bringers of the Dawn*, and... *A Course in Miracles*.

New Age is permeated with references to vibrations and energy, advices to avoid the negative (you can tell good people by their eyes), stop doubting, follow your intuitions and premonitions, flow with coincidences, believe in the purposiveness of

everything, join thousands of others on the quest, turn into your feelings and evolve to a higher plane. Follow your intuitions and dreams as you go through your spiritual evolution. Fact or fiction, it doesn't matter. Truth is what you make it. Life's too short and too complicated to deal with reality. Make your own reality.

This New Age subjectivism and relativism encourage people to believe that reality is whatever you want it to be. The line between fact and fiction gets blurry and obscured. Subjectivism shuts down people's critical faculties, making them suggestible for any Ideology. It involves making people quit thinking critically in order to open them up to thinking Magical about that Subjective validation and Communal reinforcement lead to bliss. Hypnosis is in New Age directly used as a means for inducing in people certain worldviews.

The subjectivism in the WingMakers Project can be seen in the question about whether the WingMakers material is fact or fiction. The introduction to the project says as follows: "It is fact wrapped in fiction otherwise known as myth." So here we see how subjectivism is used as an attempt to get the line between fact and fiction blurry and obscured. It is also an attempt to avoid critique. Without success, because the story, as mentioned, ends in pseudohistory.

So, we see how the dark league behind New Age gurus like Marianne Williamson, is basing their viewpoints on confabulation.

### **Jean Houston and the Reduction of Ancient Mystery Schools to a Psychotherapeutic Role-playing Game**

In my Ebook, [The Scientology Game – and The Matrix Player's Handbook](#), I have shown how the New Age scene looks like a gigantic role-playing game.

The American psychologist, Jean Houston, is a central figure in the Human Potential Movement, a New Age Guru factory, developed directly out of the more dark sides of the counterculture.

Houston's *Mystery School* is an example of a long line of New Age self-help or personality transforming programs. According to Dr. Houston, "the purpose of the Mystery School is to engender the passion for the "possible" in our human and global development while discovering ways of transcending and transforming the local self so that extraordinary life can arise!"

Here is what Houston says on her Mystery School:

*It is my 20th Century version of an ancient and honorable tradition, the study of the world's spiritual mysteries. Once upon a time there were such schools in Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Afghanistan, Ireland, England, France, Hawaii, India, China, Japan and many other places on the globe. We harvest what is available (or can be imagined) of the knowledge and traditions, rites and rituals of these ancient studies, imbuing them with new realities and applications in order to live more freely and more fully.*

*Mystery School is intellectually vigorous, psychologically challenging and spiritually demanding . . . It is celebrational and transformational. It is also frequently hilarious and zany satiric.*

*Mystery School is both experiential and experimental. I weave together the things I love most: sacred psychology, music, history, theatre, cultural wisdom, science (fact, fiction and fantasy), neurophysiology, philosophy, anthropology, theology, poetry, laughter, cosmology, metaphysics and innovative ideas to provide a multi-faceted, multi-level Time out of time.*

*Exercises include psychophysical work, psychospiritual exploration, creative arts, energy resonance, movement and dance, altered states of consciousness, ritual and ceremony, high drama, high play and mutual empowerment.*

In her books and lectures she, like other New Agers, frequently aligns herself with the Great Traditions, which therefore becomes dangerously distorted. "In all the great traditions - Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Sufi, Jewish - it's all about waking up. Mystery School is essentially about the wake up call from Central and putting you not in attunement with it, but in alignment with it. You can always tune, but alignment is forever."

And:

"As we encounter the archetypal world within us, a partnership is formed whereby we grow as do the gods and goddesses within us."

This is all based on a reduction of philosophy to psychology, or rather, a certain aspect of psychology which originates in James Hillman's version of Jung's psychology, which reduces Plato's objective idealism to subjective idealism.

In his article on Jean Houston, the philosopher and critical thinker, Robert Carroll, writes:

*What Jean Houston has done is create her own mythos. She has probably gotten enough communal reinforcement to encourage her to believe in the reality of her mythos. Like so many others in New Age movements, she seems to find the distinction between myth and reality a hindrance to the truth. For their view of truth is entirely subjective: truth is whatever you want it to be.*

Houston claims:

*You . . . are probably at this point every race that ever was, as well as every species, as we know from the development of the brain that contains most of the species coded in us. . . .*

*Once you start living out of that Depth Life, you're living a Mythic Life and life gets very juicy!*

*"Body/Being/Blissing. Bodying/Blissing/Beingness. You are in it. You are in the utter Suchness of it, and you have lost the great divide." You need the divide only when you're driving. You don't need it when you're cooking.*

*...you have within you not only all the evolutionary past, but another reality altogether, a depth reality. . . . It is the great creative archetypal realm: hyperspatial, hypertemporal, but co-existent with consciousness in some way. The Depth Realm, the realm of gods, goddesses, angels, numinous borderline persons, creative principles, archetypal patterns.*

*You are the mystery, and the job of the Mystery School is to school you in your own depths.*

*The problem is that when we lost myth, we lost the rest of the story. We got stuck in television . . . .*

And, one might add, New Age.

### **The Mythology of Authenticity**

In my first book, *Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic Reader*, I worked with four philosophical openings in towards the Source. In my article, [Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity](#), I have revised them a bit. Let me describe them:

Philosophy and spirituality are in opposition to all kinds of ideology. In philosophy of existence (and in true spirituality) the concept of being are covering the concepts of

being yourself, of authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action. It is also covering the concept of happiness: the existential and life-philosophical concepts of reality, co-operation, movement, safety and meaning. Being yourself is therefore the same as being yourself present in the now, no matter what you are, no matter how much you are suffering, how poor you are, or how incompetent other people are conceiving you to be. Being yourself present in the now (passive listening presence, silence, or meditation) will by itself awaken a spirit of greatness.

In the self-help industry all this is turned upside down because of the ideological aspects. Instead of focusing on being (where the self-help industry has the word authenticity from), it presses people to focus on becoming. In philosophy of existence (and in true spirituality) the concept of becoming is covering the concepts of trying to become something else than what you are, where you imitate others, are a slave of others ideas and ideals, and where your actions are characterized by irresoluteness and doubt. In short: non-authenticity. It is also covering the concepts of suffering: the existential and life-philosophical concepts of unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness.

It is this aspect of the self-help industry that has made me puzzled over that this industry actually is supporting what you in traditional philosophy and spirituality consider as the four philosophical hindrances for the opening in towards the Source. But not enough with that, it directly hates the corresponding four philosophical openings.

The self-help industry is today often calling its method positive psychology. We have already looked at it. Let me summarize:

- 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 (and metaphysics) has in that way been reduced to psychology. Humanistic psychology is a central inspiration for management theory.
- 3) The postmodern intellectualism (constructivism) which supports the subjectivistic and relativistic idea, that there doesn't exist any objective truth. Truth is something

we create ourselves, either as individuals or as cultures, and since there doesn't exist any objective truth, there doesn't exist any objective scale of truth. Therewith (with the vocabulary of modern technology) 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 ideology is characterized by the mythology of authenticity. This mythology has two world-images, which are closely connected: humanistic psychology and constructivism. And the two methods used by these world-images are psychotherapy (humanistic psychology) and coaching (constructivism). It is a mythology because it isn't something real, it is the dream about becoming another, a life in a constant state of in-authenticity; in contrast to true spirituality, which you could call the reality of authenticity, because it here is about being precisely what you are, no matter how insignificant, or negative, it might seem in relation to your own or others' ideals.

The five main programming technologies of this conspiracy are Management theory, New Age, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), The law of attraction.

It is on the background of these sources of inspiration, that the self-help industry is turning the philosophical hindrances and openings upside down, so that the hindrances are considered as positive, and the openings are considered as negative. I call this the 666 aspect of the Matrix conspiracy.

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 subjectivist and relativistic point of view that the power of thought can create reality as it fits you*) and hereby end up in a contradiction between your thoughts and lived live.
- 2) A life-philosophical, where you are circling around your own past and future (*the idea that you should get in contact with your hidden resources to either becoming yourself as you once were: humanistic psychology and the idea about your inner core, and its method: psychotherapy and the dream of a lost past – or to become the other, you want to become: the constructivist 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 life-situation, are dependent on political or religious ideologies (*the supreme good is lying out in the future, and therefore the end justifies the means; you ought to find ways of getting on in the world rather than finding ways of discovering the truth; it is alright to use thought distortions in this quest*) and where you hereby exist on a future salvation. And this evaluating fragmentation is the separation of the observer and the observed.

According to the original wisdom traditions these four hindrances constitute a malfunction in the human mind. And it is this malfunction, which is the cause of the ignorance of the source of life. Ignorance is again the cause of suffering. In this way spiritual practice becomes a practice, which seeks to correct this malfunction. And therefore the two main concepts in spiritual practice are ignorance and suffering. In that way you get the four philosophical openings in towards the source:

1) A rational, where you examine the validity of your assumptions, conceptions and values, and search for coherency between your thoughts and your lived life.

2) A life-philosophical where you are present in the Now, and hereby achieve that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom.

3) An existence-philosophical, where you in your opinion and identity formation are yourself in the sense of being precisely what you are here and now (no matter how insignificant, or negative, it might seem in relation to your own or others' ideals), live in accordance with your own essence, and thereby achieve authenticity, autonomy, decisiveness and power of action.

4) A spiritual, where you aren't identified with your lifesituation, and where you, independent of religious or political ideologies, live from something deeper: The source itself; the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Said in another way: where



essence (the form of consciousness, meditation, the divine source) is one and the same with existence (being precisely what you are, existential presence in the now, life itself, the otherness). And this realized oneness is the wholeness of the observer and the observed.

I am well aware that the self-help industry also is using the concepts of the openings as positive concepts (especially the existence-philosophical opening with its concept of authenticity; that it is good to work with yourself, and realize your illusions, etc.), and therefore would disagree with my claim that they see them as negative. The use of the concepts of the openings is also the reason why it can be hard to discover the paradoxes. But the problem arises because they see them as future-oriented goals or ideals. And in order to reach these ideals you need therapy or coaching. And it is in this "practice" they end in the hindrances. That should be easy to see, when looking at the concepts of the hindrances. What they misunderstand is that the openings precisely are a practice in themselves: the true spiritual practice.

Such a spiritual practice can again be said to contain three aspects:

- 1) Critical thinking (spotting thought distortions and changing them)
- 2) Investigating the shadow
- 3) The spiritual practice (going beyond all ideas and images)

The reason why the self-help industry considers these three aspects, and therefore the four philosophical openings, as negative, is as follows:

- 1) There is no objective scale of truth that can decide whether something is positive or negative; it is entirely your own subjective feelings, that decide what is positive or negative. Therefore thought distortions can be seen as positive means of getting on in the world.
- 2) The positive psychology of the self-help industry is avoiding and ignoring all negative; that is: your shadow, your ignorance, your painbody, your suffering, your dark side.
- 3) It is not possible to go beyond your ideas and images. The only thing you can do is to change them into what you find positive.

In my article [Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology](#), I explain how the self-help industry, unknowingly, is supporting a

kind of black magic, or satanism, which show the essence in the 666 conspiracy, namely that the ego has become an object for “spiritual” worship. This will end in spiritual crises, especially the “positive” aspect of the spiritual crisis called ego-inflation.

The above-mentioned problems lead another paradox, namely the thought distortion I have called *The Hermeneutic of Suspicion*. The self-help industry ends up in a prejudiced worldview, where it condemns being; that is: it not only condemns what people are (it basically considers people as non-authentic and powerless if they have not accepted the self-help ideology and its therapeutic techniques), it also condemns people who actually are themselves present in the now, people who live in accordance with their own essence, and who have achieved that self-forgetful openness and absorption in the world, which is a condition for love, spontaneity, joy of life and wisdom: critical thinkers, (think for yourself), the true philosophers and spiritual masters.

## **Nondual Bias**

In my Ebook, [The Tragic New Age Confusion of Eastern Enlightenment and Western Idealism](#), I describe how New Agers confuse Eastern notions of enlightened consciousness (the Wholeness) with a point inside the ordinary psyche, or mind. This is a misunderstanding, since enlightened consciousness has to do with spaciousness, and not something inside the head. Folded into this spaciousness there exist a realm of collective and universal images, which are independent of the mind. This is the philosophy of Plato and Vedanta. Starting with Jung, all this has been reduced to a place inside the head: the psyche. It ends in subjectivism, and eventually solipsism, which I will return to in the end of this Ebook. The external world has become a problem.

In this way New Agers commit the thought distortions called Nondual bias. Nondual bias arises when you describe something as nondual, while forgetting that you can't describe anything without implying the negation of it.

The only thing that can be said to be nondual is the Wholeness. According to the Taoistic teaching of Yin and Yang there isn't anything beyond the world. You can't see the world from outside. You are in the world and you can only describe something from its opposition. What is the good? This you understand if you know what the evil is. You can't say anything about the world as a whole, because you can't put the Wholeness in opposition to anything. The Wholeness is therefore the indescribable (Tao).

So clear thinking, and therefore clear communication, involves, according to Taoism, an epistemological, a so-called gnoseological, dualism (Yin and Yang). Clear, or unambiguous, description, has the distinction between subject and object, image and reality, as a necessary precondition. We have to discriminate between subject and object, image and reality, in order to communicate unambiguous. And we have to discriminate between a long line of other oppositions as well: under one called Yin and Yang. And this discrimination is characterized by the knowledge that oppositions are complementary to each other, because they mutually exclude each other and at the same necessarily must supplement each other. If your thoughts slip out in one extreme you must remember the other extreme and bring it in. If you confuse oppositions, you must separate them.

Unclear, or ambiguous, thinking, or communication, arises when you either are confusing the oppositions, or are thinking in one extreme of a pair of opposites. That is: dualistic unbalance which creates thought distortions.

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

In meditation circles they often commit the Nondual bias by saying that meditation is to be completely without thoughts, because the enlightened consciousness (the Wholeness) is without thoughts.

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

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

There are also many people caught in spiritual crises of different types, or clairvoyants, mediums, channelers, etc., who experience non-ordinary phenomena,

and where images and reality in their descriptions flow together in one big confusion. It can be very flattering to hear, and sound very “nondual”, but in reality they express themselves, not only unclear and ambiguous, but directly obscure. So instead of taking them seriously, you should remember that obscurantism means hostility towards enlightenment, or simply: darkness. So, who knows what it is that expresses itself through them.

You can also see the Nondual bias in action when New Agers claim that their techniques, systems, therapies, methods, etc., etc., are nondual, or holistic, which is another word for nondualism. Here it is also often used as attacks on critics. The most known example is the so-called “integral” method of Ken Wilber .

The Nondual bias is also active in philosophical theories of mind such as materialism and idealism.

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

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

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

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

The problem is psychological reductionism, and lack of understanding philosophy. New Agers simply don't understand the Eastern concept of consciousness. They confuse the enlightened consciousness with the ordinary mind, or rather, the mind as described by subjective idealism. You could also say that they confuse the enlightened consciousness with the ego. So, the problem is the reduction of ontological realms of enlightened consciousness to psychology (ordinary mind); to something inside the ordinary human mind or psyche, which is situated in the head (in the East the enlightened consciousness is situated in the heart).

Conway's three levels of discrimination are:

3 - Conventional level

2 - Psychic-Soul level

1 - ONLY GOD

Conway writes:

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

*Losing the capacity to distinguish these three levels is a mark of great folly, not enlightened wisdom. And so, for instance, to excuse or overlook injustices occurring in the Rajneesh movement or elsewhere on this planet because "whatever happens is perfect" or because "this is all a dream, there's only God" is a tragic confusing of*

*levels, and makes a mockery of the courageous work of all those who have ever endeavored to bring truth in place of lies, healing in place of harm, justice in place of injustice.*

## **Ego-inflation**

Those who have read *A Course in Miracles* will have learned many things such as the following, where you can see the lack of discrimination:

Lesson #35, “My mind is part of God’s. I am very holy.”

Lesson #38, “There is nothing my holiness cannot do.”

Lesson #61, “I am the light of the world.”

Lesson #96, “Salvation comes from my one Self.”

Lesson #186, “Salvation of the world depends on me.”

Lesson #191, “I am the holy Son of God Himself.”

You could call it *A Course in Ego-inflation*.

The consequences of works like Williamson and Houston, if you actually succeed in creating an opening to the spiritual twilight zone, is spiritual crisis, manifesting either as the dark night of the soul, or ego-inflation. The reason is that the subjectivism and relativism in these environments (as well as in many other areas), eliminate critical thinking (discrimination), and thereby makes you vulnerable for magical thinking and ego-inflation.

Ego-inflation happens when the ego has embezzled itself energy, which rightly belongs to the collective time. 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, etc.

When the ego is getting inflated there comes a feeling of, that the “old” ego has been altered, even disappeared. This feeling is sensed a being good, positive, yes it can even be a peak experience. The illusion is that the ego hasn’t disappeared, but instead has been inflated. Therefore the dark side of the ego, the whole complex of thought distortions, also has been inflated.

Ego-inflation is the cause of the sense of improvement, healing, or religious experiences people can have, when for example working with therapy, coaching, healing, clairvoyance, or when they have discovered a new ideology, religious or

political. It is closely related to thought distortions such as Subjective validation, Communal reinforcement, Groupthink, Illusion of control, Classical conditioning and placebo effects.

There are three main forms of ego-inflation: intellectual, identifical and euphorical inflation.

### *1) Intellectual ego-inflation*

In general, in intellectual circles, in cultural connections, and in the political life, they have always accepted intellectual ego-inflation – but as mentioned: it is one of the most crucial causes of all the conflict, war and violence, which the world is characterized by. People and their opinions and –isms, political directions etc., all of it is, as a rule, mainly an intellectual play characterized by a contradiction between thoughts and lived life. One is idealist, another realist, one is Marxist, atheist, another Christian, charitable, but if you look these people after in their existence – in their lived life – then you soon discover the contradictions.

Kierkegaard called it “the litany madness”; people can repeat the right doctrines and principles by rote, but when it comes to reality, to their way of living, then you discover all the contradictions.

The tool to be used against intellectual ego-inflation is in other words rationality and critical thinking, therefore philosophical training, where you investigate the validity of your assumptions, conceptions and values, and seek after coherence between your thoughts and lived life. All this is removed in Houston.

### *2) Identifical ego-inflation*

Identifical ego-inflation is of two kinds: 1) Identification with an outer power, which not belongs to the ego (an institution, a teacher, others’ techniques, meditation-centres, one’s role, etc.). 2) Identification with an inner power, which nor belongs to the ego (God, master, healing energy, the collective time, collective images, etc.).

The tool to be used against this form of ego-inflation is authentic spiritual practice; that is to say: where you understand the difference between the content of consciousness and the form of consciousness – that in neutrality to separate yourself from the content of consciousness, for thereby to direct yourself towards the form of consciousness; discrimination, which again is a central part of critical thinking.

### *3) Euphorical ego-inflation*

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

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

The tools to be used against this ego-inflation is partially ground connection (Hara, earth bound work, preferably with other people, for example as a health care worker), partially again realization work, discrimination, humble separation of the ego and the spirit, between the ego and the rising, bubbleling, jubilant delight. Moreover ethical practice, training of compassion, for example Tonglen practice (in my book *Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader*, I have described both the Hara practice and the Tonglen practice in the supporting exercises The Hara meditation and the Heartmeditation).

One of the deep reasons why they in monasteries anywhere in the world are letting the monks and nuns work with dirt, cleaning, cooking, taking care of sick people and dying, was in order to, that they never should loose reality and the ground connection of sight.

People who are being caught by ego-inflation, begin, as a rule, to act like kings and queens, they shall not anything practical do, they shall not be adjusted, they fly.

To all three kinds of ego-inflation there are in other words some philosophical principles and supporting exercises you ought to hold on to. This is what the traditional mystery schools taught.

### **Nietzsche and the Antichrist**

In the prologue to her book, *The Search for the Beloved – Journeys in Mythology & Sacred Psychology*, Jean Houston quotes two pages from Nietzsche’s *The Joyful Wisdom*, and celebrates his claim that God is dead. In the next chapters she speaks



about the rise of a new science and a new kind of scientist, more or less based on the biologist, Rupert Sheldrake's pseudoscience; that is: the new science and the new scientist are New Age pseudoscience and New Age pseudoscientists (see my article, [A Critique of Rupert Sheldrake](#)). The external world (the stars, mountains, trees and flowers) has been reduced to a morphic field, and the gods have been placed where they belong: inside your own psyche. Hereafter she is introducing subjective idealism (though she of course has no clue about that she is doing philosophy and not psychology). Her "great news" are that humans now are gods themselves, and can create in reality like gods. The rest of the book is about psychotherapeutic role-playing games, which teaches people to identify with gods and goddesses.

In my Ebook, [Philosophical Counseling with Tolkien](#), 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.

A phenomenon which I have returned to many times in my books, especially in my book, *Lucifer Morningstar – a Philosophical Love Story*, is the Faust-syndrome. It is a syndrome which characterizes most Westerners. We have already mentioned it: it is the dangers of ego-inflation in combination with spiritual practice. Ego-inflation is at the same time based on a great denial of our own collective shadow, or painbody, which are rooted in original sin. It is a kind of compensation.

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

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

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

This is a demonical element.

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

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

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. But, it is very difficult to know whether you actually do this, because of the Ego's incredible ability of self-deceit, and the many masks and roles this can take. I myself have chosen to give away all my services, books and articles for free, so that I at least not is subject for an economical personal gain through my work.

In another, more aesthetic-vampirism scenario, you can also see some of these group-energetical polarization-phenomena around Karen Blixen.

Modern Western occultism is permeated with the Faust-syndrome. Both Steiner's Goetheanum and Jung's tower in Bollingen are two strange and fascinating buildings, which both has to do with the enlightened consciousness, and, of course, the dangers and pitfalls on the path towards it. Both are referring to Goethe. Over Jung's tower is written: "Philemonis Sacrum – Fausti Poenitentia". Philomoni's Shrine, Faust's atonement". Both buildings have in a symbolic way to do with the collective karma, which unites both Steiner and Jung with Goethe. This kind of collective karma is also the reason why I claim that Westerners must find a Western oriented path of enlightenment, in order to understand the layers of our collective painbody, which we will meet when we begin to practice meditation.

*The Closing of the American Mind - How Higher Education has Failed Education and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*, is a book by Allan Bloom. Bloom explains this by showing the rise of nihilism and the embracement of Nietzsche. In the Matrix Conspiracy, I describe Nietzsche as the Sophist King over all Matrix Sophists.

Nietzsche is one of the most central philosophers behind New Age and New Thought. Christianity, as a religion of peace, is despised by Nietzsche. According to Nietzsche's account, pity has a depressive effect, loss of vitality and strength, and is harmful to life. It also preserves that which should naturally be destroyed. For a noble morality, pity is a weakness, but for Christianity, it is a virtue.

Nietzsche's book, *The Antichrist*, was written shortly before his nervous breakdown. However, as one scholar noted, "the Antichrist is unrelievedly vituperative, and would indeed sound insane were it not informed in its polemic by a structure of analysis and a theory of morality and religion worked out elsewhere ...".

In §35, in the book, Nietzsche wanted to convey the idea that, to Christ, Heaven is a subjective state of mind. This is precisely the subjective idealism which also New Thought promotes, and which we see reflected in A Course in Miracles. In Nietzsche

it is called perspectivism. In order to accomplish this goal, Nietzsche parodied a passage from the New Testament, which the Nietzsche-Archive, headed by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, decided to suppress so that there would be no doubt as to the strict correctness of Nietzsche's use of the Bible. According to Nietzsche, one of the thieves, who was also being crucified, said, "This was truly a divine man, a child of God!" Nietzsche had Christ reply, "If you feel this, you are in Paradise, you are a child of God." In the Bible, only Luke related a dialogue between Christ and the thief in which the thief said, "This man has done nothing wrong" to which, Christ replied, "Today I tell you, you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 39-43) Nietzsche had the thief speaking the words that the centurion later spoke in Luke 23: 47, Matthew 27: 54, and Mark 15: 39. In these passages, Christ was called the Son of God by the soldier. The Nietzsche Archives' suppression was lifted in later editions and now appears exactly as Nietzsche wrote.

According to Nietzsche the will to power is the basic power of all life. He therefore thought about a special meaning of the word will. Normally the will is understood as Man's ability to bring a more or less reasonable decision out in life. And ahead of the will's effort goes the consideration. But Nietzsche's will to power is neither connected to reasonable considerations, nor consciousness. On the contrary it describes life's fundamental character of striving towards increase – a central idea in evolutionism.

Will is normally a psychological concept. It describes an ability, or an aspect, of the human consciousness. In contrast to this Nietzsche is seeing it as an ontological, or metaphysical, concept. The fundamental idea is, that if we shall understand the multifold expressions of all life, then we must interpret them as outcome of will to power. This idea led to Nietzsche's re-evaluation of all values. The eternal values are only a slave moral without reality and truth. They are illusions or fictions. Therefore he dethroned reason as the ability to insight in the eternal values. Body, desires, and nature, are the central in Man, not reason. God is dead and the world is chaotic, empty, absurd; something, which Man himself must control. Man must himself create his values: a master moral created by the so-called superhuman.

Now, if we take Nietzsche, then his idea about the will to power has to do with the outgoing movement of time, the future; but as an ontological principle. What he is talking about is the becoming of everything, becoming and not being; that is: a state of non-being, nothingness, which only you yourself can fill with meaning. So - though Nietzsche is talking about the will to power as a creative force - this is not something positive connected with life itself. Nietzsche's view of life itself, the eternal recurrence of the same, is a view of life devoid of values. God is dead.

According to Nietzsche there neither exists a sensuous, a material, or a spiritual world given in advance. Everything is created by being interpreted. Nietzsche believed that the will - that is to say: the defeating, the remodeling, the striving - is something creative. The will to power, according to Nietzsche, is a creating power. That this power is the basic power in Man means, according to Nietzsche, that all expressions of the human life must be understood as forms of will to power; intake of food, arrangement of the everyday life with home and clothes, cultivation of nature, as well as sensation, feelings, thinking and will in usual sense - are expressions of the will to power. Nietzsche is not least thinking about the will to power in the image of art. All human unfolding is actually a creative process where a content, or a material, is formed. Life is seen as a work of art.

A similar thought exists in the so-called self-production thesis, which is the thought about, that Man is the being, who creates himself through his history, and thereby controls his own freedom. The thought exists in the German idealism, for instance in Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. Both Existentialism, as well as Marxism, also builds on the understanding of the freedom of Man to form his own life, and that this is an unconditional value. Freedom is a good thing, a demand and a responsibility. What it is about, is the freedom to be the creative power in your own history. In the Existentialists it is the life-story of the individual, in the Marxists it is the world-history of the community.

The self-production thesis builds on the thought, that Man is in a continual state of becoming. The concept formation also often becomes used in connection with the concept of becoming. In my book *A Portrait of a Lifeartist* I have examined this in details in the section *The Lifeartist as a Desirous Being*.

With this Nietzsche introduced a quite central concept: perspectivism. Through our interpretations (language) we directly construct the world. And you must therefore have the will and power to create new values, and you must have the power to give them name in a new way, because namegiving is the same as an unfolding of power. Or else you end up as a slave.

"Name it and claim it" is a theology taught by some televangelists, faith healers, megachurches, and Pentecostal preachers. Some of them think the "name it and claim it" label is derogatory and prefer it be called "Word of Faith" or the "prosperity gospel". Word of Faith theology is also called "blab it and grab it" by less kind detractors.

The movement has its roots in the griftier parts of New Thought. The movement itself was popularized by Kenneth Hagin, a Pentecostal preacher from Texas and later

based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He taught faith healing and founded the Rhema Bible Church and Rhema Bible Training College. His church was moderately famous around the state for the large and expensive Christmas light display but not really notable for anything else (although the implicated thoughts now are global). Hagin authored scores of booklets teaching how the Holy Spirit could make you rich, healthy, and "anointed" with spiritual gifts if you would just have enough faith to "name it and claim it."

The New Thought promoter, and "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. It's really that easy.'"

According to Nietzsche, 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.

All this is also the New Age guru (and conspiracy theorist) Jon Rappoport's view of life. He just has another name for perspectivism, namely imagination. Imagination is the creative power, and this power is unlimited. You simply create reality through your imagination. Fake it Till You Make It. The *create-your-own-reality* ideology (see my article, [A Critique of Jon Rappoport](#)).

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 superhuman 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.

Heidegger and Sartre both think from Kierkegaard's philosophy of existence, but without his Christianity and humanism, and therefore they end in subjectivism and irrationalism. They both show, in different ways, what the danger is in subjectivism

and its belonging irrationalism. Irrationalism led Heidegger to Nazism, though only for a shorter period, and Sartre had difficulties explaining why you not as well could choose an anti-humanistic project of life such as Leninism or Nazism.

All the above theories is today seen in a whole tendency of time within school, folk high school and continuing education, where you focus on so-called "personal development" and "Personality-developing courses" in connection with demands about lifelong learning, continuing education, readiness for change and flexibility; precisely what management theory and coaching are all about.

For instance they use Sartre's scriptures as a request for uninhibited and egoistic self-expression, where the individual person is letting his choices decide everything. The existentialists say that Man has the freedom, through his choices, to be the creative power in his own history.

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. Nietzsche called it perspectivism, Rappoport calls it imagination. New Thought calls it visualization. It doesn't matter, it is all expressions of the same mix of materialism and idealism. So, don't get fooled over that these two metaphysical theories apparently are in war with each other.

### **The History of the American Dream**

Susan Jacoby's new book *The Age of American Unreason* might be viewed as a kind of sequel to Richard Hofstadter's 1963 classic, "Anti-Intellectualism in American Life." A cultural history of the last forty years, *The Age of American Unreason* focuses on the convergence of social forces—usually treated as separate entities—that has created a perfect storm of anti-rationalism. These include the upsurge of religious fundamentalism, with more political power today than ever before; the failure of public education to create an informed citizenry; and the triumph of video over print culture. Sparing neither the right nor the left, Jacoby asserts that Americans today have embraced a universe of "junk thought" that makes almost no effort to separate fact from opinion.

With mordant wit, she surveys an anti-rationalist landscape extending from pop culture to a pseudo-intellectual universe of "junk thought." Disdain for logic and evidence defines a pervasive malaise fostered by the mass media, triumphalist religious fundamentalism, mediocre public education, a dearth of fair-minded public intellectuals on the right and the left, and, above all, a lazy and credulous public. It is a breeding ground for populism.

In my articles on Donald Trump ([The Confabulation of Trump](#), and its update, [A Critique of Donald Trump](#)), I showed that populism is the key factor in the election of Donald Trump as the President of US. The key elements of this kind of populism are anti-elitism and nativism, which can translate into anti-immigrant views. Donald Trump, and his government, are defending concepts of “alternate truths” about Trump’s ideas, and “fake news” about any critique of him. Trump is completely indifferent to what is true and false, never speaks positively about democracy, equality before the law or human rights. He openly admires foreign dictators, who define leadership as the ability to suppress the opposition and who led an election campaign where people who contradicted him were removed by force. So, we actually have a quite good idea about what we are dealing with. It is quite easy to see, that since New Thought is based on subjectivism, it has no objective frame of reference for what is true and false. No New Thought practitioner has any rational foundation for claiming that Trump not is following the teaching correctly, and actually has success with it.

Donald Trump seems like the ultimate proof of the premise of Kurt Andersen’s book *Fantasyland – How America Went Haywire*. An entertainer, reality tv star, conspiracy theorist, con artist and pathological liar are now sitting in the White House. New Thought is a movement that can justify this with a postulated root in spirituality. In his book, Andersen argues for that USA was created by people, who likes good stories and the believe in the, sometimes a bit too, fantastic worlds. The book describes the Trump-phenomenon as a direct consequence of the land’s history. The national character is determined by the right of believing what you want. No matter what others are saying. This moment in history, the era of Donald Trump, where facts no longer are facts, are quite natural for Americans.

In the start of *Fantasyland* Andersen defines to decisive movements for the creation of the American identity: the strong religious protestant immigrants, and the English colonialists. Other versions of American history have also told this story, but Andersen is doing it in quite another way.

When the puritans went from Europe to America, they precisely did this because they insisted on the right to believe what they wanted to, even if the surrounded world believed they were crazy. The first English attempts on settling in America was an attempt of copying the Spaniards, who had found gold in South America and Mexico. The English dreamt fever dreams about their own Eldorado. However, there was no gold in Jamestown in Virginia, which became the British’s first anchor in the new world. Nevertheless, they kept on believing that the grand gold discovery was just around the next corner.



Andersen believes that the Nation is created by what at that time was extremist protestant sects and people who kept on digging after gold, despite that people died like flies. In other words: religious nutcases and soldiers of fortune, who hoped about being rich in a moment.

Andersen hereafter follows the American history, which slowly over the centuries develops into the present Fantasyland, where reality constantly is being questioned, and where the irrational and false have become respectable and perhaps unstoppable.

Over witch hunts, revivalist preachers, Mormons, gold diggers, quacks, capitalists, sects, immigrants and soldiers of fortune, who believe they can become millionaires over a night, the book is going through the history of America. A history which are accentuated by strong individuality, anti-establishment-culture, extreme religiousness and the believe in the fantastic – that anything is possible.

The classical American enterprise plays a central role in the development. The American idea, that everything can be sold or bought – even religion, is quite unique for USA. Andersen says that before John D. Rockefeller ended up as the world's richest man, the oil baron's father got rich on a false pink elixir drink by the name *Microbe Killer*, which apparently was able to cure all diseases.

The establishment of Hollywood's dream universe marks another turning-point on USA's path towards the ultimate state of "Fantasyland". The most famous people in USA are now actors – persons who pretend to be other persons, who exists in an alternative version of reality. In the movie theatres' seats, everybody can now live a life with unrealistic stories, and they can dream themselves away into another reality.

The 1960s puts even more fire to this. The hippies' rebellion against the existing norms begins in a beautiful way, but leads to a widespread relativism, where the subjective view becomes more important than the objective. The political left, and its insistence that you can perceive many things in different ways, was gaining foothold in the academical world and therefore it was turned into the society as such. With time the political right was following and has taken relativism into new heights. Andersen argues that the 1968s somehow is partly responsible for the denial of facts coming from the political right. I have myself argued for this. American weapon enthusiasts, climate deniers and conspiracy theoreticians are in a high degree using information which are against the objective truth.

The hippies' message about that you can believe in anything because truth is constructed, created a markedly movement. In the 1960s all forms of belief and speculations were suddenly made possible, says Andersen.

Around the turn of the century another revolution happened: the internet allows the spread of fake news, and wrong information and viewpoints explode. Conspiracy theorists have found a haven here. Donald Trump, for example, created his political platform and power base in the republican party on the background of a conspiracy theory: that the former president, Barack Obama, not is born in USA.

The internet creates a perfect infrastructure to obscure ideas and beliefs, which before were long from mainstream. Alternative realities could now be discharged to a huge audience, which the traditional gatekeepers couldn't control.

In 1961 the former president Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against the "military industrial complex". He believed that the mix of interests of the US military and the weapon industry could have catastrophic consequences. Andersen, however, is worried about the "fantasy industrial complex" where the mix of business, religion, entertainment, technology and politics, have created a culture which are out of touch with reality. Where truth not is truth, facts not is facts, and where you can believe whatever you want to believe.

People want to be entertained. Everything can now become entertainment, and entertainment sneaks in in all parts of society. Andersen claims that this is important in order to understand why the difference between fantasy and reality has become blurred.

Americans are basically more religious and believe more in supernatural phenomena than most other "highly developed" societies. According to Andersen, half of the Americans are completely convinced that there exists a divine heaven where you come up when you die. Two-thirds believe that there exist angels and demons, while half see God as a male being and not just a universal power.

But the Americans also believe in all kind of other stuff. A third is convinced that aliens have visited earth and that the government has invented a cure for cancer, but keeps it hidden for the population. Almost a quarter believe that vaccines creates autism – and that Donald Trump won most votes at the presidential election in 2016. 15 percent believe that the medias or the government have inserted technology in the TV signals which can control peoples' minds.

Andersen argues that the strong Protestantism, mixed with the thoughts of the enlightenment time, have created a unique situation – and a problem for America. The impulse in Protestantism to find meaning in everything, mixed with the enlightenment time's focus on empirical evidence, have created Americans' mania with connecting all points. Everything has to be explained. Irrationality mixed with rationality.

The special about the American Protestantism was, among others, that you were in a completely new country where you could do what you liked to do: create your own faith societies, churches and cities. Where everything was possible. People could in fact be rich overnight. This was mixed with the less fortunate aspects of the Enlightenment time. Not Voltaire, Jefferson and Hume, but on the contrary the viewpoint that you can believe in anything. When you in this way don't care about normal rules of evidence, for example through science, you end in an almost religious believe, that you can define your own reality; a phenomenon which is very American and are characterizing the situation today. This is the problem of reductionism, pseudoscience and scientism. The insistence that science should be united with spirituality. New Age. Quite central in New Age is the idea that you can create your own reality, an idea which often is supplied with all kinds of pseudoscientific statements that claim to prove it. There is no consideration of evidence at all.

Many analyses and evaluations points towards that USA is a split country, where the political difference is so large that the country almost isn't connected. But according to Andersen there is another split which is more important: the split between those who believe in science and fact, and the part of the population who just believes what they feel are right. This is a more fundamental split and a much more dangerous one. The problem is that the ones who believe in facts also have develop into a typical American fundamentalism, namely [atheist fundamentalism](#), another aspect of scientism.

Andersen is very critical towards Trump. But Fantasyland was actually written long before Trump was nominated as the presidential candidate for the Republican party in the summer of 2016. Andersen had to rewrite it, so that the president could be included. He had good experiences since he had been writing about Trump in several years for different American publications.

When one of Donald Trump's attorneys and a near political supporter, the former New York mayor, Rudy Giuliani, in front of rolling cameras, should explain why the president didn't had to be questioned in the Mueller investigation, another low in the American post-factual world, was seen. He said that the argument for why the president needed to give an explanation, since he just could tell the truth and

therefore hadn't anything to fear, was a silly argument. Because that would just be one single version of truth, which not is truth.

The TV host answered confused: "truth is truth."

"No, truth is not just truth," was the surrealistic explanation from the president's attorney.

One of the promises Donald Trump gave the Americans was: "I will give you anything" and "all the dreams, you have dreamt for your country, will be fulfilled". Andersen believes that Trump's feat both was to use the Americans' distrust in the democratic system and at the same time play on Americans' unrealistic dreams and fantasies about National greatness.

Trump is just a symbol on the underlying development of distorted reality and indifference towards facts. It will still be there when Trump no longer is president, says Andersen. But because Trump incarnates this development, it makes it even more clear *how* crazy America might seem to non-Americans.

### **The Influence from Occultism**

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 Middle-earth, 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.

There can be no doubt that Marianne Williamson is inspired by this Ring. In *The Gift of Change*, she writes in a section called Angels and Demons:

*During the wee hours of the morning, both angels and demons take shape...In those hours that I've lain so inconveniently awake, I think I've begun to know what awakened means. Noting the witching hour – 4:15 – at which I awake more often than not, stealing outside to look at the stars and marvel at the moon. I return again*

*to my ancient self. In those hours, I am not a menopausal nutcase, I'm a magical witch, and I can feel it in my bones (page 243-244).*

In my Ebook [Evolutionism – The read Thread of The Matrix Conspiray](#), I tell about how also occult knowledge has left the traditional path and developed into New Age. For those who are occult awakened it is important to know about this. In the following I will give an overview over this development.

Modern occult knowledge has its origin in Western Esotericism. I'm quite fascinated by esotericism, and there is a lot of valid stuff to be found here. I've already explained the necessity of understanding our Western karmic lines. Western esotericism could for example be treated as a world view that embraces 'enchantment' in contrast to world views influenced by post-Cartesian, post-Newtonian, and positivist science which have sought to 'dis-enchant' the world. Esotericism is in this sense understood as comprising those world views which eschew a belief in instrumental causality and instead adopt a belief that all parts of the universe are interrelated without a need for causal chains. It therefore stands as a radical alternative to the disenchanted world views which have dominated Western culture since the scientific revolution, and must therefore always be at odds with secular (modern) culture.

An early exponent of this definition was the historian of Renaissance thought Frances Yates in her discussions of a "Hermetic Tradition", which she saw as an 'enchanted' alternative to established religion and rationalistic science. However, the primary exponent of this view was Faivre, who published a series of criteria for how to define "Western esotericism" in 1992.

The origins of Western esotericism are in the Hellenistic Eastern Mediterranean, then part of the Roman Empire, during Late Antiquity, a period encompassing the first centuries of the Common Era. This was a milieu in which there was a mix of religious and intellectual traditions from Greece, Egypt, the Levant, Babylon, and Persia, and in which globalisation, urbanisation, and multiculturalism were bringing about socio-cultural change.

One component of this was Hermetism. Another tradition of esoteric thought in Late Antiquity was Gnosticism. A third form of esotericism in Late Antiquity was Neoplatonism. After the fall of Rome, alchemy and philosophy and other aspects of the tradition were largely preserved in the Arab and Near Eastern world and reintroduced into Western Europe by Jews and by the cultural contact between Christians and Muslims in Sicily and southern Italy. The 12th century saw

the development of the Kabbalah in southern Italy and medieval Spain. These are all traditional occult practices which I support.

But with The Age of Enlightenment we witnessed a process of increasing secularisation of European governments and an embrace of modern science and rationality within intellectual circles. In turn, a "modernist occult" movement emerged that reflected varied ways in which esoteric thinkers came to terms with these developments. One of the most prominent esotericists of this period was the Swedish naturalist Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), who attempted to reconcile science and religion after experiencing a vision of Jesus Christ. His writings focused on his visionary travels to heaven and hell and his communications with angels, claiming that the visible, materialist world parallels an invisible spiritual world, with correspondences between the two that do not reflect causal relations. Following his death, followers would found the Swedenborgian New Church, although his writings would influence a far wider array of esoteric philosophies. Swedenborg is the predecessor of the channeling craze, which is seen today in Theosophy and New Age (see my article [Paranormal Phenomena seen in relation with Channeling](#)).

Though it is extremely important to make aware of the existence of external spiritual beings, both demonical and divine, accounts like Swedenborg's falls for the thought distortion called truth by authority. The very claim of having total knowledge (authority) of the afterlife is a proof of its delusion. There is not a hint of the traditional philosophical urge to think and discover for yourself, which occult teaching always has emphasized, and it is therefore ending in ideology. This can't be a message from the divine source. Therewith is not said that Swedenborg didn't had some good ideas. He has for example some interesting thoughts about the free will problem.

Another major figure within the esoteric movement of this period was the German physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1814), who developed the theory of Animal Magnetism, which later came to be known more commonly as "Mesmerism". This is the aspect of esotericism which developed into the New Thought movement, and hypnotherapy (see my articles [The New Thought Movement and the Law of Attraction](#) and [Hypnosis, Hypnotherapy and the Art of Self-deceit](#)).

Various Spiritualist mediums came to be disillusioned with the esoteric thought available, and sought inspiration in pre-Swedenborgian currents; the most prominent of these were Emma Hardinge Britten (1823–1899) and Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), the latter of whom called for the revival of the "occult science" of the ancients, which could be found in both the East and West. Authoring the influential Isis

Unveiled (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), she co-founded the Theosophical Society in 1875 (see my article [The Fascism of Theosophy](#)).

Theosophy is the most obvious predecessor of New Age and its “evolutionistic spirituality”. Theosophy is directly trying to synthesize spirituality and science, and is especially inspired by Darwinism, and its theories about human evolution. It is from Theosophy we have the spiritual confused concept of “The Evolution of Consciousness”. And this idea continues today in New Age and Ufology, where spirituality, apart from Darwinism, furthermore is sought synthesized with new developments within psychology, psychotherapy and natural science, especially biology and quantum mechanics.

Add to this that new esoteric understandings of magic also developed in the latter part of the 19th century. One of the pioneers of this was American Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825–1875), who argued that sexual energy and psychoactive drugs could be used for magical purposes. Inspired by Nietzsche, this developed into the create-your-own-reality craze in New Age and New Thought. And the combination of spiritual practice with psychedelics was seen in the counterculture of the 60s and is today especially having its renaissance in the so-called “transhumanist spirituality” (see my booklet [The Psychedelic Reanaissance and David Jay Brown](#)).

In England, the [Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn](#), an initiatory order devoted to magic which based itself on an understanding of kabbalah, was founded in the latter years of the century. One of the most prominent members of that order was Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), who went on to proclaim the religion of Thelema and become a prominent member of the [Ordo Templi Orientis](#). Some of their contemporaries developed esoteric schools of thought that did not entail magic, namely the Greco-Armenian teacher George Gurdjieff (1866–1949) and his Russian pupil P. D. Ouspensky (1878–1947). This developed into the human potential movement and New Age psychotherapy (see my articles [The Devastating New Age Turn within Psychotherapy](#), [Spiritual Vampires](#), [The Vampirised Spirit of John Rosen](#), and [Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh \(Osho\)](#)).

So, emergent occult and esoteric systems found increasing popularity in the early 20th century, especially in Western Europe. Occult lodges and secret societies flowered among European intellectuals of this era who had largely abandoned traditional forms of Christianity. The spreading of secret teachings and magic practices found enthusiastic adherents in the chaos of Germany during the interwar years. Notable writers such as Guido von List spread neo-pagan, nationalist ideas, based on Wotanism and the Kabbalah. Many influential and wealthy Germans were drawn to secret societies such as the Thule Society. Thule Society activist Karl



Harrer was one of the founders of the German Workers' Party, which later became the Nazi Party; some Nazi Party members like Alfred Rosenberg and Rudolf Hess were listed as "guests" of the Thule Society, as was Adolf Hitler's mentor Dietrich Eckart. It is clear that these tendencies have their influence of the obvious fascistic element in the Matrix Conspiracy (see my article [The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism](#)).

All this forms a central background for Jung's psychology. We have seen that Jung simply reduces Plato's objective idealism (the objective world of archetypes) to subjective idealism (the subjective world of archetypes). The whole metaphysical world is now planted within the human psyche, a move which opens the path into ego-inflations of solipsistic dimensions (the problem of the external world is now immense). He does this through some intermediary sources, as for example the metaphysical [Lebensphilosophia](#) from the romantic era (irrationalism), neo-paganism, theosophy, social Darwinism, occultism, Richard Wagner worship, and Nietzsche's theory about the superhuman, who shall replace God. It is no surprise that inflation is such a central theme in Jung. We can see this in the English scholar, Peter Kingsley's work about Jung called *Catafalque - Carl Jung and the End of Humanity*. (see my article, [Peter Kingsley – Another Story Waiting to Pierce You \(a critique\)](#)).

In Kingsley's book, Jung is not only a hero, but something like a world savior, a prophet and an enlightened master renewing a line of former enlightened masters. His view of Jung as an enlightened master is not my exaggeration (see page 281-82, 293, 303). He also describes Jung's *Red Book* as a new bible, a new testament (page 280).

In my view Jung was not enlightened, and he made a huge mistake in his reductionism. He was in a spiritual crisis, due to a kundalini awakening. He therefore had an opening to the collective images of time. The opening to the collective images of time, the creation of genius works, and the possibility of, either choosing spirituality, or ego-inflation (a Faustian pact with the devil), is, as I will show below, quite central in my own work. Something similar unfolded in the life of Karen Blixen - see my free Ebook, [Karen Blixen - The Devil's Mistress](#). I am therefore grateful that Kingsley has gone into these very esoteric things. But it is disappointing that he falls into the trap of sophism.

Jung's, and therefore Kingsley's, view, is that psychology has to replace religion. Read about this on page 277-279. On these pages it is also stated that wisdom, and therefore philosophy, needs to be replaced by psychology.

Herewith we have the explanation of why New Age today reduces everything to psychology. It is clear that with reductionisms, such as psychologism and historicism,



universal truth is reduced to subjectivism and relativism. Therewith the foundation for the perennial philosophy is removed. It is also in this neo-pagan, and anti-Christian environment, you can find pseudohistorical postulations that questions the historical life of Jesus. We see this in [Ernst Haeckel's](#) evolutionary pseudohistory, a fundamental inspiration for Jung's theories. And today we find the same in a positive reviewer of Kingsley's book, [Michael Baigent](#), who is a psychologist and freemason. He co-wrote a number of books that question mainstream perceptions of history and the life of Jesus (see my article, [The Priory of Sion Hoax](#)). He is best known as co-writer of the book [Holy Blood, Holy Grail](#), a theme Dan Brown is working on in his novel *The Da Vinci Code*. In other words: we have to go to Germany in order to find the roots of the counterculture movement in USA, and therefore for New Age. It is known as [Lebensreform](#). And it is here we have to find the roots of Kingsley's philosophy. The beginning of *Catafalque* is namely starting with Kingsley giving a lecture at [Eranos](#). And only a few pages later you will find that Kingsley is claiming that the Crucifixion is a diabolical historical twisting created by Christian Doctrine – page 40. Kingsley doesn't mention the problem of reductionism with one single word.

In the 1960s and 1970s, esotericism came to be increasingly associated with the growing counter-culture in the West, whose adherents understood themselves in participating in a spiritual revolution that would mark the Age of Aquarius. By the 1980s, these currents of millenarian currents had come to be widely known as the New Age movement, and it became increasingly commercialized as business entrepreneurs exploited a growth in the spiritual market.

Conversely, other forms of esoteric thought retained the anti-commercial and counter-cultural sentiment of the 1960s and 1970s, namely the techno-shamanic movement promoted by figures such as Terence McKenna and Daniel Pinchbeck which built on the work of anthropologist Carlos Castaneda. This is the trend which can be seen in the psychedelic renaissance (for example David Jay Brown), which also is the trend of transhumanist spirituality (see my booklet on [Plastic Shamanism versus the Traditional Shamanic Awakening](#)).

Other trends which emerged in western occultism in the later 20th century were satanism as exposed by groups such as the Church of Satan and Temple of Set, as well as chaos magick through the [Illuminates of Thanateros](#) group. Here we see the direct demonic influence in evolutionism. What's most frightening is all the techniques of opening the third eye which are given on the internet and social media (I have called this tendency, *The Conspiracy of the Third Eye*, and I will return to it below). Peter Kingsley is in my view influenced by chaos magic, which again is heavily influenced by Jung.

A central figure is Aleister Crowley. *The Eye in the Triangle: An Interpretation of Aleister Crowley*, is a book by Israel Regardie. The book description sounds like this:

*“Aleister Crowley, the greatest Magus of the twentieth century, redefined the very basis of the Western Esoteric Tradition. His incalculably vast influence reaches through all modern occultism. Whether acknowledged or not, he is the father of the modern arts of ceremonial magick, Western Tantra, Tarot and Wicca. His devotees ascribe even greater significance to his life, regarding him as the prophet of the modern age.”*

I believe this is completely true, but I don't see it in a positive way. I believe there, with the rise of evolutionism, happened a distortion in occultism. Occultism was sought integrated with science. Such an “integration” ends unavoidable in reductionism. In Crowley's case the reductionism is psychologism.

In 1898 Crowley joined the esoteric Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, where he was trained in ceremonial magic. In Cairo, Egypt, where Crowley claimed to have been contacted by a supernatural entity named Aiwass, who provided him with The Book of the Law, a sacred text that served as the basis for Thelema. Announcing the start of the Æon of Horus, The Book declared this:

**DO WHAT THOU WILT SHALL BE THE WHOLE OF THE LAW**

A fall into complete subjectivism. Aiwass seems very inspired by Nietzsche. After his channeling experience Crowley founded the religion of Thelema, identifying himself as the prophet entrusted with guiding humanity into the Æon of Horus in the early 20th century. His followers should "Do what thou wilt" and seek to align themselves with their True Will through the practice of magick (this is clearly an inspiration for the New Age concept of *create-your-own-reality*, and *fake-it-till-you-make-it*).

Crowley gained widespread notoriety during his lifetime, being a recreational drug experimenter, bisexual and an individualist social critic. He was denounced in the popular press as "the wickedest man in the world" and a Satanist. But Crowley has remained a highly influential figure over Western esotericism, the counterculture, postmodernism and New Age.

Political he was without doubt a fascist, since he directly demonstrated this. Crowley described democracy as an "imbecile and nauseating cult of weakness", and commented that The Book of the Law proclaimed that "there is the master and there is the slave; the noble and the serf; the 'lone wolf' and the herd". In this attitude he

was especially influenced by the work of Nietzsche (seen in the Aiwass channelings) and by Social Darwinism. Although he had contempt for most of the British aristocracy, he regarded himself as an aristocrat and styled himself as Laird Boleskine, once describing his ideology as "aristocratic communism". Pasi described Crowley's affinity to the extreme ideologies of Nazism and Marxism–Leninism, which aimed to violently overturn society: "What Crowley liked about Nazism and communism, or at least what made him curious about them, was the anti-Christian position and the revolutionary and socially subversive implications of these two movements. In their subversive powers, he saw the possibility of an annihilation of old religious traditions, and the creation of a void that Thelema, subsequently, would be able to fill. All this forms a background understanding of that my concept of [The Matrix Conspiracy Fascism](#), is to be found on both the political left and right.

In the best Orwellian NewSpeak style he taught his students to use thought distortions in order to get on in the world, as for example contradictions. In his book *The Vision and the Voice* he writes something which sound like Yin and Yang wisdom, but which is a clever distortion:

*...all the symbols are interchangeable for each containeth itself its own opposite. And this is the great Mystery of the Supernals that are beyond the Abyss. For below the Abyss contradiction is division. But above the Abyss contradiction is Unity. And there could be nothing true except by virtue of contradiction that is contained in itself.*

He mixes the opposites instead of discriminating between them, as Yin and Yang philosophy teaches, and instead of clarity he therefore ends in obscurantism. The Nondual bias. We see this very same technique used deliberately by Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh) who also was inspired by Nietzsche. It is Orwellian doublethink (see my article, [What is Doublethink?](#)).

Where philosophers would point to logical problems such as self-refutation and contradiction, Crowley's supporters see this as a sign of "crazy wisdom" (about crazy wisdom, see my article [Why I Don't Teach Tibetan Dream Yoga](#)). Osho was inspired by Crowley, and used precisely the same rhetorical techniques of deliberately using contradictions in order to manipulate his students.

Crowley's paranormal experiences and the contradictions can in my view not be due to any kind of enlightenment, but to a spiritual crisis of some sort, altering between ego-inflation and the dark night of the soul.

Finally, about the concept of The Eye in the Triangle. Usually this is used as a Christian symbol, where it represents the eye of God watching over humanity (the

concept of divine providence). In Crowley's case it refers to the Eye of Horus, but has been reduced to psychology mixed with the concept of the third eye. It is also a symbol used in many conspiracy theories, as for example the Illuminati conspiracy, one of the sub-conspiracies in my concept of The Matrix Conspiracy. Here it represents the rise of scientism (reductionism).

In that connection it is interesting to mention [The Illuminates of Thenateros](#), which is an international magical organization that focuses on practical group work in chaos magic. It is not a secret that William S. Burroughs, Timothy Leary, and Robert Anton Wilson have been members. Especially Timothy Leary, but also Wilson, are proponents of transhumanism, and must be seen as important pop cultural inspirators for transhumanism (see my articles, [Timothy Leary – A Psychedelic Shaman Playing a Fascistic Game](#), and [Final Secret of the Illuminati \(about Wilson\)](#)).

Another sub-conspiracy is the 666 conspiracy, which in my context has to do with a turning spirituality upside down, so that we have a worship of ego and obscurantism, instead of self-forgetfulness and clarity. Ironically enough, Crowley refers to himself as the Great Beast, and used 666 as his magick number. His sex magick was essentially about awakening the kundalini and rising it to the third eye. The Third Eye is central also in Leary and Wilson.

*The Psychopath's Bible: For the Extreme Individual*, is a book by Christopher Hyatt. Christopher Hyatt was an American psychologist (why is this not a surprise anymore) and psychotherapist, who was one of the most extreme occultists in the Crowley tradition. The description of the book goes:

*In the most of the world, psychopaths have gotten a bad rap. That, of course, is quite understandable since almost all of the world's religious and social philosophies have little use for the individual except as a tool to be placed in service to their notion of something else: 'God,' or the 'collective,' or the 'higher good' or some other equally undefinable term. Only rarely, such as in Zen; in Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism; in some aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism; and in some schools of Existentialism, is the individual considered primal. Here, finally, is a book which celebrates, encourages and educates the best part of ourselves --- The Psychopath.*

Other titles of Hyatt's books are: *To Lie Is Human: Not Getting Caught Is Divine*, and, *Pacts with the Devil: A Chronicle of Sex, Blasphemy & Liberation*.

Hyatt is one these many American intellectuals who after their own names always write the title PhD, in order to make you believe that we here have to do with an

authority in something. In Hyatt's case such a title would mean: *completely incompetent philosopher*. But one should not understate what this decline in philosophy means. Because you see Hyatt's "philosophy" everywhere today in the coaching and self-help environment. So maybe Hyatt's book actually *is* a bible? In my article, [A Critique of Coaching](#), I have shown the resemblances between the advices given in self-help books, and the actual behavior of the psychopath. This theme is continued in my articles [Humanistic Psychology, Self-help, and the Danger of Reducing Religion to Psychology](#), and [Self-help and The Mythology of Authenticity](#).

Hyatt's "philosophy" also shows the background for the flight from rational thought (philosophy), and the consequently free-for-all approach to psychotherapy we saw in the counterculture movement, [The Human Potential Movement](#), and today in New Age. I have shown this in my articles [The Devastating New Age Turn Within Psychotherapy](#), [Spiritual Vampires](#), and [The Vampirised Spirit of John Rosen](#).

We have seen it all before: namely with the Sophists in ancient Greece, who succeeded in corrupting philosophy in a degree that it hasn't been the same since. As we can read in Plato's works (and in the Upanishads as well), philosophy belongs to an ancient forgotten time. Plato (Socrates) was not the beginning, but the end.

### **The Conspiracy of the Third Eye**

The Conspiracy of the Third Eye has to do with a top-down awakening. A top-down awakening can manifest either as suffering (anxiety, the Dark Night of the Soul) or as ego-inflation. 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 in this description must not be confused with psychic chakras, but rather with love and existence.

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.

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.

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.

This is a significant energetic imbalance, and the energetic field of the experiencer often appears to look like an inverted cone. Often the experiencer is partially or fully out of their bodies/disassociated, and they prefer to remain this way (especially when they are euphorical 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 top-down awakened. It is all about role-playing: through courses and spiritual educations you 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. This is an aspect of the *Faust Syndrome*, a typical Western complex due to our denial of our negative karma of original sin; the denial of the devil in the heart; the Anti-Christian attitude.

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, identifi- cal 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 (it's all in the head), about success, ecstasy, power, sex, money. 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*.

The difficulty of top-down awakenings is that it is by far the most common awakening to get stuck in. I believe it is a central part of all types of spiritual crises; that is: when a spiritual awakening develops into a crisis. It can be very dangerous because it creates an environment where we are not quite part of any reality. With our ability to easily shift through dimensions, times, perspectives, and being fully or partially energetically out of our bodies it also creates opportunity for other energies to attach. Without any support from Earth we can become dysfunctional and without a filter. Many severe mental imbalances such as schizophrenia, disassociate identity disorder, bipolar, and depressive issues are partially or fully a result of top-down awakenings. The more our lower chakras are blocked in comparison to extremely opened top chakras, generally the more issues we have.

What I, in my philosophical counseling practice (now [personal mentoring](#)), have experienced again and again, is the meeting with New Agers who work as therapists, spiritual healers or teachers within the alternative world, and who would without doubt be diagnosed as schizophrenic, delusional, bipolar, or simply disconnected and untethered from collective reality. The whole New Age package is opening the path for all this. The subjectivism, the avoidance of preparatory work, the denial of one's dark sides, and the elimination of critical thinking.

I find it interesting, that the spiritual teacher, Mary Shutan, considered quitting teaching as she saw how the New Age world perpetuated such things, and didn't want to spend her time immersed in chaos with individuals that lacked any type of logic or connection to communal reality. It is interesting to read about how Shutan, in her second phase of kundalini, naturally was becoming more and more interested in truth (philosophy – love of wisdom) instead of herself. In her book, *Working with Kundalini: An Experiential Guide to the Process of Awakening*, she writes:



*...the realization dawned on me that what motivates you on your spiritual path is highly significant. There is a difference between the search for truth, knowledge, communion, peace, divinity, or similar qualities and a spiritual path fueled by self-obsession (page 134).*

Shutan writes this after having told a story about a certain type of women, who contacted her:

*...One of these was a certain type of woman who initially puzzled me; up to this point I thought that the spiritual path took direct experience. You did the work, and you saw the results of that effort. But these women had been on a spiritual path for ten, twenty, or even sixty years and they had little or no consciousness. It was because of this type of woman that I stopped offering spiritual guidance appointments to people. She would spend the whole appointment telling me how awake she was, about the fire ceremonies she had attended to in Laos, about how she had known someone thirty years ago who was now famous, and about all of the modalities or methods of healing that she had participated in. She would tell me how wonderful she was because she didn't eat meat, or about how she didn't have any anger or shadow anymore because she visited a shaman in Belize.*

*At the time I held a belief that all it took to become conscious was effort and discipline on the spiritual path. I generally need to feel like I am being of service in my work. I do things wholeheartedly and with passion, or I do not do them at all. These women were not calling me in order to receive a different perspective, or any form of guidance. They were in fact closed to anything I had to say; when I offered any input that varied from their own thoughts they would launch into stories that showed how much they already knew. I began to see and feel compassion for how they had to hold on to such stories because their lives were often a mess, and they still felt empty within (page 133-134).*

In an Eastern context, when a disciple meets a teacher, such a behavior is unthinkable. But it is typical for Westerners. In the East there are lot of warnings against this. A Zen master in China talked every morning to his students on a hill. Every day there came a fox and listened. One day the fox stayed and went to the master and asked: "Master, in five hundred incarnations I have been a fox, and yet I was once a Zen monk, what did I do wrong?" And the master answered: "You thought you were a master before you were, and you pretended as if you were." That is: ego-inflation, identification with an inner power field.

Certain spiritual practices are therefore dangerous for Westerners, unless we understand and acknowledge our dark Western karmic line which includes concepts

such as original sin. There are namely Eastern spiritual practices where you identify with divine powers, gods or persons (that's where Houston got her ideas from). In the West you can see it on Athos, where there is a practice called Mary Mysticism. You start out with the heart prayer, 8-10 hours daily in 5 to 10 years. Hereafter you start visualizing Virgin Mary in 5 to 10 years, and later you are in a kind of identification with Virgin Mary (but you don't deliberately identify with her). Such practitioners attain a feminine body attitude. They had produced a Mary-archetype, or a Mary-anima in their system. It is so powerful, that it not only works in the soul, but also in their physical layers. They look female, they have high voices, they radiate gentleness and have a very refined light between the eyes. The last practice is called The Transfiguration Mysticism. These monks now attain a beautiful, hermaphroditic femaleness that radiates happiness and light. But it requires a context, complete humility, and an accomplished teacher, and that's not exactly a Western trait. Ego-inflation is almost "natural" for Westerners. The Faust syndrome.

As Shutan says, some of these ego-inflated individuals are dangerous. The name "spiritual vampire" is fully appropriate here. There is no shortage of people in history using spiritual or religious paths to feed delusion, instead of facilitating greater connection. It is people who mix their psychic problems with spiritual constructs. For example, many who believe that they are experiencing kundalini awakenings are not; it is not uncommon for those with mental-emotional imbalances to reach for spiritual labels when medication or other forms of care may be indicated. And, as explained, often real spiritual openings have created a spiritual vampire, due to ego-inflation.

In his book *The Kundalini Process – A Christian Perspective*, the Christian, spiritual director, Philip St. Romain, tells a story about how he, after delivering a lecture at a kundalini conference, was being approached by a man of about 40 who introduced himself as an "energy therapist," and said there were imbalances in Romain's auric field he could correct if he let him "work on him." Romain writes:

*The hair on my back stood up when I heard this, and I politely declined, but he continued to impose this suggestion several more times before finally going away. My general policy is not to allow anyone do any kind of "energy work" with me unless it's in the context of Christian ministry (page 104).*

An even more scary scenario is the scenario of psychic attacks. In Romain's book there are some stories about such from people who have found a safe shelter in Christianity. One of these stories tells that the attacks not is coming from demons, but from "occultists." (page 126).

I have myself tried this. And I have heard countless stories of a New Age market filled with all this. Like Shutan, I don't want my life "immersed in chaos with individuals that lack any type of logic or connection to communal reality". But in my shift from philosophical counseling to personal mentoring, I have found a way to filtrate in people. I avoid online counseling, and people have to travel a long distance in order to reach me. My main tools for protection is partly critical thinking (elenchos, as explained in my book, A Dictionary of Thought Distortions) and my Icons, especially my Icons of the archangel Michael.

And I can recognize that the attacks not are coming from demons, but from either living people, or spirits. Demons work in another way.

When we easily can shift through dimensions, or being out of our bodies, without embodiment and critical thinking, other energies can attach. Timothy Conway writes in a remark to Rajneesh's charisma:

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

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

Note that demons, in my view, very rarely possess a single human being (this is in my view a myth in popular culture). Possession states has to do with other kinds of spirits (there are many). Demons work, as Conway suggests, collectively.

The reason why it is necessary to lead people around the collective time, or shorten the passage through it, is therefore that discarnate entities from these areas are using people or cults (collective energy processes in mass phenomena: religious, spiritual, political, sports or other type) as psychic channels, working interdimensionally to create all sorts of "experiences" in people, experiences that seems dazzling and/or extraordinary – but with the purpose of using their energy as food.

As in the case of Osho, they can also be powerful humans. As a comment to Kevin Dann's blog on Deeksha, Joshua Rosenthal is telling that he was throwing this great party in Tokyo and close to the peak of the event, this Deeksha leader asked if she could speak for a minute – she had a gift for Joshua, she said, and Joshua answered: “sure, no problem.” First in Japanese and then in English she got everyone to lie on their back and then – to cut to the chase, she did this eye touching, meaning touching everyone's third eye and “sending them energy”. Well, Joshua writes, besides the fact that she hijacked his party, at the end of the exercise she looked glowing and full of life while everyone else, including Joshua, had lost their buzz and soon decided to go home. So Joshua thought to himself, it seemed like she was receiving energy instead of giving it (I have written about Deeksha in my article, [A Critique of the Indian Oneness Movement and Its Use of Western Success Coaching](#)).

I have myself met quite a few New Agers with a large charisma, almost glowing, but who simply act, talk and behave weird. This is something which often seduces people, but in reality it is a quite simple sign of danger. Just ignore them. The danger happens if you let them work on you physically, or are letting your thoughts involve in theirs.

It is interesting that Shutan, who actually was working as a shaman (a person who actively involves herself in the spirit world), only reached the third phase of kundalini, and her enlightenment experiences, due to Zen Buddhist training. She writes:

*My experience in 2016 of “dropping through” occurred during meditation. At this point I had meditated for almost twenty years, and due to my early Zen Buddhist training I tended to disregard a lot of the imagery that came up. It was not that such things were not relevant, but I am grateful for this early path as it allowed me to not get stuck in any phenomena, not even bliss or profound states of peace.*

*Yet this was initially at odds with a lot of my shamanic training, which works with symbols and spirits and the senses in a way that Zen would disregard, or see as biproducts on the path. But pairing the two together has allowed me to experience things fully and dynamically, as well as to avoid attaching mental significance to things. Generally, I find that if a message or something else needs to arise, it will do, and I do not need to sit for hours or decades figuring it out. If we don't let go of this need to know at a certain point, we can drive ourselves a bit crazy trying to figure out what has happened. This teaches deeper surrender (page 151).*

In his book, *Shamanism – Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Mircea Eliade several times make aware of what he calls “a present decadence of shamanism.” He writes:

*According to Buryat tradition, in olden times the shamans received their utcha (the shamanic divine right) directly from the celestial spirits: it is only in our day that they obtain it merely from their ancestors. This belief forms part of the general conception of the decadence of shamans, documented both in the Arctic and in Central Asia; according to this view, the “first shamans” really flew through the clouds on their horses and performed miracles that their present-day descendants are incapable of repeating (page 67).*

This sound like the myths in the Indian Yuga teaching, written down in the Vedas. Yuga in Hinduism is an epoch or era within a four-age cycle. A complete Yuga starts with the Satya Yuga, via Treta Yuga and Dvapara Yuga into a Kali Yuga. Our present time is a Kali Yuga, which started at 3102 BCE with the end of the Kurukshetra War (or Mahabharata war). What’s interesting about this view of our present day history is that it has the direct opposite view of the linear history than evolutionism, namely that we are heading into a very long time of decline. The ages see a gradual decline of dharma, wisdom, knowledge, intellectual capability, life span, emotional and physical strength.

The Vedas is said to have been written down at the beginning of the Kali yuga, and the Shastras say that the Vedic civilization flowered in India much longer time ago than the 50.000 years which modern science claim to be earliest possible time where Homo Sapiens firstly appeared on Earth (characterized by [behavioral modernity](#); that is: behavior which can be characterized by abstract thinking, planning depth, symbolic behavior - e.g., art, ornamentation, music - exploitation of large game, and blade technology, among others). The Shastras (or Sastras) claim that the philosophers, Yogis and Rishis (Seers) lived for millions of years ago, and the Vedic Acharyas (Indian scholars) believe that the stories in the [Puranic literature](#) are factual stories, not only from this planet, but also from many planets in this Universe. Data taken from these planets have nothing to do with the data from this planet (as for example incredible life spans and the ability to fly without mechanical help). The Puranic literature describes a universe where the supernatural is trivial and miraculous births are everyday phenomena.

It is tempting to add that with the Western plastic shamanism, generated by Michael Harner, and his “core shamanism” this decadence has increased enormously

A central part of Greco-Roman philosophy, which was rooted in shamanism, was the use of critical thinking (elenchos) to distinguish base magic (trance, which leaves everything to chance, and may lead its practitioners to consort with falsity and evil daemons), and higher magic or [theurgy](#). The latter is a guarantor of truth and

happiness, combined as it is with the source itself: the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

Besides the Hara and Heart meditation, it was critical thinking that rescued myself from madness. As a result I came to believe that Socrates represented an ancient path of wisdom, where philosophy in a similar way was used as a navigator through the Spiritual Twilight Zone.

As far as I can see, then the spiritual exercises developed in, for example Platonism and neo-Platonism, are refinements of those leading to cataleptic trances and other paranormal experiences (psychic abilities, kundalini, shamanic journey, channeling, possession of gods or spirits, ecstasy, etc). They respond to a rigorous demand for rational discrimination, a demand which, as far as I'm concerned, emerges with the figure of Socrates. In this you can see precisely the same as what happened in, for example Tibetan Buddhism and Taoism: a refinement of shamanism into a path of enlightenment (Unio Mystica) – see my page, [My Teaching in a Nutshell](#).

The central difficulty with the top-down awakening is therefore that it is difficult for people to want to do their personal work. 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 of that the divine eventually is an external source you can't control.

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 am beginning to experience progressive karma, or divine providence. A strange aspect of my spiritual crisis is also that I all my life have experienced this mysterious connection with Karen Blixen, which is puzzling me more and more the more progressive karma I'm experiencing: a sympathy for the Devil.

## **Black Enlightenment**

To conclude: What ACIM, as well as New Age as such, do, is to place enlightenment in the subject, what would end in metaphysical solipsism, the terrible result of a total metaphysical subjectivism. You could term it "Black Enlightenment." It confuses the mind (thoughts) with reality, or the Wholeness (the Universe), and that splits the thought in infinity.

The idea that the world doesn't exist when you're not there to observe it, is purely subjective idealism, which ends in metaphysical solipsism. Metaphysical solipsists maintain that your own mind is the only existing reality and that all other realities, including the external world and other persons, are representations of that mind, and have no independent existence. It is quite central in transhumanism, and the believe that reality could be a computer-generated Matrix. It's an incredible easy idea to debunk (see my booklet, [A Critique of the Simulation theory and the Rise of Digital Totalitarianism](#)).

Moreover: it is an extremely frightening thought, which can be compared with the short stories of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. It could be called *The Borgesian Nightmare*. In all his short stories and poems, Borges played with subjective idealism, and the absurd consequences. It is a vision of Hell that wants something: you yourself have to simulate infinity each and endless moment in an infinite past and infinite future. You have no family, no friends, no other humans to support you (because they are your own mind-creations), and no other existence at all, except yourself and your Sisyphean mind-work. Ergo: there is no reason at all to share the idea because there is no one to share it with. No reason to run for president. But, there might be hope. The very fact that Marianne Williamson was beaten already in the first round, could be an indication of, that the idea isn't true (read about The Borgesian Nightmare in my article, [The Strange World of Jorge Luis Borges](#)).

I believe Helen Schucman in fact could be channeling some subtle-plane entity who was very much in love with pompous-sounding New Thought material. I also believe the entity could be a demon, or even the Antichrist himself, considering the ingenuity of the book. In other words: I believe we are talking about a very special case of the type of spiritual crisis called *Possession State*.



Even Wapnick himself said that "if the Bible were considered literally true, then (from a Biblical literalist's viewpoint) the Course would have to be viewed as demonically inspired". Though a friend of Schucman, Thetford, and Wapnik, the above-mentioned Catholic priest Benedict Groeschel has criticized ACIM and the related organizations. Finding some elements of ACIM to be what he called "severe and potentially dangerous distortions of Christian theology", he wrote that it is "a good example of a false revelation" and that it has "become a spiritual menace to many". The evangelical editor Elliot Miller says that Christian terminology employed in ACIM is "thoroughly redefined" to resemble New Age teachings. Other Christian critics say that ACIM is "intensely anti-Biblical" and incompatible with Christianity, blurring the distinction between creator and created and forcefully supporting the occult and New Age worldview.

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

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