

Chapter 6: out-of-body experiences, astral (68 p.).

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Chapter 6: out-of-body experiences, astral travel

For religious man, the sacred is the foundation, the ground of all existence. This sacredness can show itself as a subtle energy, as an increased strengthening force, inside all living things. Those who are sufficiently clairvoyant can perceive this sanctity in one way or another. Those who are sufficiently magical gifted can manipulate this fine matter and achieve results with it. Neither profane nor sacred, man remains a passive observer: he evolves. He has and makes history. His evolution can be favorable or unfavorable, depending on the choices he makes in life. In this way, he can steer, adjust and even speed up his evolution. He achieves this through an ethical life. Initiations can elevate man to a higher level, but it can also be reversed. This has already been explained (5.2.2.). Such initiations are of course related to processes in the subtle body. Gradually one becomes more and more aware of this. Some people also notice that the subtle body can leave the biological body. Then we talk about the so called "out-of-body experiences". The term has already been mentioned a few times. We referred, among other things, to the subtle cord, which connects the biological and the subtle body (4.2.2.). And on this last theme, out-of-body experiences, we continue. This is the common thread that links our different chapters.

6.1. Out-of-body experiences during life

The theme of 'Out-of-body experiences' was also mentioned when we talked about the experiments of A. de Rochas (4.2.2) in which, by adding subtle energy or so-called magnetization, the subtle body was released from the biological one. Both remained connected through this subtle cord, in the Bible called "the silver cord" (*Preacher: 12.6*). The fine-material body usually hangs 75 cm to one meter above the biological body during sleep. If a person who has just fallen asleep receives a sudden shock, one sometimes feels more like he or she is falling. Sensitive people say that then the subtle body 'falls' too suddenly back into the biological one.

We have also already mentioned the so-called repercussion: an injury, inflicted on this subtle body, is reflected in the biological body. This shows that the fine-material body has a causal effect on the biological. We will come back to this later.

Many people testify to having experienced such an experience at some point in their lives. In a number of cases it struck them spontaneously and totally unexpectedly. Others can cause this in themselves consciously, willingly and repeatedly. Finally, such an experience also occurs in case an

acute danger, as a result of an accident, a serious illness, or in death throes. Many people describe it as a wonderful and shining experience. A sample.

6.1.1. Out-of-body experiences without imminent danger.

There is the following testimony of Plotinus (203/269), a philosopher from the ancient world: "Often I wake up from my body, awakening to myself. I become an outsider for all things, I become present within myself. I see a beauty of a wonderful exaltation. At that moment I am sure that I am part of a higher world. The life I live then is the highest. I identify with the divine, I am in it. And, once that ultimate act has been achieved, I settle myself in it. After resting in the divine, when I lose myself in reflection and reasoning, I wonder how I could descend in this way once more, and how my soul could have ever become the inside of a body."

So much for this neo-platonic philosopher. Apparently, for Plotinus, "falling into thinking and reasoning" is an activity that does not reflect the full reality. In other words, there is a way of life that goes far beyond "thinking and reasoning". This is also how Plato had put it with his myth of the cave and his point of view on ideas (5.1.2.).

G. Van der Zeeuw, *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*¹, (Clairvoyance in space and time), informs us about such an out-of-body experience, which he experienced himself and used as a conscious exercise. He writes: "I had put my body to sleep and when I left it I looked around me. I tried to look at myself (note: he wants to look at his biological body from his subtle body that then floats just above the biological body), but I didn't succeed. I just tried to grab my material body, but I couldn't do it either, because I just went through it. So I noticed that I could just walk through the bed and the walls. However, 'walking' is not a proper expression for this, because it was more like moving through an expression of will. Keep your thoughts in your power, because every thought creates forms".

People who have had such an experience say that thought is the driving force behind the movement. This is not the case with the biological body. We can think, for example, "I'm going to move my arm", but that thought is not enough. We must also do it; we must move our muscles. These are two very different things. In the out-off-body state, this is not the case. If you just think: I'm going to move my (subtle) arm, then it's already happening. If you just want to be able to turn around, this happens immediately. This is why it is so important to constantly control your thoughts in this state.

People who can't do this, people who become anxious when they get out of their body and lose their self-control, fly back and forth in an uncontrolled way. This 'flying' can be understood in the most literal way. One 'floats' through space, through the walls. One rises and falls according to what one thinks. One floats through one's own biological body, on which one has no grip in the exteriorized state and that one cannot move at all. It is a very bizarre experience.

Coming out of the out-of-body-experience sometimes makes you feel like you're falling. A lot of people who are unknowingly having an out-of-body-experience, experience this fall, just before they wake up. For a moment the two bodies have to be adjusted to each other again, before a movement with the physical body is possible. This tuning gives a number of people an intense tingling experience. The sentence "every thought creates forms", as Van der Zeeuw says, will be discussed in the next chapter (7.2.4.).

The "going through the walls" may seem bizarre, yet it is also mentioned in the Bible. Let us remember (4.2.2.) that Jesus, after his death and resurrection, was suddenly in the house where the apostles had gathered (John 20:26). The fine dust of the subtle body is not hindered by the 'coarse' dust of the door or the wall. Both types of fabric indeed differ thoroughly. We refer to the so-called "hylic pluralism" (1.4.2.).

Consciousness without brain activity

The journal Science, *Au-delà de la mort, (Où se situe la conscience ?)* (Beyond death, (Where is the consciousness?)) reports that such an out-of-body-experiment took place under scientific conditions. Statistics tell us that at least one in ten people have had such an experience at least once in their lives, a figure that makes us think. The most important part of the Science Sector's report is presented below.

The American heart specialist Michael Sabom, who was initially very skeptical about NDE experiences (note: "NDE" stands for "near-death experience"), testifies about the removal of a vein (aneurism) in the brain of a patient, a certain Pam Reynolds. Although the patient is on the operating table for about six hours, the removal itself only takes half an hour. During this short period of time, no blood is allowed to flow through the brain and the brain is without oxygen, with all the dangers that this entails. As is well known, there can be organ failures, if the parts of the brain that are aligned to the organs, do not get sufficient blood flow. Hypothermia is therefore used. The body is kept at 35.5°C. Only then all blood flow is stopped in the brain.

The entire operation of Pam was recorded and filmed. For example, brain activity via an EEG and changes in the brain stem. All these data were then related to the story that Pam herself told when she had awakened from her 'anesthetic' and returned to normal consciousness.

She said she had been through an NDE. She had 'observed' the operation from a different consciousness and from her subtle body, which was then a few meters above her biological body. After her awakening, she remembered quite a bit that she had experienced during her operation, when her brain was inactive. What Pam 'saw' and 'heard' when she got out of her body was easy to test afterwards. For example, she 'saw' a kind of toothbrush, which was in fact the cranial drill. The conversation between the surgeon and the cardiologist was recorded. What Pam had 'heard' in the 'astral' state corresponded to this. The comparison of her story and the recordings allow her NDE to be accurately observed.

Dr. Sabom says: "The recordings show that at that time the body and the brain were without blood. We have the medical recordings of the course of the NDE at our disposal. We can study the EEG activity. We are able to check everything that happened in the biological body during the NDE. This allows us to answer questions such as: Was the NDE triggered by a crisis in the temporal lobe or by a specific electrical activity in the brain? Well, the answer is 'no'. Because the brain waves were flat and the brain stem was inactive during the NDE. The question arises: How can consciousness be in a waking state without any brain activity?".

So much for the testimony of the heart specialist. The TV station National Geographic has also dedicating a documentary to this whole incident.

This immediately leads to very penetrating questions about the relationship between consciousness and brain function. Does consciousness arise as a result of brain functioning, as a number of current materialistic views suggest? Or is the opposite the case, and was there some form of consciousness before the brain was active? And does this consciousness ensure an optimal functioning of our grey brain cells? Consciousness then is the cause, the brain is only the means, the infrastructure with which we think.

Reducing what's more to what's less

For religious people, reality is 'over-determined'. This means that when something happens, it has more than one reason. If a person just escapes a serious accident, he says he was protected by 'something' or 'someone'. A

nominalist person thinks that this is just a happy coincidence, that's all. He believes that one should not look for more than is strictly necessary. The believer says the opposite and believes that the unbeliever finds less in it than is given. One can approach reality in more than one way. It is a form of ABC theory. A is the fact that occurs, B the assumptions with which one approaches reality, nominalist or religious. C is the result. Here: it was just a happy coincidence, or, no, there is more, 'something' or 'someone' has protected me.

An extreme nominalist approaches consciousness as a material brain process. If the brain works optimally, then consciousness arises automatically as a by-product.

E. Wilson, *Het fundament*³, (The foundation), gives us an extreme example of such a reduction of what is more, to what is less. For him, the basis of the whole reality is the 'hard sciences'. From this he deducts chemistry. From chemistry he deducts biology. From biology he then derives psychology and the humanities. And finally, art and culture follow from this. From the point of view of traditional philosophy, this extreme form of nominalism is rather the world upside down. In this reductive vision, the higher is only the result of exclusively lower and material processes. In this view, humanity, love, religion... can just as well be 'explained' as mere movements of cells, neurons and atoms. That's all there is to it. However, this viewpoint is not so new. As early as 1748, J. de Lamettrie, *L'homme machine*, (The machine man) wrote that human thought, feeling and will can be traced back to purely chemical reactions in our brains. Even in our time, Verhofstadt D., *Atheïsme als basis voor de moraal*⁴, (Atheism as a basis for morality), writes with regard to our theme, the near-death experiences: "In fact, these are the side effects of morphine-like painkillers". The whole and so extensive paranormal event is 'explained away' as 'just' a chemical reaction. It should not involve a higher reality. A priori, life can only have a materialistic explanation. Verhofstadt actually says that he has never had an out-of-body experience before, and therefore they don't exist. As already mentioned (1.2.), this is a syllogism in which the premise has been concealed. This reasoning is written out: "Everything I don't experience myself, doesn't exist. Well, I don't experience any out of body experiences, therefore they just don't exist". But the statement "everything I don't experience doesn't exist" is an unproven generalization as a premise. The whole reasoning is therefore only a hypothesis, not conclusive evidence.

A far-reaching experience

Robert A. Monroe, *Uittredingen, experimenten buiten het lichaam*⁵, (Out-of-body experiments), knows this the phenomenon from his own experience. He draws attention to the fact that testimonies about Out-of-body experiments have occurred at all times and in all places. For most people it is an experience that occurs only once in lifetime. He writes that the experience of an out-of-body experiment, is often one of the most profound experiences in one's life and that it can profoundly change one's vision of life itself. This is expressed, for example, as: "I no longer believe in an immortal soul and life after death. I'm just sure that I will survive after death".

An anonymous testimony

I woke up, but I still needed some time. Do you know that feeling? A bit saying goodbye to the world of your dream and gradually making yourself ready to awaken in this world. And wonder if this is the beginning of a new working day. If so, that alarm clock is going to be annoying right away. If not, you can still lie down for a while. But that was the problem now, I didn't have the impression that I was lying down. No, it seemed to me that I was gently floating up. Just open your eyes, then you have a point of orientation and that unstable feeling will pass, I thought. So I opened my eyes, but I only saw fibers. All around me were fibers. My face was smack in the middle of them. Then I'm not in bed after all, I thought.

I tried to gradually het my head up. I succeeded. Now I saw wooden beams to the left and right of me, with a wooden fiberboard floor on top of them. That makes you think you're still dreaming. But I couldn't be, because I was awake. I was still getting up and expected to hit the wood with my head. But look, my head just went through it. And so did my shoulders. That was amazing. And just in front of me was a pile of books on the fiberboards. I could even read the titles on the spine. Funny, I had all those books too. But mine were lying in a pile in the attic, which is just above the bedroom. And suddenly I realized it. They were my books. And I was in my attic. I just crossed the attic floor with my head and shoulders. And the fibers I first saw were the insulating materials that I had put in between the beams of the floor. But I couldn't float, could I? And if I was just hanging in the air, then the bedroom should be underneath me, shouldn't it? And the bed? That's what I wanted to see. And instantly, without having to move my muscles, my whole body turned around. I fell through the attic floor, through the beams, the insulation and the plasterboards of the ceiling of the bedroom. And there, two meters below me, was the bed. I saw my wife lying there, and next to her... I lay. I saw the thin cord with which my biological body was connected to my subtle body. I saw the alarm clock on the bedside table. It was three minutes after three. I didn't

know what was happening, wanted to get out of the situation and panicked. That's when it felt like I made an intense fall and lost consciousness...

I woke up. I knew that I had experienced something unusual. Yet it seemed as real to me as every-day reality. This was not 'just' a dream. I opened my eyes. I was lying in bed, next to my wife who continued to sleep peacefully. The alarm clock showed three hours and five minutes. So two minutes later. Don't tell me that there are no out of the body experiences. Afterward, I informed myself about this phenomenon in great in detail.

The Dalai Lama

H. Harrer, *Zeven jaar in Tibet*⁶ (Seven years in Tibet), says: "The Dalai Lama told me that he studied books describing the ancient methods of separation of body and mind. The history of Tibet tells of many saints who were able to make their minds function at a distance of hundreds of miles away while their bodies were immersed in meditation. The young Dalai Lama was convinced that through his faith and with the help of rites, he could go to distant places with his mind, for example in Samyé. When he was ready, he wanted to lead me there from Lhasa. I remember laughingly answering, "Well, Kundun, if you can, I'll be a Buddhist too."

The Dalai Lama is obviously talking about out of the body experiences. As many Westerners who think nominalistically would do, Harrer did not take the Dalai Lama seriously. The well-known film version of the book conceals this event. It reminds us a bit of the complaint of Poortman (4.2.2.), who writes that the belief in a hylic pluralism in our culture is repeatedly concealed, while there are often many reasons to mention it.

Those who have returned from the hereafter

Alexandra David-Neel, *Magic and mystery in Tibet*⁷ says. In Tibet one meets people who, after wakening from a state of lethargy for a short or longer period of time, give a description of the different places they claim to have visited. Some of them had confined themselves to a visit to inhabited areas, but others tell of wanderings in paradises, purgatory sites or in the Bardo, the intermediate sphere in which the spirit wanders after death, awaiting its reincarnation. These peculiar travelers are called 'delogs', which means "those who have come back from the hereafter". Although the stories of these delogs may differ from each other in terms of the places visited and the events, they are usually experienced as fairly pleasant.

A woman I met in a village in Tsawarong, who had been lifeless for a whole week a few years before, told me that she had been pleasantly surprised by the lightness and swiftness of her new body, which was moving at an extraordinary speed. To go to another place, she only had to want to do so. Moreover, she could walk on water, cross rivers and pass through walls. One thing was impossible for her: the cutting of a cord, a material almost intangible, that still connected her to her old body and that she clearly saw lying on her bed. This cord could be extended indefinitely, but it did bother her while changing places. "I got entangled in it," she said.

A magician who has an out of body experience

J. Teernstra, *Schetsen en verhalen uit Afrika*⁸, (Sketches and stories from Africa), mentions the experience of Father Trilles, a magician who has an out of body experience. Trilles was a missionary in Gabon, West Africa. It is this same Father who gave us the description of an initiation of the ngil (3.3.3.). Teernstra's book, with many stories about black magic, still has a so-called ecclesiastical 'Imprimatur', a permission given at the time by the ecclesiastical authorities to print and publish it. It meant that the content of the book did not contain anything that was in contradiction with ecclesiastical doctrine. The fact that the book was given its imprimatur bears witness to a great openness, a broad axiom (4.1.1.), of the church at that time to the world of paranormal and magic. We give a brief account of the story of Trilles.

Ngema, the village magician, decorates himself at big celebrations with his shiny helmet and his scarlet coat of arms that we once gave him as a gift. At night, however, I was able to see him in his sorcerer's clothing, made with a mask of animal skin and with his, for me, ridiculous arrangement, which is usually sprayed with human blood. For many years he has been both chief and a famous magician. Everyone knows his power.

People come to him from 80 km or more to be healed. That's how I saw miraculous healings, which I think could be attributed to hypnosis. For Ngema, I am one of his 'friends'. He often needs me. He loves to come and talk at dusk. We often talked about his black magic and evoking spirits. One evening I invited him to go fishing with me.

- Too bad," he said, "can't you put that off for a day?"
- "For what reason? You can come with us, can't you?"
- "The Master has summoned all of us, my colleagues and myself, for tomorrow;"
- "What do you say? What master?"
- "Well, the master I say, the one who can".

I understood.

- "Well done, and which colleagues are coming?"

- Those who live in the vicinity, and beyond. Some of them come from thirty days away".

- "And where is this meeting being held?" Ngema hesitates for a moment.

"On the table land of Yemvi, near the old abandoned mine, a four day trip from here."

(Note: Ngema considers the missionary as a white magician and treats him as if he

was a colleague who also deals with magic.)

Trilles was surprised:

- How can you get to a place tomorrow evening that is four days away from here?

Never will you get there on time."

Ngema looked at me in bewilderment:

- "White colleague, can't the magicians travel in your country?"

- "Yes, but not like you".

- "No, certainly not like me. You know, you can come to my place for dinner tomorrow. In the evening you will see how we, black magicians, travel." That evening Ngema became very solemn.

- I'll start. As long as I'm busy, don't bother me, if your life is dear to you. For me as well as for you, every disturbance means a certain death."

If Ngema is going to Yemvi anyway, Trilles asks him, as a test, if he wants to visit his friend Eseba in Nshong. A three-day trip from here, but on the way to Yemvi, to ask Eseba if he urgently wants to bring the box with the bullets that Trilles had forgotten there. Ngema agrees. In the evening Ngema starts a number of ritual arrangements. He prepares idols and keeps a fire burning, with fragrant plants and pungent fragrant wood in it. Then he starts humming a monotonous melody. This is his prayer in honor of the spirits that have to help him. He also rubs his entire body in with a red liquid. Then he starts a slow dance around the fire, in which he also turns on his own axis, ever faster and faster. For hours. Then he stands still. From the ceiling of the hut sounds a sharp hissing. Trilles looks up. A large snake twists down, keeps looking at Trilles and moves her poisonous tongue back and forth. Trilles understands that the snake is his 'elangel' or 'nahual' (note: about which more in 10.2.). She wraps herself around Ngema's neck and sways her head back and forth to the beat of his magic song. Afterwards he falls asleep. The snake also goes to rest. Throughout the night Trilles stays with Ngema, whose body seems to be dead all night. He is completely numb. Trilles lifts one of Ngema's eyelids. The eye is white and glassy. Trilles lifts an arm of Ngema, then a leg. They fall

down again without any sign of life. A white foam appears at the corners of his mouth. Palpitations can hardly be felt. In the morning Ngema wakes up desperately. It takes a while for him to regain his full consciousness. Then he says: "There were many of us and we had a good time".

Trilles, however, is skeptical: "No, you were here all night, in a deep sleep!". Ngema: "I wasn't lying on the bed. That was just my body. But what is my body? I was on the plateau of Yemvi."

Three days later, Eseba arrives at the mission: "Father here are the bullets that you had asked for through Ngema." Trilles: "When did Ngema come to you?" Eseba: "Three days ago, at 9 o'clock in the evening." Trilles was surprised: "At the moment when Ngema was asleep. Did you see him?" Eseba: "No, Father, you know that we are afraid of ghosts passing by at night. Ngema knocked at my door and that's how he conveyed the message. But I didn't really 'see' him." For Trilles there was hardly any doubt: Ngema went to the celebration. His 'I' had made a journey in just a few moments that would normally take several days. His 'I' had also acted, listened and spoken there.

He was lying across the foot of my bed.

D. Fortune, *Psychische zelfverdediging*⁹, (Occult self-defense), deals with what she calls an "ethereal projection". This form of projection differs from the "astral projection" which is still material but much more subtle or finer. Both are out of the body experiences. One calls the projected, departed body, an "ethereal double", 'doppelganger' or 'phantom'.

These subtle substance is also called "ectoplasm" of 'ecto', 'outwardly' and 'plasm' a form of fine substance. Between the ethereal double and the coarse biological body a tradition situates a "first substance". In Greek they spoke of "protè hulè", in Latin of "materia prima" or "primal substance". We refer to the chapter on fine matter in history (4.4.2.). It concerns the basic material from which the ethereal and astral materials are condensed. The projected body can take various forms. It is, as the pre-Socratic emphasized, deformable, just like water, like air or like fire.

D. Fortune thus describes an out of the body experience. An advanced occultist resigns himself and after a few convulsions he is in 'trance'. He then becomes as stiff as a board. Weight loss occurs. Fortune writes: "Many times I have helped to lift someone in that out-of-body condition. I could then lift someone all by myself, because he wouldn't weigh more than a child". Where did the weight go? Fortune experienced it "in person". One of her acquaintances - her teacher in occult matters - had been ill and had been

shivering with a high fever. Fortune had assisted him every night. When he had recovered sufficiently to be left alone at night, Fortune then shared the bedroom with another housemate. They slept with the window open. Fortune continues: "I fell asleep immediately. However, I couldn't have slept very long when I woke up with the sensation that a weight was pressing on my feet. It was as if a rather large dog had jumped on the bed and lay down on my feet. The full moon was shining in the room. In that light I saw the man we had left in the bed downstairs. He was lying across the foot of my bed, seemingly in a deep sleep". He seemed to be wearing his dressing gown. His figure and his face were colorless.

Fortune wanted to tap him on the shoulder. She says: "I could not only see him but also felt his weight on my feet. When I moved for a moment, he suddenly disappeared so that I kept staring at the bed in amazement. Only then did I realize that his whole appearance had seemed too colorless and had looked more like a pencil sketch than a human being of flesh and blood". The next morning, the patient did not remember this. However, he had had confusing dreams all night.

For Fortune this was not an occult attack but rather the visit of a friend. In his weakened condition, he probably no longer had the normal control over his occult life forces. This way, he was carried away from his biological body and had instinctively sought comfort from her. This may also explain why some people complain of a 'heaviness' they experience on their body during certain nightmares. It can be a person's ethereal body during an out-of-body experiment.

It is striking that Fortune does not go into what the ill man had said, namely that he had lived through the confusing dreams of a sick person all night, which he could not describe any further. Possibly he had helped someone with an occult problem himself, or he had just met someone who had thoroughly exhausted him, so that he himself had become ill from it. It would be worthwhile to find out how Fortune felt a few days after that night. Did she get very tired? Was she depressed? That, too, may indicate a lack of vitality. Was she, in turn, perhaps also plagued by nightmares? In that case, the resignation of her teacher is not so innocent, because then he has sought her out in order to draw on her life force.

A multifaceted view of reality

Many people have already experienced an out-of-body experience. All of them describe it in related terms, at least in so far as they can talk about it

undisturbed and without danger of being ridiculed. Which indicates the reality of it, though different from everyday life. One can keep arguing about such a consciousness-expansion, but there must be a reason somewhere for all these things, otherwise so many people wouldn't get involved. Those who deal with it claim that 'something' manifests itself as real. Even if it is something other than everyday reality. Without a multifaceted concept of reality, without a broad axiomatic, with only the axioms and powers of perception of the classical senses, one simply cannot enter this world. All materialism, all positivism, all nominalism that is merely sensualism or 'sensory belief', closes itself off beforehand. That is what some clairvoyants tell us.

An umbilical cord

As already mentioned, those who have experienced such an experiment tell us that this consciousness is carried by a 'vehicle', a body similar to the biological one, but made of a much finer substance and connected with a fine umbilical cord, just as a newborn baby is still connected to the mother. This fine-material body is visible to those who are sufficiently clairvoyant.

We have already written that the Bible mentions such an exteriorization and calls this umbilical cord the 'silver cord'. In Ecclesiastes 12.6 we read: "the silver cord breaks off, the golden bowl breaks". This breaking down means that the biological body is no longer 'animated', can no longer be supplied with life force, which immediately leads to biological death. However, the subtle body can survive without its biological 'partner'. This brings us to the next series of near-death-experiences that are experienced as a direct life-threatening event.

6.1.2. A near-death experience or NDE Another consciousness

In circles of the paranormal sciences one hears more talk about such an NDE. A world-famous authority in this field is Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. In her book *Over de dood en het leven daarna*¹⁰ (About Death and Life Beyond), she writes, "We have studied twenty thousand cases of people around the world who had already been declared clinically dead and who were then recalled back to life. Some woke up on their own and others only after resuscitation attempts. During an operation, a lot of people get out of their bodies and then look at the course of the surgical procedure. You no longer perceive the events with your earthly consciousness, but with a new kind of perception. You record everything, even though you no longer have blood pressure, no pulse and no breathing, sometimes even when there are no more measurable brain waves. You know exactly what everyone says and thinks and how they

behave". And further: "Usually such experiences take place when an encephalogram no longer gives a result or when the doctors can no longer see any signs of life. Our subtle body, in which we temporarily find ourselves and which we experience as such, is not a physical body but a finer body. During certain phases of sleep we all have such experiences, but very few people realize that".

Much has been written about the existence of fine-material and fine-material bodies, especially in works with a so-called occult or magical impact. Many philosophies also address such a delicate subject, including neo-Platonic philosophy.

I felt like I was leaving my body.

In her book *l'Amour foudre*¹¹ (Out on a limb), Shirley Maclaine lets the British actor Peter Sellers (1925/80) speak. He confided to her that he had experienced an NDE.

- "I'm afraid of this place."
- I asked him why.
- "Because I died in this place!"

I remembered that I had read in the newspaper how he had only just escaped death.

- "Dr. Kennamer saved my life", he said "and I saw him do it!"
- "Are you serious?" I said, "How?"
- I felt like I was leaving my body. I just floated out of my corpse and saw my body being driven to the hospital. Then I saw Dr. Kennamer coming. He felt my pulse and saw that I was dead. He did everything he could to get my heart beating again. Then I looked around and saw an incredibly beautiful, bright, lovely white light above me. I saw a hand through the light and I wanted to grab it. Then I heard the doctor say, "It's all right again. He has a heartbeat again!" At the same time, I heard a voice say, "It's not time yet. Go back and finish your work!"

About a year and a half later, I was sitting with a couple of friends in my apartment in Malibu. I had been travelling and didn't know that Peter had had another heart attack. We were chatting, when all of a sudden I sprung out of my chair: "Peter", I said, "Something has happened to Peter Sellers!"

Then the phone rang. It was a reporter from a newspaper who wanted to see me. (Note: Shirley pretends to be a maid and says that Mrs. Maclaine cannot be reached.)

- "I would like to hear her reaction."
- "About what?" I asked in amazement.

- I'm sorry if you haven't heard it yet, but her friend Peter Sellers has just been deceased."

I turned around. I felt how Peter was looking at me. I wanted to tell the man that he was wrong. I wanted to tell him: "You may think he's dead, but actually he only left his last body." Of course I didn't say that. Still, I know that Peter would have loved it if I had answered that. So I said, "Shirley is not here. I'll give her the message." I quietly laid the horn down.

- My friends asked, "What is it?". I saw Peter smiling.

- Nothing," I replied, "some reporter just told me that Peter Sellers died.

When I saw little Kate, I 'fell' back into my body.

The British singer Kate Bush (1958/...) known for her hit Wuthering Heights, writes in *Joepie*¹²: magazine: "One day when I was a child, my mother collapses. My father immediately puts her on her bed. He no longer feels a pulse and uses artificial breathing. Afterwards, the mother tells: "I climbed like a hot air balloon up to the ceiling, 'looked' at my husband from there and shouted: 'Leave me alone! I'll take care of it!" Then I entered the room and cried, "Where's mammie?" Mother says: "When I saw little Kate, I 'fell' back into my body and came back to life". Kate Bush believes that a lot of people have such an experience.

Mrs. Schwarz

To quote Elisabeth Kübler-Ross: "In my lecture room, what Mrs. Schwarz said was for us the first report of a patient who had an NDE. We already have (note: in 1977) hundreds of such reports that were recorded in California, Australia or elsewhere. Without exception, they have one common denominator, namely that the person in question left his earthly body in full consciousness. This death, which the scientists want to convince us of, does not exist in reality. Death is nothing more than leaving your earthly body in the same way that the butterfly crawls out of its cocoon. Death is a transition into a new state of consciousness, in which you continue to feel, see, hear, understand and laugh and in which you are able to grow further. And the only thing we lose in this transformation is exactly what we no longer need: our physical body. It's like the winter coat that we put away at the dawn of spring, because we know it's already very worn out and we don't want to wear it any more anyway. And with death this is exactly how it is.

A large number of these patients also told us that in addition to the peace and tranquility that came over them, as well as the awareness of being able to perceive but not being perceived, they also had the feeling of being 'whole'

again. This means that someone who has lost one leg in a car accident and sees that leg lying on the road, will notice after leaving his physical body that he still has both legs. In a laboratory explosion, one of our patients lost the light in both eyes. Immediately afterwards she had left her body and could see again. She was able to see the other consequences of this accident and afterwards described what happened when people came to running up. After the doctors managed to bring her back to life, she was completely blind. Do you understand why many of them are resisting our attempts to bring them back to life, when they found themselves in a much more desirable, much more beautiful and perfect place? .

And often we meet those of whom we did not even know that they were already "on the other side". We know of the case of a twelve-year-old girl who didn't want to tell her mother about her delightful experience, because no mother would like to hear that one of her children loves it better somewhere else than at home. Of course, this is quite understandable. But what that girl had experienced was so unique that she had to tell someone about it anyway. And therefore she confided to her father that when she 'died' she had experienced so much joy that she wouldn't have wanted to come back to the world for anything. The special thing now - apart from the incredible splendor and simply fantastic abundance of light and love described to us by most others - was that her brother was with her and had held her in his arms full of love and tenderness. When she told her father this, she added, "But the only thing I don't understand is that I don't have a brother at all." Then her father's eyes teared up and he had to confess to her that she had indeed had a brother, but that he had died three months before her birth. No one had ever said a word to her about it.

So much for E. Kübler-Ross. We also refer to the so-called 'phantom pains': people claim to have pain in a body part that has been amputated. An amputation only concerns the biological body. The fine-material body remains intact.

Happiness after death?

Karlis Osis and Erlendur Haraldson, *Op de drempel; visioenen van stervenden*¹³, (On the Threshold; visions of the dying), also, but very extensively and on a scientific basis, deal with the phenomenon of out of body experiments.

Karlis Osis (Riga, 1917/1997) obtained his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Munich in 1950 on the basis of a thesis on extrasensory

experience. Erlunder Haraldson (Reykjavik, 1931/...) obtained a PhD in philosophy at the University of Freiburg in 1972, also on the basis of a thesis on extrasensory perception. This says a lot about the then already present broad-mindedness of these universities regarding paranormal research.

In their book they describe three different researches:

- 1. 1959-1960: samples all over the U.S. A questionnaire is randomly sent to 5000 doctors and 5000 nurses. Of these, 640 answers were returned, covering 35 540 moments near death, of which 2 202 appearances and faces. 753 of whom death was near, experienced a sudden, medically astonishing change in mood some time before their death. 83% of the appearances were family members, 90% of whom could be identified were next of kin: father, mother, partner, brother, sister or children. In most cases they came to escort the almost dying patient to the other world. 70% of those who appeared to the dying were deceased, 30% were still alive.

- 2. 1961/1964: research in six states (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania).

- 3. 1972/1973: Research in northern India.

Facts: Osis and Haraldsson studied hundreds of cases of Americans and Indians (especially from North India), both Christians and Hindus, in the field of NDE.

Their main impression: the cultural context and the religious experience play a very small role concerning the NDE. However, the depth of the religious faith exerts a great influence.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, sees her observations in that area confirmed.

We read (o.c.): "Many claim to be awaited by acquaintances in their final moments of life. Others say they 'see' a man (Jesus, Krishna, Shiva...) dressed in white and surrounded by a shining aura, which brings a medically inexplicable rest and calmness. In India the messengers of the death god are called 'yamdoots'. If the Hindu prepared himself for life after death by good deeds, then a friendly yam death appears, if the Hindu behaved badly, then a creepy yam death appears".

From such observations, heard through the testimonies of medical personnel, Osis and Haraldsson conclude that there is another paradisiacal world. Also that at the time of death often beings, especially family members, from the world of those who are close to death 'welcome' them to accompany them to the paradisiacal world. This may explain the medically so sudden change of mood. If at first death was feared, then the dying person does not feel alone, and moreover 'in safe hands'. In such a case, overwhelmed by light,

music and accompanied by deceased acquaintances, one joyfully approaches the other world and its inhabitants. It seems to be the joy from birth, but in the other world. In this context, there are many stories of people who, as a result of a serious illness or traffic accident, claim to have been faced with a choice in a disembodied state: to return because they saw that they still had a task ahead of them here, or to go further towards the light and leave this world.

Refuting experiences

In their research, Osis and Harlrdson also believe that they find refuting experiences, namely where patients display incoherent hallucinations. O.c. 59: "There are incoherent hallucinations (note: false experiences) in which patients, in a kind of lucid dream, - a dream in which the dreamer is aware that he is dreaming- mumble things that seem meaningless to the doctor. We have not taken these cases into account".

Note: The very earthy nature of the contents is striking in such cases. For example, the usual daily worries are discussed. However, whether this is a reason not to take it into account is questionable. Could this not be a consciously suppressed or unconsciously repressed form of confrontation with death? The mere fear of death, not to mention a practical disbelief concerning the afterlife, can, in the vicinity of death, lead to "adherence to this earth", with its day-to-day concerns. Is that a reason not to care and to interpret such reactions as enlightened rationalism and hard science do: namely, as nonsense?

Pointless mumbling, mental deterioration of the soul that is not prepared for death at all, and what follows, can be a prelude to terminal behavior. Let us think of incoherent nightmares. Can they not reflect the deeper being of the immortal soul? Doesn't a man who dies come into that very sphere of nightmares, At least if he enters the other world after leading a disordered life and finds himself there unprepared? Religions worthy of the name have repeatedly pointed out that the soul must be prepared for the hereafter. Perhaps not without reason. The following text seems to illustrate this.

An approaching hell

We read Phyllis Atwater, *Retour de l'après-vie*¹⁴ (Return from the afterlife). The author herself experienced three NDEs, on which she investigated this phenomenon for 15 years. In Boise (Idaho) she had met a Californian who came to live there. It came to a kind of friendship. After a phone call she learns that this woman had experienced a heart crisis and is expecting her. The

woman was pale. What she had experienced during her clinical death, came down to this. She comes out of her body, floats above it. Then she penetrates a dark corridor, a 'tunnel', and reaches the end of it. She sees deserted hills full of naked people who look like some kind of zombies.

Let's note the following: Haitians claim that zombies are people who have been deprived of most of their subtle life force by black-magic rites and which have thus been transformed into automatons deprived of their free will. This is also what the image of their nakedness refers to: they have been robbed of just about everything and hardly possess any life force.

G. Van der Zeeuw, *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*¹⁵ (Clairvoyance in space and time), says that during a visit to what he calls "the lowest areas", he also sees the deceased people who are there naked. We will return to such visits later in the text (12.1.1.).

We listen to Atwater again: "They (the 'zombies') kept themselves straight, shoulder to shoulder and did nothing but look at her. The spectacle was so creepy that she started to scream. Immediately she entered her body again. But she kept screaming. Only after a sedative did she finally fall asleep. Her interpretation: death, so she repeated, is a nightmare. She cursed all the churches that for centuries have been fooling people with stories about paradise. The woman was desolate. Two other patients enter: an elderly woman and a woman supported by sticks. They, too, had recovered after being declared dead. They mainly told the same story and were as horrified as the first one".

Atwater discovered only one common but striking point: all three suppressed the errors that weighed on them, all three had an even stronger sense of guilt from the NDE. They confessed that, by "experiencing death", they had encountered what they feared most, and since then they have been more convinced than ever that they should pay for their 'sins'. These women were totally convinced of the existence of hell.

We wanted to touch on the existence of such paranormal 'hell' experiences, for there is usually a strange silence in that area, with the impression that such negative experiences would not occur.

People with sufficient 'sensitivity' and 'clear vision' can interpret these 'hell'-experiences Biblically. They say that these women saw the 'refaim', as psalm 88 (89)11/13 suggests, souls without a divine spirit or life force

(Genesis 6,3). In psalm 88 (89), a desperate dead man complains of the desperate, lonely and dark situation in which he finds himself.

The fact that some experience their NDE as exalted, others as frightening, may, again in biblical terms, indicate their "judgment of God". We will come back to this in more detail in chapter 12: "On causes and effects".

Finally, we would like to point out that almost all religions speak of a post-mortem judgment. We find it not only in Christianity, but also in Judaism, among Muslims, in the ancient Egyptian religion, among the Zoroastrians in ancient Iran, among the Eastern cultures: India, China, Japan, and Tibet, but also the North American Indians, and the Central American religions, such as the Incas and the Aztecs.

M. Richard, *Voyage aux limites de la mort*¹⁶, (A journey to the limits of death), describes the whole phenomenon of NDE as follows:

1. The subjective impression of dying.
2. The entry into a dark corridor or tunnel (cf. the Bible; the book of Job) .
3. Meeting with beings (including the deceased)
4. Inner peace and feeling of well-being.
5. The impression of being outside one's own body.
6. Access to an unsuspected living space and to a light that radiates love.
7. To recuperate,
8. The absence of any fear of dying.

Note: We take this as a partial definition of near-death experiences because, as has already been shown, there are also very creepy near-death experiences. These seem, at least by some, to have been pushed into the background. Perhaps in order not to frighten those who read the reports, or for lack of completeness in this respect. It is also concealed here that during a sudden agonizing life-threatening experience, for example, a traffic accident, many people say that they see their entire lives passing by as a panoramic image, right down to the smallest details.

So much for these testimonies about the NDE. It is clear that the phenomenon is not so rare and that it is not bound to any religion, time or place. The phenomenon raises in an acute way the question of the origin of consciousness. According to the nominalist view, it is a by-product of optimal brain function. The centuries-old tradition sees this differently: it is not our brains that think, but we, using our brains. The tradition also sees the

material body as one kind of body, while a human possesses other, thinner vehicles or bodies.

6.2. Dying

6.2.1. Just before dying

A preview or precognition

J. Bois, *La télépathie*¹⁷ (Telepathy) in: *Les Etrennes merveilleuses*, (The Wonderful tips) quotes Plutarchus of Chaeronea (+/- -45/+125) where he tells how Calpurnia, the wife of Julius Caesar (-101/-44), tried in vain to convince her husband not to go to the Senate where he would be killed.

We read: Belline, *La troisième oreille*¹⁸ (The third ear). Michèle Morgan, a clairvoyant, says: "A few days before the death of a loved one, I was able to see the precise details of what was going to happen. It happened when I woke up. As I closed my eyes again, I saw my two close friends at my side. The face of one of them was full of tears, the face of the other showed the pain. In an avenue we went into a funeral procession. About ten days later, the scene was effective and presented in every detail.

M. Van Gestel, *Mijn kind ziet meer, Een moeder vertelt over haar paranormaal begaafd kind*,¹⁹ (My child sees more. A mother talks about her psychically gifted child), quotes a similar experience. "I am reminded of a predictive dream I had a few years ago about the cremation of a good friend. Six weeks later, this friend was killed in a traffic accident. The moment I entered the crematorium, the world stopped for a moment. The same flowers, the same candles, the same auditorium. The recognition was there immediately. It was as if the image had been burned into my brain".

J. Grant, *Meer dan één leven*²⁰, (Many lifetimes), tells of an experience she had as a child when she sat at the table with her family, together with a visitor, a doctor. "When I suddenly realized that the man sitting opposite me at lunch was going to die that night, it seemed obvious to me to congratulate him on the fact that tomorrow would be his happiest birthday. He was a doctor I loved, so I felt sad that I might not see him for a while, but I knew such feelings were extremely selfish. "Tomorrow is not my birthday," he kindly said. So I rushed to explain that I meant that kind of birthday that fell on the day you died. I was sent out of the dining room, soon to be followed by my mother, who gave me a scolding for making such a cruel remark. Finally, mother was sufficiently calmed down to say that it probably didn't matter, since the doctor was only fifty-five and he knew he was perfectly healthy. But the next morning the

commotion flared up again, when the doctor's body was found dead in his bed."

6.2.2. The moment of death.

The final end?

Traditional science has nothing to say about the state of man after death. Stating of course, that there is no longer any consciousness after the death of the body. All life has ceased, the vital functions have come to a standstill. This is the final end. The human body will now undergo its deterioration according to biological laws. If necessary, a dead person can still live on in the memories of those who were close to him or her, and the ideas or vision of life that the deceased advocated may still be carried by third parties, but there is no place at all in the physical vision for an actual survival of 'something' in the deceased person. Death is an irrevocable ruler.

This opinion is supported by the undeniable fact that no one has yet returned from a possible afterlife to show us in an unequivocal and hard scientific way that death is not the ultimate end for mankind. This is a nominalist vision. However, it seems very unlikely that this is the last word on death.

A departed soul

J. Bois, *La télépathie*²¹ (Telepathy), gives the following example. On the eve of an exposé on telepathy that he would give in Rome to the Collegio Romano, Queen Margarita, who did not despise the problems of "transcendental psychology" (according to Bois), told him in a private audience in 1904 following historical fact. Marshal von Moltke, one of the founders of modern strategy, was very ill and could not possibly leave his royal residence. At a certain moment the sentries who knew nothing saw him standing, leaning on the bridge of the river. They went toward him but he had disappeared. At that moment - they had heard - von Moltke had died. They were so impressed that they wrote down the fact in the guard log.

What the soldiers saw was not a telepathic phenomenon, but a paranormal phenomenon, namely that the Marshal's soul, which had just had an eminent death experience, had materialized to such an extent that even a simple observation was enough to see it materialize.

Bois himself mentions both: there is the subtle body of the living people that can materialize outside the body and there is the ghost of the deceased who can 'appear', who materializes in such a way (understand: assumes a coarse density) that ordinary vision, hearing and touching is sufficient to

perceive them, often like a cold mist. Such phenomena do belong to the paranormal but are not telepathy in themselves. Telepathy will be discussed further in this text (7.5.1.).

Dying, clairvoyantly observed

Ch. Lancelin *La vie posthume*²², (Posthumous life) describes what can be clairvoyantly observed during the moment of death. A certain Dr. Jackson-Davis, clairvoyant and doctor, wrote it down. We will give an abridged account of his report, which was written a century ago and which now looks somewhat outdated.

"She was a lady of about sixty years old, whom I had often assisted medically. I saw that several internal organs seemed to be resisting the departure of the soul. The vascular system resisted the principle of life; the nervous system struggled with all its might against the destruction of the physical senses; and the brain sought to hold on to the intellectual principle. The body and the soul were like a wedded pair, resisting their complete separation. Shortly thereafter the head was surrounded by a magnificent mist. Then I saw the large and small brains extinguish their inner parts. The radiation of the brain suddenly became ten times greater than normal. This phenomenon invariably precedes physical disintegration. Then I saw how the soul or the spirit disengages itself from the body.

The head became enlightened and I noticed that, as the ends of the limbs became cold and dark, the brain showed a special brilliance. In the ethereal nebula surrounding the head, I saw that another head was clearly beginning to emerge. It was so beautiful that I could hardly look at it. In the same way that the ethereal head of the brain had come loose, I saw, one by one, the neck, the shoulders, the torso and ultimately the whole of the ethereal body forming. The Spirit (note: from the one who passes) rose up above the head of the dying biological body, but even before the final separation of the bond that had kept the material and intellectual parts together for so long, I saw a flow of vital electricity being created between the head of the dying lady and the lower part of the new ethereal body.

This led me to the conviction that death is only a rebirth of the soul or spirit that rises from a lower state to a higher one and that the birth of a child, in this world, or of a spirit, in the other, are actually analogous processes. (Note: just as the birth in this world means a farewell in the other world, so is the dying in this world as a birth in the other world). Nothing is missing, not

even the umbilical cord depicted by a band of a kind of vital electricity, the so-called "silver cord".

By the way: somewhere in one of her works, D. Fortune puts it this way: "For he who knows, the womb is a grave and the grave is a womb". Understand: with the conception in the womb, a spirit leaves its true home to incarnate in a biological body, as it is freed from it once that body dies and the spirit can go back to its true home.

Let us continue with Dr. Jackson's description. He says that it is neglectful to bury the body before biological decomposition has begun. The umbilical cord is often not yet broken. That's exactly the case when someone rises after a day or two from a suspended animation and tells his tale.

"It was impossible for me to find out what was happening in this resurrected intelligence, but I noticed her composure and her amazement at the deep sorrow of those who wept around her body. She seemed to be aware of their ignorance of what was really happening. The tears and exaggerated lamentation of the relatives stem from the view of the majority of humanity, namely from the materialistic belief that with the death of the physical body everything is over. You can proclaim from my various experiences that, if one dies a natural death, the soul does not have a single painful experience.

The period of transformation that I have just described usually lasts two hours. If you could see with clairvoyant eyes, you would notice, in the vicinity of the stiffened body, a very material form with the same appearance as the person who died a moment ago, but a form that is cleaner and, as it were, animated with a higher life. So much for this text by Dr. Jackson.

The process of dying, seen from the "other world".

Also G. Van der Zeeuw, *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*²³, (Clairvoyance in space and time), describes in a clairvoyant way the death of a human being. Contrary to the testimony of Dr. Jackson, who, as a clairvoyant, 'saw' the event from his physical body, Van der Zeeuw is present during the death of a young woman while he is in an out-of-body state. We therefore have a testimony both of "this side of death" and of "the other side".

It is expected that both testimonies will show a number of parallels. On the woman's deathbed there are a few family members, including her husband. We should also mention that the couple once had a daughter, who died a long time ago. And now we listen to Van der Zeeuw.

In the room, he testifies, three subtle creatures appear, who from "the other world" apparently want to accompany the woman in her death. It was quiet. I gently heard the thoughts of those present and felt the suffering of the man. He knew that he would lose his wife and had already accepted this. His resistance was broken. I followed with great interest the work of the three beings, one on each side of the bed, while the third one, half floating above the bed, made some movements above the dying person. It was as if they detached the woman from her material garment. Suddenly a great light came from the space above. I looked up and saw a landscape far above me, in which there was a large house. The house was made of a transparent fabric and had many colors. The flowers in front of the house were beautiful. There was also music, as beautiful as I had never heard before. The light emitted set the whole room in a warm glow. In front of the house stood a young girl, of exceptional beauty. She looked with joy at the scene below. Suddenly the dying woman opened her eyes and saw what I saw. She stretched out her arms and shouted, "Oh, how beautiful that is. Ina, Ina, comes to get me. I'm going! Bye, man. I am so happy."

With these words I saw her body, which had been standing up for a moment, fall back on the bed, but she herself remained seated. A human being came from a human being, but what a difference there was between the two. The material body, which, compared to the spiritual body, was coarsely built. She was helped by the three 'spirits' to come out of her cocoon like a butterfly. In a short time she was free and broke the thread (note: the subtle umbilical cord) that connected both bodies. To my amazement I saw that the husband's body, too, was wincing in pain. What was the cause? His thread had also been connected to that of the young woman. I knew that they had given each other a great deal of love and were thus spiritually connected, so that the woman's spiritual body was not only detached from her material body, but also from the spiritual body of her husband. It was as if the man had provided her with strength through this thread during her illness and had in doing so tried to keep her on earth. He had therefore remained strong, but when he felt that the connection was being broken, he collapsed. The woman, who had become completely free, was taken away with the three spirits after she had cast a last glance at her husband. At a fast pace they went straight to the house where Ina, a former lost daughter of the couple, welcomed her with open arms.

The 'heaven' closed, the light in the room gradually disappeared, and slowly I recovered from all the emotions. I looked once more into the room and saw the man sitting on his knees, praying, in front of the bed, in which the

body was lying, but from which all the light had disappeared. I tried to send good and comforting thoughts towards him, but he was not accessible for anything and was completely absorbed in his grief. I saw that he blamed himself, that he had not been good enough for her, and that he regretted many things that he should have done differently and better. I understood that only time could heal his grief.

So much for this text. Indeed, there are many similarities with the description given by Dr. Jackson. Let us also point out the following: "The threads of the husband and the young woman had been connected. D. Fortune, *Occultisme*²⁴, (Occultism), writes that married couples who love each other, build up a 'spiritual' bond, a kind of marriage aura, and that it can gradually become very strong and can take a great deal, such as disagreement, differences of opinion, a growing quarrel, all except... adultery. Then, she writes, the aura suffers very much and has to be rebuilt with difficulty. For a sensitive or strongly intuitive partner adultery or infidelity seems like a horror, while the nominalist-minded person doesn't really care about it, yes in a number of cases he doesn't even understand the whole commotion around it.

What people have not learned during their lives.

Alexandra David-Neel, *Magic and mystery in Tibet*²⁵: "As I have already remarked, the initiates are able to keep their minds clear during the disintegration of their personality and to pass from this world to the other in full awareness of what is happening to them. They also don't need anyone's help in their last hour, while the practice of religious rites after their death is completely unnecessary. This is certainly not the case for ordinary people, where it should be noted that the expression 'ordinary person' here means anyone who has no knowledge of death, regardless of whether he is a clergyman or a layman, in other words, the vast majority.

Lamaism does not leave these ignorant people to their own devices. During their agony and even after they have already breathed their last breath, a Lama teaches them what they have not learned during their lifetime. He explains to them the nature of the creatures and things that occur to them, reassures them, and above all does not stop pointing them in the direction they should go to henceforth.

The very first concern of a lama who is helping a dying person is to try to prevent him from falling asleep, becoming unconscious or sinking into a coma. He successively reminds him of the gradual loss of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. In the now senseless body, thinking must remain active and

devote all its attention to the happening phenomena. The important thing now is to get the spirit out of its body through the crown of its head, for if it flew off in another way, its future well-being would be in great danger. So much for Mrs. David-Neel's quote.

The Tibetan book of the dead, in Tibetan the Bardo Thödol, and the Egyptian Book of the Dead are for those cultures, with their specific gods, a kind of manual for an approaching death, at the moment of death and in the situation just after death.

6.2.3. After death **Earthbound souls**

Many cultures are thoroughly convinced that the 'dead' somehow still exist 'somewhere'. This was shown by the story of the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28: 3/25 see 1.4.2.), in which King Saul asked the witch to put him in contact with the deceased prophet Samuel. Let us remember that the prophet Samuel was not at all pleased with this contact and wanted the deceased to be left alone.

In some cases the dead are not yet willing to continue their way to the other world, because they want to solve another problem on earth, for example. Think of a scenario like the film 'Ghost'. This film tells the story of a murder in which the killer goes unpunished. As a result, the soul of the murdered person does not yet find 'eternal peace' and the spirit will therefore, if it is occultly strong enough, 'take action' on everything related to the injustice done and try to undo this injustice.

J. Bois, *La telepathie*, in *Les Etrennes merveilleuses* (The Wonderful tips), links up with Marcus Tullius Cicero (-106/-43), Roman philosopher, who on the one hand reacted skeptically to clairvoyanys, but on the other hand, in full seriousness and with a wealth of details, tells the following. In Megara there were two friends. One was murdered, while the other dreams that the victim shows him and the perpetrators as well as the place where his body was hidden.

There are also a lot of stories about the deceased who, after their death, find it very difficult to separate from the earth. For example, they are too attached to what they leave behind: their material wealth, their power, their worldly success... They run the risk of remaining what is called 'earthbound'. This situation then lasts until they see their real situation. If necessary, third

parties can help them with this, after which they continue on their way 'beyond'.

G. Van der Zeeuw, *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*²⁶, (Clairvoyance in space and time), writes: "These people have passed into a spiritually unconscious state. They are not yet aware of their dying on earth. They live as if in a dream and project most of their consciousness on earth. They do their daily work, they fabricate their furniture and they go to sleep as soon as it gets dark".

In this context we also refer to the ancient Egyptian 'death culture', where everything was aimed at ensuring that the deceased pharaoh was given what he needed in his grave in order to live on as a subtle phantom. D. Fortune, *Spiritisme in het licht der occulte wetenschap*²⁷, (Spiritism in the light of occult science), writes: "It is interesting to know, that precisely to stop this "leakage of energy" of the ethereal (note: subtle) body and to give the soul as much time as possible between incarnations, the Egyptians embalmed their dead, while the Hindus, another race with a natural occult predisposition, burned their dead, precisely in order to loosen the soul from the body, and also to ensure that it left for the place where it should finally be".

A blinding light

Mrs. David-Neel (o.c., 34), talks further about people who have just died: Some claim that the mind immediately after its liberation experiences an inner contemplation of the supreme reality, as it were, in a flash. When a deceased person is able to hold that light, he is liberated forever from the cycle of successive rebirths and dying processes. Then he has reached the nirvana state. This is rare. In general, this sudden light blinds the mind. The person recoils, is pulled backwards by his prejudices attachment to individual existence, to the 'I' and by the desire for sensory pleasure. It also happens that the meaning of what is happening to him escapes him completely, just as someone who is completely filled with something often does not notice the things surrounding him.

The ordinary deceased, who has entered the hereafter in a state of unconsciousness, does not immediately take the new situation into account when he regains consciousness. For days he still speaks to his former housemates and is surprised that no one answers him and that they do not even seem to notice his presence.

A llama from the monastery of Litang (eastern Tibet) told me that some of the dead, through the intervention of po's (mediums), had indicated that they had made attempts to use their belongings, that they wanted to take their plough in hand to work the field, or to take away their clothes hung on a nail in order to put them on. It upset them that they were no longer able to perform those daily actions.

In such a case, the spirit of the deceased gets confused. What happened to him? He sees an immobile and numb body lying down, surrounded by lamas. Is he dead? Those who have not learned during their lifetime what the Bardo (note: the atmosphere in which the spirit wanders around after death, waiting for its reincarnation) is and penetrate it while still filled with sadness for the loss of their earthly life, can almost not benefit from the advice received. Maybe they don't even hear them." So much for this text.

Mrs. - Neel speaks of the experience "in a light" of an "inner contemplation of the supreme reality" and of the attempt to "hold that light". Plotinus (6.1.1.) also described his withdrawal as "a beauty of a miraculous exaltation". What is more, according to the Tibetans, whoever succeeds in holding the light is definitively freed from further reincarnations. Such images are very similar to what was said about experiencing the world of platonic ideas (5.1.2.). Those who have fully experienced the reality of these ideas do not have to learn "earthly lessons" anymore. We will come back to this theory of ideas in a moment.

Haunted houses

But not everyone who passes is that exalted to experience some of that light. That's what the stories of hell show (6.1.2.). There is also an overwhelming literature about so-called 'haunted houses'. H. Gasse, *Erzählungen der Antike*²⁸ (Stories of Antiquity) recounts a testimony of Plinius the Younger (61/112), who tells a ghost story in one of his books. The philosopher Athenodorus was able to buy a house in Athens for a ridiculously low price, because it was said that it was haunted. A phantom would inhabit the house. But that's exactly why he bought the house. During the first night Athenodorus stayed awake and what he expected happened. A chained ghost showed up and asked the sage to follow him. When both had come to a certain place in the garden, the ghost suddenly disappeared. The next day Athenodorus had excavations carried out at that place. There one found a skeleton that was firmly riveted with chains. The remains were collected and buried according to the customs of that time. After the burial, the house remained free of ghosts. What is the purpose of this excerpt? The fear of spirits

was not uncommon in ancient Hellas, as in all archaic cultures, even today. Well, Athenodoros appears to be familiar with such 'spiritistic' phenomena. The deceased had no rightful burial. This one thought dominates him and causes him to have no rest, until the living did something about it.

A fallen soldier

D. Fortune, *Psychische zelfverdediging*²⁹ (Occult self defence), tells. We summarize. Miss E.'s fiancée was killed during the war. At first she overcame her grief, but six months later she suffered a depression and collapsed. At night, never during the day, she feels that her body loses all ability to perceive itself. She experiences an out-of-body experience with a serious loss of life force.

D. Fortune does not treat Miss E, but her deceased fiancée, who does not find his way in the other world and clings to Miss E.. In doing so, she is sacrificing vitality, something that the deceased soul lacks and 'steals' this energy. Her late fiancée tried to prevent her from coming out of her out-of-body journeys in order to have her with him all the time. D. Fortune says that she "pointed him skyward" so that he wouldn't approach Miss E. again.

A steam train

Robert A. Monroe, *Uittredingen*³⁰ (out-of-body experiences), says. We summarize. A thirty-five-year-old patient believed that she was a steam train and made the characteristic sounds that goes with it, just as children do when imitating a train. A seer who was consulted found that the ghost of a deceased train driver had locked himself in her aura. When the seer was able to contact him, he said that he had been crushed by an accident under his locomotive, which had the number 89. He still thought he was under his locomotive and could not understand that he was dead. When he became convinced of his real situation, he understood that he had no business in the patient's aura. He left her and continued on his way, after which the patient recovered.

A testimonial

An anonymous person recites. It was nine years ago that I had met E.. In the night of 22 to 23 July 2003 I was suddenly awakened by a man standing next to my bed. I was wide awake immediately, but realized a little later that I was out of my body and that my physical body was asleep. Only then did I realize that the man next to my bed was not standing there with his physical body, but with his subtle body. I now noticed that it was E.. When he saw me his mouth literally fell open with amazement, almost as if he realized only now that I was not the one for whom he had always kept me. He knew that I had a

great interest in religion and the paranormal, and he always looked down on me with a distinctly materialistic vision of life, somewhat pityingly. But now, in his out-of-body condition, there was nothing left of his superior feeling, on the contrary. Not only was he infinitely surprised by the "full reality" with which he was now confronted, and which almost ran counter to the image he had had of me all these years, but he was also in complete panic.

Only now did I notice a big bloodstain on the spot of his solar plexus. The umbilical cord was broken. I immediately understood that he had died but that he had not yet realized his true condition at all. I tried to calm him down and make him understand his real situation. I reminded him of our earlier conversations, in which I argued that there was much more in the world than what was only physically detectable and that death does not have the last word. However, he always stated that death was the very last thing that could happen to a human being.

I argued that now he must realize that there is life after death, because there he stood, "in the flesh", but without a biological body. He replied that he was not dead at all "because you can see that I have my body and can still think", he argued. I agreed that he had a body and consciousness, but that it wasn't his physical body nor his earthly consciousness at all. I therefore suggested that he put his arm through the wardrobe. It seemed to him such an absurd idea that he first refused. I insisted. What could he lose? Finally, he moved his arm towards the wardrobe and, to his infinite amazement, noticed the hand disappearing completely into it, through the wooden door. He was rooted to the spot. I went on to say to him that he was indeed dead, but was now left with only a subtle body and that he could now only conclude that his thoughts about death as the end of everything were completely wrong. Gradually he seemed to see the reality of his true situation. I then tried to convince him to go on, away from this world. Otherwise he would remain an earth-bound spirit, which could only live on by stealing the subtle life energies of other people still living in their biological bodies. Especially his widow, his only daughter and all those who had been close to him in his life.

He seemed to understand it gradually, kept looking at me hesitantly for a while and a little later he disappeared into thin air, almost like a mist that slowly dissolves. I myself woke up in the morning and noted this 'dream'. A year and a half later I accidentally heard about the date of E's death. He had died on 22 July 2003. So much for this experience.

Such testimonies can be found repeatedly. Among others, J. Grant, *Meer dan één leven*³¹, (Many lifetimes), mentions a number of her own experience. R. Montandon, *Messages de l'au delà*³², (Messages from the other side), also gives many examples and concludes: "Most of these deceased people do not know that they have died and do not want to believe it either. They imagine that they will continue their earthly life and their thoughts will remain focused on this material world that they do not want to leave at all.

In one of the popular radio broadcasts *Te bed of niet te bed* (In bed or not in bed) by Brt 2 Limburg, the Flemish radio and TV presenter Jos Ghysen interviewed an exorcist in the seventies of last century, and this as a result of the success of the film with the same name "the exorcist". The recording took place in a studio where a lot of people were present. The man claimed that he regularly had to help people who had already passed away, but who didn't realize that at all yet. They panicked at their new and unusual situation, refused to go their way and preferred to stick to a next of kin in their ignorance. This can manifest itself in the latter in far-reaching fatigue, unpleasant dreams about the deceased and even in the appearance of ghosts. When the audience heard all this, it fell into a... insurmountable, prolonged and mockingly laughter.

This makes it obvious as to why people who are at home in the paranormal world, will be more inclined to avoid any public interest. And those who don't, complain more about the fact that, after being interviewed, they read things about themselves that they didn't say at all or find their words distorted. Sometimes the reporter on duty even finds it necessary to speak scornfully about the interviewee's vision not to lose "the scientific status of his text" and "the credibility in the eyes of the reader or the listener". Apparently it is not always possible for the common man to listen to such themes and other visions of reality with a calm mind.

Yes, the fiercest among them sometimes feel it is their high vocation and a passionate duty, to get the life of these "stray ones" difficult in every way possible, and pillory them publicly with a lot of sensation, prejudice, nonsense and lies.

They take a lot of liberties and the laws that normally apply to everyone suddenly no longer seem to count. "You shouldn't take him seriously at all!". "He's in a cult!". "He's crazy!". That's how it sounds sometimes. Such critics certainly don't suffer from an excess of tolerance and humility. They demand their own vision of life, but they don't want their neighbor to have his own.

Anyone who refuses to think like them is labelled 'stubborn', apparently forgetting that it is they who constantly impose their opinion.

However, it is also possible to adopt a completely different attitude. You can listen to all of this and leave everyone to his or her opinion, possibly inform yourself in a serious way and above all check what logical arguments there are for or against such an 'alternative' view of reality. Those who are somewhat familiar with the axiomatic of this world will also say that a person who has knowledge of post-mortem situations can orientate himself or herself much more easily during his or her transition. When the time comes, such a person is much easier to help than someone who is totally ignorant of post-mortem situations. In a manner of speaking, one already has a map and some signposts at one's disposal. For that purpose the Egyptians and Tibetans, among others, knew their book of death, and the Christian finds an excellent guide in the Bible.

And let's think about what the anonymous witness says about E.: "He was infinitely surprised by "the full reality" with which he was now - in a disembodied and deceased state - confronted". The German philosopher Hans Driesch (1867/1941), *Parapsychologie*³³, (Parapsychology), states that man is clairvoyant in his deepest being. However, this mantic gift is limited in the biological body because otherwise man would not be able to live because of the excessive abundance of 'faces' and 'visions' from the other world. Occasionally, however, this clairvoyance can occur, especially in cultures and people who open themselves up to the other side of reality. In Driesch's view it strongly seems as if man, after stepping out of his biological body, has been freed from the limitations of time and space and is becoming clairvoyant. What makes that one transcends the limitations of the material world, and – let's hope - one's own prejudices, and is confronted with "the full reality" as the anonymous witness mentioned above. The English paranormologist H. Price, the French Jewish philosopher H. Bergson, the American pioneer J.B. Rhine and M.M. Moncrieff, *The Clairvoyant Theory of Perception*³⁴, among others, are also supporters of this theory. This vision, by the way, governs the entire ancient Greek philosophy, from Empedokles to the neo-platonic. Those who are familiar with this body of thought argue that today's human beings hardly have any knowledge of it and that this ability is almost never practiced.

Time and again

J. Grant also confirms that many people are not or not sufficiently prepared for their death. She wrote: "But now I had to take care of the people who had died so recently that they had not yet realized that they had died.

She says she was on the fifth floor of a hotel room in Brussels and that she was already in bed, when suddenly an unknown young man ran out of the bathroom and crashed through the window in the hotel courtyard. She realized that she was not dreaming and saw that this image was being repeated. Then she understood that it was the subtle body of a deceased man who had committed suicide and who, trapped in his despair, had to relive this horrible scene over and over again. Grant writes: "Prayer did not help this man, so the task expected of me was to free him from the despair in which he was imprisoned.

It is remarkable that she does not like to pray at all, which means that she does not like to mobilize subtle energies and creatures that can help her in such a situation. We will also come back to this later (7.3.3.).

When we read her book "*Geveugelde farao*" (Winged Pharaoh), as she says in "Meer dan één leven", ((Many lifetimes), it is clear that she is assisted in her liberating work by Egyptian gods. Even if she doesn't explicitly mention it here. She continues: "during my sleep I had released many people who had recently died. (note: in the out-of-body state, to try to persuade the deceased of their real situation). I could do it because I wasn't influenced by their fear." To help the deceased's mind, she must understand their situation and share their presuppositions (2.3.) while ensuring that her courage remains superior to her fear. This in order not to be caught by his fear and not to suffer the same fate. Finally, after much fear and "in a flood of tears", she managed to absorb the young man's suffering, to treat it, and thus to free him from the fatal situation he had to live through again and again. The young man realized his real situation - that of the deceased - and was able, once released, to continue his journey into the other world. The next morning, she checked with the hotel management and learned that in her room, five days earlier, a man had committed suicide by jumping out of a window.

Poisoned tablets

G. Van der Zeeuw, *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*³⁵, (Clairvoyance in space and time), tells the story of a man who killed himself by taking poisoned tablets. The author says he has the ability to help people who have died in their distress when he puts himself in an out-of-body state. He tries to get them out of their ignorance and to break the compulsive and constant repetition of their last earthly acts.

Van der Zeeuw continues: The man who committed suicide sat down, of course with his subtle body, at his desk and repeated "endlessly and

unceasingly" what he had experienced the last time on earth. He had not been able to deny his much younger wife a life of too much luxury, but he had put himself in great financial difficulties and saw no other way out. During his lifetime, his wife had an affair with a younger man, without his knowledge. However, the woman and the young man are now tormented by the death of the legitimate husband. For the deceased to become aware of his current situation, those who want to help him must identify themselves with his situation in order to be able to communicate with him. Van der Zeeuw tells us that he and some spirits helped the man and are trying to convince him that he was dead. Disbelief, however, was the result: "You can see that I am sitting at my desk and that I can talk to you," he argued. Gradually, however, he became convinced of his real situation. He also 'saw' that his wife was cheating on him. "Hate seized him and, to our great surprise, we saw terrible demonic characters enter the room. The man was faced with an important choice, but in the end he changed his mind and stammered: "If I had known, I would have given you freedom, and I wish you good luck now". The author concludes with these words: "If he had remained in his hatred, he could not have gotten rid of the demons".

From the same author we read: "In the 'higher' spheres, to imagine something is to realize it". In these spheres, every thought can be transformed into a form, which is not possible on earth because it is slowed down by matter. However, we have seen that magical experiences (4.3.2.) can be accomplished if the power of thought exceeds a certain limit. Then, some people, who are able to direct an abundance of subtle energy in a concentrated way, can look at a frog to death, turn a compass, move a computer cursor or do other things. But if they have such powerful energies, they are also able to bring many more practical things: for evil, but hopefully, especially for good. This last point was addressed in the chapter on paranormal healings (4.3.3.).

I torment her as much as I can.

Raoul Montandon, *Maisons et lieux hantés*³⁶, (Haunted Homes and Places), mentions a testimony of Mrs. A. Morigret, in *Psychica* (15.03.1923).

Twelve years ago, we met a German woman at the court of William II. She told us that she had a young girl friend. As soon as she was alone, a man, dressed in black, appeared. He followed all her movements with his big wild eyes. She has traveled a lot to get rid of this torment. But nothing could stop him. When she returned to her room as late as possible in the evening, the man reappeared again. He stood at the foot of her bed and kept staring at her. The young girl friend knew that my daughter was a good medium and asked

me to talk to my daughter about it. I advised her not to do so. My daughter had trouble coping with her many visions. I assured her that I myself had attended spiritualist meetings and promised her that we would submit this to our "controlling spirit". When we did, the "spirit" said that he wanted to help us and advised us not to put the burden on my daughter.

Later, as I was talking to my daughter, I suddenly see her anxiously staring at a certain place. She points to a corner of the room and says, "There, a man dressed in black looks at me with wild eyes. She tried to escape his gaze without success. I then offered to ask him who he was and what he wanted. She did it. The answer was: "I had a very sad life on earth. A doctor locked me in a madhouse, even though I wasn't crazy. I died there. Since then, I have sent my hatred to everything about this doctor on earth, including his granddaughter. I torment her as much as I can. My daughter immediately told him that it was not only reckless, but that it prevented him from making spiritual progress. This message seemed to sink in. After a brief hesitation, he decided to end his hatred. Then he disappeared. For my daughter, it was the end of the case. I didn't tell her anything until I myself received news from the German lady. And here she was, a few days later, standing there. She was looking well and told me that she had received a letter from her young girl friend in which she wrote that she had been freed from her terrible vision. It was only then that I spoke about my daughter's vision and the conversation she had had with the deceased. The German lady then confirmed that the young woman in question was the granddaughter of a famous doctor.

Mrs. Schwarz

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *Over de dood en het leven daarna*³⁷; (About death and life after that;) recounts. "My story about Mrs. Schwarz (6.1.2.), however, has not yet been fully told. I still have to resort to the fact that she died fourteen days after her son finished his studies. As one of my many patients, I certainly would have forgotten her if she hadn't come to see me again.

Mrs. Ross tells us that one day she noticed a woman in the elevator that looked familiar to her, but she couldn't locate the lady immediately. "Her silhouette was very transparent, but not transparent enough for us to see everything behind her," Ross wrote. However, the woman approached her and said, "Dr. Ross, I had to come back. Do you mind if we go to your room together? I won't keep you long."

And Ross said: "Elizabeth, you know you see this woman. And yet it can't be true. You absolutely have to touch this woman to know if she's really there.

So I grabbed her to see if she would dissolve into nothingness again. I felt her skin to see if it was hot or cold. I even deleted the idea that this apparition could really be Mrs. Schwarz, who was buried a few months ago.

When we arrived together at my door, she opened it as if I was visiting my own room. She did so with irresistible courtesy, tenderness and love and said, "Dr. Ross, I had to come back for two reasons. One is to thank you and Pastor G. (who was the black preacher with whom I got along so well) for everything you did for me. But the real reason I had to come back is to tell you not to give up your work on death, at least not yet". I persuaded the apparition to put a few words on paper for the pastor. "You will understand, of course, that I didn't want to send these lines to my friend at all. But I needed scientific proof, because it goes without saying that someone who is buried can no longer write letters. And this woman with her so human, no, with a non-human smile, with her dearest smile, could read all my thoughts. Never before had I been so sure of what mind reading was like. She took the paper and wrote a few lines on it, which we of course locked away in a glass case where everyone could still see it.

The hitchhiker from Alba-la-Romaine

Our source is D. Audinot, *Les lieux de l'au-delà*³⁸. (The Places of the Afterlife). The well-documented work speaks of ghosts, so-called "white women" and "disappearing hitchhikers". We remember a remarkable case of a disappearing hitchhiker.

In spring, in the period of the red moon, i.e. early May (note: the days of the ice saints), motorists leaving the A6 motorway in Montélimar to drive along the Ardèche department on the National Road 102, may undergo a very strange encounter. It is that of a ghost hitchhiker of the most tenacious and of a very particular kind: she does not appear dressed in white, but strapped in leather, in motorcyclist attire; the appearance is not nocturnal, but always appears in the late afternoon before sunset.

This hitchhiker lets herself be transported for about thirty kilometers, unfolding a very strange litany as the journey progresses. This event has been observed several dozen times, always following an extremely rigorous and planned pattern

Let's give the floor to one of the victims of this ghost hitchhiker, before reconstructing in detail the itinerary concerned. The testimony you will find here, reproduced to the nearest comma, has been kindly communicated to us

by the journal *Science et Magie* (Science and magic). It comes from Mr Régis F., from Lyon. His account of the facts, he says, can be verified at the Aubenas gendarmerie, which is well informed about this phenomenon repeatedly.

As a math teacher in a Lyon high school, I am not precisely superstitious. But it is still a strange adventure that happened to me recently, in the spring of 1996, and gives me something to think about. Owner of a sheepfold that I restore in the south of the Ardèche, I drive there every weekend with my wife, taking the highway (the A6 from Lyon to the south province) to Montélimar. However, last spring, Saturday evening, we had just left the highway and crossed the Rhone, when, in a bend, a hitchhiker in a leather suit, a biker's helmet under her arm, waved at us timidly. I stop. She asks me where we're going. I tell her. It seems to suit her, so I let her take place in the back. Apparently, it is a very beautiful young girl, with an almost white complexion, not very talkative, that I can see fleetingly in my rearview mirror. It's getting dark. I turn on my headlights. I drive at my own pace, which means quite fast. At that moment, the passenger asked me: - "Can you slow down a little, sir, I don't feel very well? I slow down unwillingly, because I don't like driving at night on these small winding roads with poorly marked aisles. Ten minutes later, shortly after Alba, she did it again, in a plaintive, almost white voice: "Sir, please, slow down! I reluctantly decelerate again, while my wife, who feels like I'm blowing up inside, puts her hand on my knee to calm me down. We cross Villeneuve at thirty an hour and I accelerated little at the exit of the village. But I swear to you, I wasn't driving more than fifty or sixty miles an hour; the road is not suitable for speeding. Despite this, after 15 minutes, my new passenger whines: "For the love of God, sir, do you want to moderate your pace! I feel really bad. Otherwise, I'm going to see it necessary to exit the car! "What a pain in the ass," I said to myself, slowing down and calming myself down and forcing me to drive forty an hour! "

Suddenly I hear like a sigh, I look in my rearview mirror and I can no longer see the hitchhiker. I suddenly stop the car at the side of the road and turn around. The back seat is empty. I look at my wife, appalled! She's as surprised as I am. "That bitch didn't jump through the door, did she? We would have heard her! ". Surprised and a little anxious all the same, I turned around and drove slowly until I reached Villeneuve. We don't pass many cars. I look carefully at the passengers' faces, but apparently our stranger is not on board. Nor is she at the side of the road. I turn around and drive silently and with full headlights to Aubenas. I stop at the gendarmerie. Two men listen without much surprise to my strange and somewhat disjointed story. When I finish describing the girl, they nod their heads and smile. "Ah" said one of them

most seriously to me, "you are the third to see the 'larva' this year. Ever since her deadly motorcycle accident three years ago, this girl shows herself every red moon.

Explanatory notes

This story, which resembles perfectly many others and many of which have been recorded at the Aubenas gendarmerie, allows for some interesting observations.

The "phantom hitchhiker" crashed three years ago and died violently on that road. She is a perfect match for what used to be called 'ghost appearances'.

Briefly sketched: These are people who suddenly died and who regularly show themselves around the place where they died, while perfectly materializing (note: becoming coarse) and dematerializing (note: becoming subtle again or even disappearing altogether) so that they are able to disappear without leaving a trace. Since her accidental death on a motorcycle three years ago on this same road, this girl has been appearing every spring at the red moon. From this account, identical to many others and many of which were collected at the Aubenas gendarmerie, it is possible to draw some interesting conclusions.

These are people who died of sudden death, regularly appearing near the place where they died, materializing perfectly while being able to disappear without leaving any traces, through doors and walls.

Another observation: the ghost hitchhiker, perfectly and physically palpable, reconstituted down to the smallest of its atoms, is a complete materialization, of flesh and bone. Finally, this materialization does not seem to know that she is dead. She often expresses a feeling of unease as she approaches the scene of her fatal accident, and this is the case here, which she cannot explain. So she is - at least temporarily - 'alive'. She knows how to open car doors and she is completely materialized.

This transgression is surprising to say the least. Depending on the cases identified, this appearance can be durable or very short. A few ghost hitchhikers only appear for a few minutes on journeys of a few hundred meters. In this story, our lady spent nearly twenty minutes in total materialization in a single vehicle over a distance of nearly thirty kilometers.

It is a very rare case due to its duration and the frequency of its reappearance on the same roadside.

Two characters were deceived by this appearance. There is therefore no epileptic vision phenomenon, a situation that can only be applied to one individual. Cases of ghost hitchhikers seen by all passengers in a car are quite frequent. The manifestations and materializations are therefore very real and do not belong in any way to the domain of individual subjectivity.

Would you like to see the phenomenon for yourself? It couldn't be easier. Wait until the first days of May, choose a Saturday and take the following itinerary: from the A6 motorway, coming from Lyon, in the direction of Paris - Province, exit at Montélimar. From there, take the Alba-la-Romaine road towards Aubenas on the National Road 102. It is before Alba, just outside the highway, that the one that the gendarmes call a little trivially 'the larva' will appear, in a bend. From there, you will go to Villeneuve de Berg, still on the N 102. This is where her first complaints will begin. You will cross this city, heading towards Aubenas. It is about ten kilometers later, at most, that the beautiful girl will disappear... to start again later and probably for a long time, shyly pointing her thumb at a designated car.

In an introductory section as in the entire book with its several hundred cases, Audinot places a strong emphasis on the dynamic aspect. One of the ghostly apparitions goes no further than a fleeting and dark apparition, while the other materializes in a tangible way. The author also believes that with the years and centuries, the energy that makes apparitions possible decreases.

The two disciples of Emmaus

Luke 24:31-35 tells the story of the two apostles on their way to Emmaus on Easter Sunday. They talked about everything that had happened, about the suffering and death of Jesus. While they were arguing, Jesus joined them and walked with them. But the apostles did not recognize him. When they later invited him to join them for a meal, Jesus joined them at the table. After they had eaten, he took the bread, pronounced the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. Their eyes opened and they recognized him. But immediately He disappeared in front of their faces. They said to each other: "Wasn't it heartwarming how he spoke to us on the way, when he explained the Scriptures to us?"

In addition to the immense differences between the history of the hitchhiker and biblical history, there is also a certain similarity: from a subtle

body, the coarse matter is materialized. Christ also had a meal. Then, the biological body is dematerialized again and apparently dissolves into nothingness.

A similar story can be found in John 20:1 ff., "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of his tomb, and I do not know where they have laid Him." So Peter and the other disciple went forth, they went to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).

And a little further on in John 20:19, the evangelist also mentions a materialization of Jesus: "So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord."

Finally, in John 21:1-16, we also find a description of how Jesus, after his resurrection, came to Lake Tiberias and there were apostles fishing in their boats, asking that the net be thrown "on the right side of the boat". After so

many fish had been caught, the apostles went ashore, prepared the fish on a charcoal fire, and everyone, including Jesus, ate it. The apostles experienced Jesus as risen, but still active on earth.

A spiritual spell

We found testimonies of people who saw death coming in advance, testimonies from the moment of death, and we found examples of deceased people who were not yet aware of their death. Spiritism teaches us that contact with the deceased is also possible. However, many clairvoyants will strongly disapprove of this subject. Many cultures warn us that calling the dead can be very dangerous. People are called upon without knowing their deep nature and without knowing whether they are good or harmful. Some of them are exceptionally cunning and can mislead man or steal his energy. In many cases, the same is true, for example, for widows or widowers who cannot separate themselves from their deceased spouse, who want to bring them back to earth and, for example, erect an indoor altar with all kinds of decorations and flowers to worship their loved one as a deity.

We now cite examples that require exorcism. Carl Wickland, *Thirty years among the dead*³⁹, tells the following story, which is typically spiritualist and gives an example of liberation by the spiritualist method.

Miss L. was the young fiancée of a widower who, at the time, lived with his wife on the same floor of the same building as the young fiancé. The two women had been close friends. The wife died very suddenly and shortly after her death, the man was engaged to the young woman. Soon after, she began to show mental anomalies that were getting worse and worse. In her normal state, she placed a high value on this man, but when she came to see Dr. Carl Wickland, she had a fierce aversion to the widower and insisted that she would rather die or go to a mental hospital than marry him. She had tried to commit suicide several times, but she apparently came to her senses at the last minute each time and called for help.

When the patient entered the institute (note: who was trying to guide her), Carl Wickland's wife, who was psychic, saw that the deceased woman was trying to enter the body of the young bride. Once 'possessed' by the deceased woman, the fiancée declared herself crazy. She longed to die, because if she stayed alive, she would have to marry "this man".

As a psychic, Ms. Wickland has the ability to connect with the deceased woman, identify with her preconceptions and, to some extent, with the feelings

and thoughts of the deceased. After a considerable effort, the deceased lady was able to be convinced of her real situation. This means that she understands that it is better to leave the living alone and continue her journey to the afterlife. This acceptance means that she changes her attitude, repents and ends the grip on the young bride to be. As a result, the fiancée recovered very quickly. She was soon able to leave the institution and marry the widower.

So much for Dr. Carl Wickland's very short text. The structure of the spiritualist incantation is clear:

1. It is assumed that the patient's disorders (mental, behavioral and health) are due to the mind of a deceased person who should not be looked for too far away, i.e. in the circle of the deceased person, and who is somehow involved in what the person wants to do or what interests him/her.

2. Dr. Wickland's wife sees the aura of Miss L. and notes the spirit of the deceased. Ms. Wickland is guided and protected by a strong and reliable guardian spirit (also known as "her controlling spirit"). In addition, her husband, who is a doctor, directs all the spiritualist experience in an expert way.

3. It is not an authoritarian and aggressive exorcism (as is often the case with the exorcism of the Catholic Church, for example, see 13.3.2.) but persuasion is at the heart of the neutralization of evil. This persuasion is a proclamation:

- a. You are dead (more than one person does not know this); you belong to the other world;

- b. Your condition is due to your own mentality that binds you to earthly life (especially through immortal desires and misconceptions);

- c. Repent: abandon this earthly life and your entanglement in it, and, with your conscious attention, turn to higher and heavenly kingdoms and ways of existence by invoking and following God and the blessed spirits.

The second death

In their transition to the "other world", people leave their biological body while their consciousness is transferred into their ethereal body. The above surveys indicate such a transition. Van der Zeeuw, among others, says that we must also leave this ethereal body if we do not want to remain 'earthbound'. In his *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*⁴⁰, (Clairvoyance in space and time), he writes: "People who are still completely bound to the earthly sphere and its desires when they pass, take with them the ethereal double, are therefore less subtle (note: than in their astral body, which is more subtle) and, because of their heaviness, cannot rise so high. Only when they have renounced their earthly desires will they get rid of this ethereal body. They will have to, so to

speak, suffer a second death, in order to separate the spiritual body from the coarse etheric double, in order to be able to ascend higher. This ethereal double remains behind and perishes. The height of the ascent depends on the ethical level that the person has reached. It is reflected in his spiritual body. As soon as it encounters its own 'vibration' or its "specific weight", it cannot go up higher. Man can never perceive higher than he himself possesses in height. However, it is always possible to go lower; because he or she has experienced it during his evolution. So much for that quote.

Let us refer to the young Indian's dream of life (3.3.4.) where the guardian spirits instruct him not to exceed the level at which he is at that moment: "There are already enough beautiful and great things for you! Look around you: you will find all the good gifts of God. Health, vitality, longevity and all creatures of nature", this is how the spirits that accompany him have ordered it. Let's clarify this ascent and descent with the movements of a submarine. If his specific weight is very low, the boat will rest on the ocean floor. If it gradually loses ballast, it floats slowly higher until it finally reaches the surface of the water. The boat can no longer climb higher, its structure does not allow it to fly. A completely new vehicle is now needed to climb even higher, for example a balloon. If the specific gravity of the latter is very heavy, it floats on the surface of the water. When its specific gravity gradually decreases, it begins to float in the air, if necessary to the stratosphere. And to rise even higher, you need another type of vehicle that can escape the gravity of the earth.

The viewing of ideas

In the previous chapter, the so-called platonic ideas (5.1.2.) were discussed. For Plato, these ideas exist for eternity and have a subtle life force. Albinos placed them in the world of light and as ideas of God. As objective models of all reality, they are somewhat 'divine', not at the extra-natural level but at the supernatural level, at the highest divine level. It is now very important for man to possess or reach this height, where he can come into contact with such ideas, where he can 'see' them. These ideas elevate the soul and advance it. When a person then reincarnates, he still has, according to Plato, this memory and he can achieve something in this world. This memory and the desire to acquire them are mutually reinforcing. This person not only moves in the right direction, but also accelerates his evolution.

The situation is completely different for people for whom higher ideas mean almost nothing. They will probably live a life that will satisfy them, but in which they will not evolve much higher. A subsequent reincorporation will

suffer the consequences. Van der Zeeuw, o.c., 135, writes: "If you have evolved spiritually high enough, then you rise up until you have found your own "specific weight". This will be the level to which we already belonged as earthly men, - we have called it the "occult status" - or the level we have reached in this life. It's good to know that you can progress through life. The whole previous chapter dealt with this, with the evolution of humanity.

Many will not rise.

Van der Zeeuw, o.c., 135, says that from an astral point of view, most people are in the lower areas. With their biological bodies, they live naturally on earth, but their actions and thoughts are manifested there, in these lower areas. And further on, o.c. 169, he writes that when he is out of his body, he sees that it is quite dark on earth, even during the day.

Mr. Van Gestel, *Mijn kind ziet meer*⁴¹, (My child sees more), quotes her daughter.

- "Mom, there is so much sadness here on earth, if I could give it a color, the earth is brown-black. This other world is yellow, white-yellow. Yes, I understand now. And now it's a matter of bringing some of the yellow from the other world here on earth. To transmit yellow to the people".

- "Won't the yellow run out?"

- No, there is an infinite amount of yellow and you can always receive it again.

There, according to Marieke, a six-year-old clairvoyant, who, at her childish level, expressed something of the world of Platonic ideas she had experienced.

Some who have had an out-of-body experience, confirm that, from their point of view, it is dark on earth, even on a sunny day.

Van der Zeeuw, o.c., 208 adds: "On earth, I have met many true demons, incarnated in human form, and I know what is in store for them. And further on, c.c., 217: "Only a few people on earth are able to perceive the spiritual body". This opinion is confirmed by more than one biblical visionary. We will come back to this later.

Let's summarize all this. As far as death is concerned, there is a lot to be said. So many opinions, philosophies and testimonies disagree with nominalism, which claims that death is the final end. So many individual experiences testify in favor of a subtle existence that becomes particularly penetrating and relevant after a journey outside the body. After their death,

many people testify that they live with their memories, consciousness and subtle bodies, but the common man is not always prepared for this. A significant number of them get lost in this alienating world and come back as a kind of ghost on earth, which can considerably slow down their future evolution. A number of others experience the "second death", by which the etheric body is also abandoned and the consciousness withdraws into a finer and astral body". In this way, one can focus on further and higher evolution. The followers of reincarnation affirm that this is how the individual prepares for a new and richer earthly life. At least as long as necessary and until the required 'terrestrial' lessons have been 'learned'. In this case no further reincarnation is necessary.

6.3. A descent into hell

A fictional story?

The term "descent into hell" has already been mentioned about Jesus, as well as the paranormal nature of His miracles, resurrection and ascension (1.4.4. and 2.6.). According to some seers, it is a real event, others contest e.a. the history of Jesus' descent by reducing it to a pedagogical but fictional story.

It should be noted that in many non-Biblical religions, an 'ascension'" refers to the extra-natural, as opposed to the supernatural. Also the extra-natural has higher levels and areas, but never reaches the high level of the supernatural.

It goes without saying that deceased ancestors who wish the best for their offspring are at a different and higher level of reality than evil spirits or even spirits who pay for their crimes in a lower and darker world. Indeed, many cultures are deeply convinced that the 'dead' still exist 'somewhere' and exert their influence over their offspring. This is shown by the story of the witch of Endor (1.4.2.). The work of Van Eersel *J'ai mal à mes ancêtres* (I'm homesick for my ancestors) and J. Herbert, *La religion d'Okinawa*, (The Religion of Okinawa), (2.5.) also indicate that diseases of the ancestors can affect descendants. According to the two authors, this is being addressed not by treating the living patient who is currently suffering from it, but by healing the deceased ancestors. They illustrate this with a number of examples.

Going down below the ground

Such "descent into hell" underlines the fact that Jesus or a competent magician descends, with his "spirit" (i.e. thought, imagination and subtle body), by means of a minimal journey out of the body, literally below the ground into the level of ghosts to be summoned or contacted. In Hebrew, we

speak of the 'sjeol', the underground world or the depths of the earth where the souls of the dead have descended and lead a shadow existence deprived of all power. This literal descent below the ground means, for example, that a seer actually sees such a subtle body disappear, sink into the ground.

For some of us, the expression "descent into hell" may sound familiar to our ears. In prayer: "the twelve articles of faith" also called the 'creed' ('credo': Lat. = "I believe"), the following wording refers to the death of Jesus: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord (...) who descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Similia similibus

We also refer to the ancient Roman liturgy, which says that Jesus destroyed death by dying himself, and restored life through his resurrection. Every magician knows what this formula means. After all, it is only by repeating a process yourself that you can magically control and master it. Many saints who are called upon for specific diseases have suffered from this disease in their lives and have conquered them "in the long term". This essential equality - *similia similibus* - the equal that attracts the equal, makes that they now know how to cope with this disease and with their energies thus acquired can help others. For example, in Conques, France, Sainte Foy is invoked against all kinds of madness. This holy lady herself suffered from a form of schizophrenia, which constantly mobilized her energies in this field. It is as if one becomes immune to a particular disease by being able to produce the necessary antibodies by inoculation. All shamans, for example, know that they can only cope with a disease after they have suffered it themselves, at least to a minimal extent. It is also where their difficult trials come from. We will come back to this later in this chapter (6.4.). Let us also think of Jesus' resurrection as a victory over death: the physical model represents man's subtle redemption. Before Jesus' descent into hell and resurrection, man was in a situation that, from a sacred point of view, was more like death than life. The following biblical texts testify to this:

1 Sam 2:6: "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

Wisdom 16:13: Yes, you are the one who has power over life and death, who brings down to the gates of Hades and brings up some of them

Amos 9:2: "Though they dig into Sheol, From there will My hand take them; And though they ascend to heaven, From there will I bring them down."

As for the reality of these descents into hell, let's take a survey here as well.

Waiting for a dream

Some people claim that they are experiencing a kind of descent into hell in a more than ordinary dream. They argue that such dreams seem real to them, just as ordinary life has real value. Some even claim that such dreams seem more real than everyday experiences. They can just as legitimately say that ordinary life is then only a kind of dream. This reminds us of the following anecdote: I dreamt that I was a gnome who thought he was a butterfly. Now I don't know if I'm a gnome who dreams he's a butterfly, or a butterfly who thinks he's a gnome?

Of course, critics argue that such experiences are only false dreams, based on deception. The question is indeed to know if they are real (their existence), and if so, how they are (their essence). As we may know, there are different types of dreams. The Dutch writer and psychiatrist Frederik van Eeden (1860/1932), a clairvoyant, distinguished twelve of them. Some dreams, according to some clairvoyants, are the representation of a contact with spirits and their energies, and are considered as occult initiations. We refer to the young Indian's dream of life (3.3.4.), in which he was initiated by a number of guardian spirits and received higher energies to guide and protect his tribe. These are the dreams we are talking about here. The authenticity of these dreams is gradually being demonstrated in its results. That is what his supporters say.

Eliot Cowan, *spirituele geneeskraft van planten*⁴², (The spiritual healing of plants), gives the floor to Dona Modesta, an Amazonian herbalist. She talks about the dream that - she says - takes her into the real world. "Americans like to put everything in their boxes. For the Tarahumara or Raramuri (note: two Indian tribes in South America), everything is connected, and you can't put anything in your own box. If we do so, it would mean killing the real world, and breaking all contact with it. Dona Modesta continues: We receive our basic education during our youth. There are no books involved. We learn to use certain plants as medicine, as food, to make them into a drink. We learn that by imitating the example given to us (note: by the spirits, let us refer to the myths). For example, how we should grow certain plants. And if a Tarahumara wants to learn more than the common man, he must get in touch with the spirits and wait for a dream. This dream takes him to the real world. Our world is not the real world. It is a world of flesh and blood. The real world is the world in which the spirit of Osha, (note: his "help" in the world of plant spirits)

comes to speak to me. The real world is not in technology and all these books, but in our visions and dreams. So much for Dona Modesta.

The Tarahumara or Raramuri call it "living a dream vision", but they know very well that it is not just a dream as most Westerners know it. It is a dream that goes far beyond the reality of this world. Her statement "this is not the real world here" reminds us of the myth of the cave and Plato's ideas (5.1.2.). Plato also stated that this world is not the real one, but only a shadow of an overpowering reality on the "other side". There are also many examples in the literature of astral travel during a dream. We referred to the Dalai Lama and the story of Father Trilles, "a magician who underwent an out-of-body experiment" (6.1.1.). Let us mention other examples.

Your ancestors are in an assembly.

<http://www.firstpeople.us> mentions (in 2011) the complete book by Black Elk, Black Elk speaks. Black Elk (1863/1950) was a Lakota Sioux who, at the age of five, could already hear paranormal voices and see ghosts. At the age of nine, he became seriously ill. His arms, legs and face swelled to double their normal size. An inner voice told him that it was time and that the spirits were calling him. Then he had an out-of-body experience and was taught "in the other world" by the guardian spirits of his tribe: "Your grandfathers are having a council", "Your ancestors are in assembly". This is somewhat reminiscent of the Orishas of the santeria and macumba, or the court of Yahweh (Job 1:6). Black Elk was introduced to the secrets of the tribe by the guardian spirits during his astral journey. They taught him many things, predicted that he and his tribe were facing difficult times, gave him more than ordinary subtle energies, and taught him how to heal people. Black Elk remained in an out-of-body state for twelve days, before waking up again in his biological body. It is the rule rather than the exception that an initiation is accompanied by a serious illness. The biological body must adapt in a very short time to the effects of many subtle energies, characteristic of such an initiation.

As an adult, Black Elk fought in many battles against the United States cavalry. This was the case at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 and the Battle of the Wounded Knee in 1890, where he was wounded. He remained the spiritual leader of his people and gained a lot of respect, even outside his tribe. From his youth, he remembers that the "white men" had found a yellow metal "that they worshipped and that drove them mad". To remove all this gold, they built a railway on the prairie. Many bison were killed during this process. He complained that whites rarely respected the agreements made with his people. Eventually, the Indians only obtained "small islands", on

which they had to settle and all their other land was taken from them. He also tells how Creeping, a healer, was able to heal snow blindness by singing sacred songs that his ancestors had given him in his dreams, and by blowing into the necks of those who were blinded.

We now know that in their axioms, "sacred songs" and "breaths into the neck" are only external signs of a ritual that aims to increase subtle energy (1.3.). Anyone who, in a nominalist way, and without contact with the guardian spirits, would sing these songs or blow their necks out like that, would obviously not achieve a cure.

Great Magicians

According to Black Elk, however, whites were greater witches because they had, for example, invented guns that could fire several times in a row, and they had built solid locomotives with which they carried yellow metal. This made them more powerful in the end. In the opinion of Indians and many natural peoples, our white civilization has many powerful wizards who, with what they conceive after much effort, achieve remarkable practical results. Only these whites don't know they're real magicians. It seems like a confrontation of the sacred culture of the Indians with the secular culture of the Whites. Yet, the Indian perceives this too profane image of the white man. The Indian, better than the white man, sees through the unconscious depths of man ('apocalyps'). In this field, many natural peoples are even more sensitive to the depths of the soul than the modern man.

G. Graichen, *De nieuwe heksen*⁴³ (The New Witches), writes on this subject: "We always do magic, every day, everyone. But most people are not aware of this. There are great magicians in politics, in economic life, in industry, in science too, but they don't know it. And if we told them, they would reject it as an absurd and ridiculous notion.

Once again, we are referring to the so-called "occult status", the "deep self" of man, which we have already mentioned. Jesus also blames the Pharisees for the fact that, in their deep soul, they are in a much worse state than they claim to be (2.5.). Father Trilles also confirmed that the formation of the ngil (3.3.3.) is much deeper in the unconscious level of the sorcerer's apprentice than the overly conscious and superficial formation that children received from missionaries during their religious teachings. A similar story can be found in the santeria. For the outside world, we pray, so to speak, we turn to a biblical figure or a saint, but in reality we contact a non-biblical divinity. Non-Biblical religions are often rooted in a much deeper level, subconscious

and unconscious, than the rather superficial layer of varnish of a misunderstood Christianity.

An anonymous testimony

A coeval speaks. "I've come to awakening, to consciousness, in my subtle body. I know I'm having an out-of-body experience and I find myself somewhere in a rather dark place, right next to a long line of people passing me by. Their grey figures barely contrasting on the dark background. They seem to me like robots, and it seems they do it all the time, that they are caught in a cycle and that they don't have the power to break themselves free. All of them died: and all of this has something to do with the violence of war. Their faces are terribly grey and expressionless, looking like masks. Only their eyes, which are unpleasant in color, have something phosphoric about them, and indicate that they are not automatons. I see that they're noticing me. The pupils of their eyes remain focused on me for a short time, while the rest of them keep going on, absently. I feel like I'm connecting with something deeper inside of them through their eyes, while they are trapped inside their bodies. In a way, I 'know' that what I'm experiencing has real value.

Despite their grey and dark appearance, I overcome a certain aversion to them, yes, I am overwhelmed by a fierce feeling of compassion and pity. They are like an 'Ich-nog-einmal', as Schopenhauer says. I consciously cross my hands and pray a Hail Mary, slowly, with faith and conviction. I pronounce each word with great empathy and in my mind I ask heaven to take care of these sad creatures. And then... suddenly, a handful of these people closest to me seem to be popping, like soap bubbles. There's nothing left of them. It seems they never existed. At the same time, I notice that small spots of light are coming down from the sky. They remind me of a so-called "sparklers" that we light at Christmas, which then burns beautifully and gives off many small sparks. But it's much finer, much more penetrating. The brightness of the many small points of light, which fall like snowflakes in the night sky, makes me realize that it is still very dark where I am. When I pray, I look up. Far above me, I see a bright light, of indescribable beauty. I want to go there. I immediately hear a sound, my whole body vibrates (note: result of the contribution of a higher energy) and I hear celestial music. I have never heard such beautiful and exalted melodies in my life. I feel my body rising, facing the light. At the same time, the sparks increase in intensity and number. It's like a splashing firework display. It's such an overwhelming feeling that I think to myself: it would be a shame if I woke up now. Immediately afterwards, everything fades away and I do actually wake up in my biological body. I probably shouldn't have thought about the latter. When I wake up, I feel

myself descending very slowly and gradually into my biological body. I notice that my subtle arms and legs are increasingly coinciding with my physical limbs. It gives me a soft tingling sensation. A little later, it stops. I wake up in my physical body and I can move my arms and legs again.

Remark: "There is celestial music", this is how the dreamer experiences it. In this context, we refer to "the music of the spheres", an expression which, according to Mr. Wildiers in the book of the same name *De muziek der sferen*, (The music of the spheres) that we encounter in the writings of Pythagoras, Plato and Cicero, among others. Those who can hear this music not "clairvoyant" but "clairaudiant" tell us that celestial bodies, stars, and planets play wonderful music together. So much for this testimony.

Accepting, purifying and elevating.

Here too, we notice the power of thought: the witness says "I want to go there" and it happens as he wants. A little later, he said to himself: "It would be a shame if I woke up now", which also immediately followed. This reflection, as I have already said, is sufficient for it to be effectively implemented. If this testimony is based on reality, it also teaches us something about the power of prayer. It is not only a form of concentrated attention, it is also a feeling: a deep pity seizes the witness. Moreover, prayer calls for the help of like-minded entities: it is more or less the "similia similibus", the equal that attracts the equal, just as a vibrating tuning fork makes everything that has the same key vibrate.

We can consider this "dream" as a kind of initiation. Something in the unconscious of the "dreamer" is accepted: the queue of the passers-by. But it is also purified: the empathic attitude undoes an evil, so that it explodes as if it had never existed. Finally, something in the dreamer is taken to a higher level. The trinity of "accepting, purifying and elevating to a higher level" has been mentioned above (3.2.). We will come back to this later in this text.

It is clear that, from a nominalist point of view, such unreal testimony can be set aside. For the 'dreamer', who has experienced it in person, it is an experience that remains with him for the rest of his life and as a highlight of his life. The question whether and to what extent reality is realized is totally superfluous for him here. His experience is a shocking reality, a fact acquired in an overwhelming way, not at all a simple 'imagination' without real value. Clearly, the hard sciences cannot take such evidence into account. Science wants to have concrete and irrefutable facts that can be repeated. But that, of course, is a completely different story.

Odysseus in the underground world

In Homer's *Odyssee*⁴⁴, translated from Greek by Bertus Aafjes, we find a description of a descent into hell. Chapter VII is titled: "In the Kingdom of the Shadows". Let's summarize all this. On the coast of an island, Odysseus (Ulysses) and his companions landed their ship at a place that Circe, the goddess, had told them. This very beautiful witch gives Odysseus instructions at the "entrance of Hades", where Ulysses wants to raise the dead. He kills a sheep and a ram, both with black hair, to consult dead souls in the underworld.

Let us refer to the so-called "do ut des", "I give so that you give" (3.3.1.). I, Ulysses, give you, the spirit I want to consult, the blood of animals. This blood is the carrier of energy. With this surplus, you can temporarily leave your "zombie" existence and recover your memory of the upper world. Someone's 'consciousness' in the underground world is not 'dead' but asleep. In hell, ghosts and deceased people outside time and space do not know the restrictions that a person, who lives in that time and space, knows.

In principle, the inhabitants are therefore clairvoyant, but only on their own level and only if they have a sufficient vital force. Hence the bloody sacrifice, the blood as the carrier of this subtle energy. These sacrifices will be discussed in more detail in the text. We also pay attention to the color of the sheep and ram: black hair, adapted to the gloom of the underground world. The fact that the colors of sacrifice play a role for extra-natural beings has taught us, among other things, the santeria: (3.3.1.). Red and white were the colors of the Sango orisha, wild blue and white Yemaya, Oshun only wanted yellow chickens as an offering. Such idiosyncratic requirements characterize creatures of the extra-natural.

We return to Ulysses and his descent into the underground world. Around the sacrificed blood, souls appear. "When I have made my supplications and vows to the dead," said Ulysses, "the souls of the dead will come. Young women, young men full of life, elderly people marked by suffering, gentle virgins full of recent pain, soldiers, once struck by bronze spears, with weapons on which blood still sticks. All crowded around the sacrificial quarry in large numbers, with terrifying whispers. Yet, with the sword in my hand, I will not allow the dead without energy to approach the blood before consulting Tiresias.

Indeed, pagan antiquity was convinced that spirits, even the apparitions of the living, are terrorized if they are threatened by a ritual sword.

Let me drink this blood.

Finally, the soul of the seer Tiresias shows itself, he recognizes Ulysses and says: "Son of Laertes, cunning Ulysses, for what purpose do you leave the sunlight to visit the dead and remain complacent to them? But in the meantime, withdraw from the career of sacrifice, divert your sharp sword, let me drink this blood, and I will tell you "true things".

Our spiritualists today also evoke the dead. But they do not always observe the most precise and magical precautions. It seems unlikely that Ulysses did not know these laws and the conditions required to contact the dead. Such precautions have only one purpose: to preserve the life force of those who are called upon to do so, and especially the life force of those who ask us to do so. If this is not respected, the consequence is that sooner or later we get exhausted and have all kinds of problems. Archaic cultures have or had a real knowledge of occult phenomena.

Ulysses sees at some point the shadow (the appearance of the soul) of his wandering mother. This 'wandering' already indicates a lack of life force. For example, this leads to a narrowing of consciousness. "Teach me" - he asks the seer Tiresias - "how she can recognize me". The seer answers with the great axiom of the consultations on death: "Those among the dead whom you let drink this blood, will tell you the true things. Those you reject will immediately turn away". Ulysses continues: "The ghosts of the dead have gathered around me. Elpenor (note: a companion of Odysseus who recently passed away) was the first to appear. His body wasn't buried yet. I had tears in my eyes when I saw him. "Elpenor" I shouted with pity in my heart, "how did you get here in the kingdom of darkness?". While sobbing, he said: "It is my bad star, it is the wine that has become fatal to me... my soul immediately took refuge in Hades (note: the Greek term for the underground world). Don't forget me, don't let me go without crying for me and without burying me...". Ulysses continues: "I waited until my mother (note: she died during his many years of wandering and is also in the underground world) drank black blood. Immediately she recognized me and said to me: "You are still alive, my child, how do you get here, in this region of darkness and mists? This is no place for people who are still alive. Odysseus then asked his mother if his wife Penelope, after 20 years of absence, had remained faithful to him, which she confirmed.

So much for this excerpt. It is clear that Ulysses was a clairvoyant, which was a requirement for a king at the time. In this way, he could protect his people from imminent danger. Such a sacred conception of royalty we still know today in some parts of the world. The Westerner, who puts aside or denies this sacred character, deviates from the meaning of the customs of these peoples, so that a large part of their culture reaches him as totally senseless. As we have already said, anyone who wants to understand the religious man must not share nominalist axioms, but the assumptions (2.3.) of the religious man and identify with (2.2.) his point of view.

Dante's Divina Commedia.

Dante Alighieri, (1265/1321) the great Italian poet, in his *Divina commedia*⁴⁵, or "divine comedy" (1307/1321) also visits an underground world "in a hundred songs", then a mountain of purification and finally a kind of paradise. This is how he summarizes in a poem the dominant ideas of scholastic philosophy. As we know, this philosophy holds the biblical vision that reality is divided into a natural, an extra-natural and a supernatural.

Dante's guide to his visit to hell and the mountain of purges is the Roman poet Virgil (-70/-19), long deceased and author of the Aeneid. This heroic poem describes the actions of Aeneas, a hero in the Trojan War. In the fifth song of this epic, Aeneas also goes down into the underground world and asks his father's shadow to predict his future.

It was Dante's great childhood sweetheart Beatrice who inspired him to his *Divina Commedia*. Beatrice had died very young. Dante saw her untimely death in a vision. She accompanies him in his poetry to the other world. Let's mention his famous "canto 7", his seventh song.

"Because I felt my heart break at this sight, I said: "O master, explain to me what kind of people they are, and tell me if these souls on our left, whose crown has been shaved, all belong to the spiritual state". Virgil replied: "These are all people who, during their earthly lives, were so blind that they did not know how to properly manage their possessions. These ghosts, whose heads are not covered with hair, were clergymen, popes and cardinals, whose greed exceeded all limits.

And while I looked tense, I saw people in that mud pool, who were completely naked and whose faces were twisted by anger. They hit each other, not only with their fists, but also with their heads, breasts and feet, tearing their skin with their teeth. Virgil, the good master, said: "My son, now you see

the souls of those who let themselves be dominated by their passion. And you have to accept as my truth that there are also people underwater: you can see everywhere that they make the surface bubble with their sigh. In the mud, they say: "During the sweet sunny life, we were miserable, carrying a smoldering fire inside us; now we are gnawing at ourselves in this black mud." They gargle at this sad anthem, because they can't express themselves with cold words. So we walked between the dry rock face and the muddy swamp in a large arch around the dirty pool. And we constantly kept our eyes on those who swallow mud."

Dante says that people in the underworld are 'naked', stripped of their vitality and thus lead an inhuman existence, yes, like zombies, without the energies that would allow them to rise. The same nudity was also experienced by the two women who had experienced an IME, a frightening near-death experience towards a kind of underground world (6.1.2.) and who later admitted that by "experiencing death, they had found what they feared most".

It should be remembered that Van der Zeeuw states that a person out of his body, can never climb and observe higher than he himself has in height. However, we can always lower our height because every human being has experienced it during his long evolution. (3.3.4.).

The voice of H. Möller

Let us also mention Möller's autobiography: *Einsamer Weg zu Gott*⁴⁶ (The Lonely Path to God). The author says that she hears the voice of an impressive force from the higher spheres and at the same time she is a kind of medium for a soul of the underground world, a deceased woman who complains about her miserable condition.

Frau Möller is a medium in two ways. On the one hand, like every human being on this earth, she remains in the middle of the "earth's atmosphere", and therefore also among immature, angry creatures who live purely demonic or satanic lives. On the other hand, she is also the medium of an elevated spirit from the sphere of the "sons of God" or "saints". This spirit accompanies her with an inner voice that she continues to hear very clearly, even if she is in direct contact with souls who are very misty and can normally deceive a medium. She is therefore a two-way medium.

First the voice of darkness speaks, then the higher force. "In my current situation, I still don't understand why I have to hear the crazy, exciting and narcissistic speech of other minds. They seem incredibly poor to me: their

speech is totally useless. Give me some advice on the cause of the fact that I'm here and I can't leave here."

Here is what she is told: "Without any power, you are at the mercy of the words of the poor spirits, for you cannot escape their company. Think of how you lived on earth, exclaiming useless words, in order to dissipate time with making you lose time of your precious earthly life. Because you didn't make time to think about really important questions. Completely rooted in the banal thoughts of the lazy and uninhabited man, you have spent your life. Although you have not neglected your earthly duties, you have taken care of the people entrusted to you, but the life of prayer ordered, powerful and nourishing towards God, has been omitted. Therefore, in your current situation, you miss the world of great ideas. You have rejected the formation of your soul, and it is precisely for this reason that you are suffering here from the dizzy, empty, and confused discourse.

Remark: "You miss the world of great ideas," the woman is told. This reminds us of Plato's theory of ideas. According to the heavenly voice, it is also the intention that man takes the time to reflect on important questions of life and a life of prayer that elevates us. Apparently, precious earthly life is not intended to let its own earthly life pass unnecessarily and without reason. For a person who sets free pleasure as the highest goal of his life, such a judgment may seem harsh.

Causes and effects

J. Grant, *Geveugelde farao*⁴⁷, (Winged Pharaoh), also describes a journey into the underworld. Because it establishes a causal link between the behavior - in this case criminal - of certain people on earth and their subsequent stay in the underground world. G. Van der Zeeuw, *Helderziendheid in ruimte en tijd*⁴⁸, (Clairvoyance in space and time), also says that he has the ability to go to the "lower spheres" in an attempt to help people in their distress. However, these are people who have not yet died and who have the opportunity to reorient themselves, to "convert", through such an intervention. Van der Zeeuw's vision can once again illustrate that, as long as man is incarnate, he remains a citizen of two worlds.

The whole theme of out-of-body experiences also raises the question of the real value of what is called the "descent into hell". However, there are also a number of penetrating testimonies. They do justice to what the long tradition has always said about this. Moreover, they are an integral part of many dynamic religions. Many advices and initiations take place through contact

with 'superior' beings: gods, ancestral souls, who are found in the extra-natural or in the supernatural. We take this theme up again in the discussion on the 'supernatural' (13).

6.4. Mediators

Intermediate beings

What we see and feel "in this world" is only the "foreground". Without any understanding of its background, this world risks being interpreted in an insignificant or at least opaque and particularly superficial way. This is one of the reasons why gifted mediators can be of some importance: after all, they are familiar with this 'environment' because of their extra-natural or supernatural clairvoyance.

Santeria knows the "mère-des-dieux" (3.3.1.) who tries to be a mediator between the gods and the mediums. The Fang had their *ngil* (3.3.3.) as an intermediary between the evil spirits and the members of the tribe. At the inauguration of the Indian (3.3.4.) and the "man in whose heart it is night" (3.3.5.), the guardian spirits announced themselves as mediators. We know mediators as priests, prophets, seers or sages. They reveal ('apocalypse'), in whole or in part, what is hidden and mysterious to ordinary people. Thus, in the Bible, the Old Testament, the prophets are important intermediaries between God and man. In the New Testament, Jesus is the great mediator. But at the same time, the mystery of God is revealed through intermediaries, mysterious beings who are called "God's messengers".

The book of Job, 4:17/18 warns against the lack of ethics of some intermediate beings: "Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error."

The term 'servants' here means 'angels'. The argument is "a fortiori": The angels of God, so 'close' to God, are already subject to anomalies. How much more would that be for ordinary people? This text teaches us not to be naive when it comes to 'angels'. Only God is infallible. Many created creatures are not infallible. Even if they are "higher" or "closer to God".

Such a revelation of what is hidden is called an "apocalypse" in the Bible (1.1.). This is why the last book of the Bible is also called the '*Apocalyps*', precisely because it reveals a great deal about the end of time.

However, revealing what is hidden involves great dangers for the one who 'reveals' and is only intended for those who can bear the occult effects of such a revelation. Evil does not like to highlight its own actions, which facilitates its unmasking and the loss of its power. That's why it's not a job for everyone. Hence the need for competent mediators. Throughout history, the latter have held the 'apocalyptic' in their hands, aware that it can ultimately be very dangerous for the unprepared human being. In this context, many cultures are familiar with the term 'taboo'. We will come back to this later (12.1.2.).

The fundamentalist trend

This vision places particular emphasis on the role of mediator between God and the great mass of people. All truth, all authority, all interpretation comes from God and this almost exclusively through mediators. Let us consider the term "almost exclusively", which underlines its exclusive character. These intermediaries are not so much religious founders, prophets or mystics, but official mediators (pope, bishops, priests). The rest of humanity has no direct contact with God. We are obliged to obey the mediators. And, if necessary, one must be forced to obey, by all means, religious and lay. Hence the centuries-old call for what is called the "secular arm" to bring large masses of people to obedience.

Tradition, authority, dogma, asceticism are taken particularly seriously. A well-known severity and rigidity characterizes the fundamentalist, which is found in all churches and religions. Many foreigners confuse such an integrative form of 'religion' with what religion should really be. We wrote earlier (1.4.1.): Religions must prove their worth, not by imposing their authority. This time is definitely over. Appealing to blind faith and blind trust is - like playing Russian roulette - looking for trouble. Peirce would certainly call this the "Authority" method (2.3.): a task is only accomplished with a solution imposed by a certain authority. In this way, ecclesiastical or political systems maintain an 'orthodoxy', a faith in the law. In a world of impecunious and illiterate people, any recourse to authority can still be justified. Those who want to speak with authority in our time must acquire authority, not by force or violence, but by "external permanence".

Public servants

It should also be noted that many ministers of a religion that was not dynamically interpreted very rarely had paranormal abilities. Their training is essentially intellectual. They are, so to speak, public servants. They would be very surprised if they are confronted with a life problem and asked for a paranormal solution.

D. Fortune, *Psychische zelfverdediging*⁴⁹, (occult self-defense), writes on this subject: "The average clergyman is not very competent in the technique of occultism (note: occult rites, psychic powers and clairvoyance) and, consequently, he understands little or nothing of his own religious achievements. It therefore remains an open question for each member of the clergy to know what influences they have on the altar and what forces they bring home backwards. Someone whose consciousness is exalted by religious rites, and does not know how to seal his aura to return to a normal state of consciousness, is exposed to a 'psychological' invasion (note: 'occult' invasion)".

The essentially intellectual training of the common pastor, for example, contrasts sharply with the training of shamans, marabouts, healers, wizards or lamas, where paranormal gifts are required and developed and where, in this magical field, an attempt is made to find a concrete solution to a concrete life problem. We have seen it in macumba and santeria, where people are magically active to find a solution to people's daily problems.

Alexandra David-Neel, *Magic and mystery in Tibet*⁵⁰, does not speak so much of an intellectual study as of an important occult initiation. In the case of Tibetans, these initiations do not consist in a sharing of an intellectual doctrine or a secret, but in a transfer of a good or a psychological power (note: 'occult' force), which allows the student to accomplish the special operation for which he receives these initiations. The Tibetan expression "angkoer dei", which we translate here as 'initiation', literally means "transfer of power". So much for Mrs. David-Neel. It should be noted that her description fits very well with our theme "the sacred", because this is also an increase in power loading.

The way in which "civil servants" fulfil their religious function, for example, also contrasts sharply with Jesus' actions. He laid hands on and healed the sick. Thus in Luke 8:43/48 where Jesus healed the woman who was suffering from blood loss. The same is true for his other miracles. The apostles also laid hands on and healed the sick. In Jeremiah 18:18, those who mediate between all the people and God are called "priest, wise, prophet" and in Matthew 23:34 they are called "prophets, wise and scribes".

Shamanism

A shaman is a kind of mediator between this world and the spirit world, in order to solve a number of practical problems in life in this way. This is why he sometimes lives on the margins of society. He tries to help people get rid of

their possessions by descending to the lower level of the spirits that cause these problems. He tries to restore this disorder by 'converting' these spirits, although at their level, and bringing them to order. Shamanism originated in Siberia, among the Evenk, a tribe of reindeer hunters and herders (including the Samoyades, Tenguscians, Lappens, etc.), and is found all over the world: in Central Asia, Northern Europe, North and South America (among the Indians), Korea, in archaic tribes in Indonesia and Oceania. It is a phenomenon that has spread all over the world and is also present at all times. Shamanism goes hand in hand with all kinds of religions.

Clairvoyance and magic

Gary Doore, *La voie des chamans*⁵¹ (The Way of the Shamans), says that the term 'shaman' refers first and foremost to the male and female magicians of the first inhabitants of Siberia and Mongolia. But in a broad sense, it is used to refer to all those who are capable of clairvoyance and magic through a congenital or induced disease. New Age claims that anyone who is inspired by ghosts is a 'shaman'. That's what P. Vitebski, says in *Les chamanes, Le grand voyage de l'âme*⁵². (The shamans, The great journey of the soul). The subtitle says a lot because a real shaman undergoes out-of-body experiences, he travels in the underground world or in celestial spheres. The shaman also works with magical energies, experiences ecstasy and causes healing. He himself possesses magical powers, but he also receives a surplus of the spirits with whom he is in contact. This showed us the dream of life of a young Indian (3.3.4.) and the dream of Black Elk (6.3.). The shaman is able to manipulate the sacred.

Let's read Bertrand Hell, *Possession et chamanisme*⁵³ (Possession and Shamanism). Hell is a professional ethnologist. He studied shamanism and the cults of possession, and sees two extremes in them. On the one hand, there is the shaman who actively contacts and controls the spirits to a large extent. On the other hand, we find the possessed who is rather a passive and impotent victim of the spirits that control him. Between these two extremes, we find all the gradations from purely active to purely passive. Bertrand Hell describes many rituals that bear witness to much more than human possibilities. Sometimes we speak of 'divine' interventions. Let us understand this 'divine' as 'superhuman' or more than human, because in the Christian interpretation there remains a huge difference between the level of these 'gods' and the biblical Yahweh.

A terrible initiation

Essentially, the call to the shaman is this: in a different state of consciousness, the candidate shaman is called by the spirits, he experiences an initiation, and sometimes he experiences terrible pains for days. He says he saw his body cut into pieces, boiled and eaten by the spirits. Then, when he survives his initiation both physically and psychologically, his body is healed again and the shaman feels reborn, but endowed with more than ordinary energies and supported by the spirits who, according to his paranormal experiences, ate his flesh. With their help, he can now solve many people's practical problems.

Because of the fact that he experienced such suffering and came out of it much stronger, he became immune to many evils. If he fails his initiation tests, he will not survive or he will end up with some kind of madness. Thus, when he has "overcome", he is able to experience the suffering of others and help them, with his mind, to regain their health. It is the redesign of a process to master it in a magical way.

The shaman is therefore a 'channel', a medium for his spirits. Where uninitiated people could not survive such a harsh initiation, the competent shaman radically dominates the conscripted spirits.

In an out-of-body state the shaman travels to the underground world or celestial spheres to contact spirits that cause disease or other problems. Eyewitnesses of absolute reliability have established such impressive magical achievements. Knud Rasmussen, an explorer born in Illulissat, Greenland, led the fifth Greenland Thule expedition through Canada's ice fields from 1921 to 1924 to collect anthropological data on Inuit.

A survey

Read P. Chichmanov, *Dans la clinique de l'âme*⁵⁴ (In the clinic of the soul). The Toeva are a Turkish-speaking people, united in their own republic, located in northern Mongolia in southern Siberia. There are about 200.000 of them. The capital is Kyzyl. The Western Toeva are mainly cattle farmers, the Eastern Toeva are mainly hunters. The report deals with the Tos Deer Polyclinic in Kyzyl, which could occur after the collapse of communism. As we probably know, communism was very violent towards shamanism.

Let's take a look at the atmosphere of the clinic: "Heavy coats with long fringes and feathered headdresses adorn the 'doctors'. Here, they take care of both the soul and the body. We play the drum and we smell 'artisj' (the gin of the taiga). In the simple waiting room, some customers watch television. The

accountant sits at his table with the cards of the different shamans in front of him. Every "caregiver", every shaman has his or her own abilities. Some shamans are specialized in prophecy, others in the use of plants, others in funeral rituals.

Legal proceedings

Professor Kenin-Lopsan, a specialist in Toeva shamanism, talks about his grandmother. She was twice a victim of communism: five years imprisonment in the 1930s, fifteen years after the Second World War (1939/1945) because she had cared for children through rites. But the other prisoners respected her and feared her, because her predictions, which went from mouth to mouth, even made the camp director tremble. She predicted Stalin's death. At one point the camp doctor judged that the camp director's daughter was incurable and suspended treatment. To which the grandmother was secretly called to see the sick girl. She managed to heal the child.

It is not surprising that Kenin-Lopsan himself became a shaman and historian of shamanism. He resurrected shamanism after communist spokesmen claimed that of the 700 shamans in 1931, there were virtually none left after the Second World War.

Very old capacities

For the shaman, this world and the other world are continuously intertwined. Everyone can experience the good or bad influences that the 'spirits' of this other world exert on us. But only the shaman is able to contact these spirits in an orderly manner. He can thus 'travel' to the other world to negotiate with the spirits. When a 'soul' has lost itself in the other living space - which could lead to illness - then the shaman can find it and bring it back. He can also accompany the deceased's soul and transmit its last wishes. In addition to the contact that shamans establish with their minds, clairvoyance is another characteristic. The shaman can know the past and predict the future. It can influence weather conditions, 'make' rain and calm storms. Thus far a sketch of the capacities that have given the shaman a particular social role throughout their millennial history.

A Conflict

In 1920, communism banned shamanism and Buddhism. Both were presented in a very negative way. Shamanism was "an inexperienced and dangerous magic". The shamans were imprisoned in a madhouse or simply executed. But communism could not face their true vocation. Kenin-Lopsan, for example, is now allowed to engage in shamanism in a 'scientific' way. This

is how he was able to write and preserve the 'algisj', the ritual poems with which spirits are evoked. He heard them from the mouths of the last shamans who had escaped the communist 'purges'. Many of those who abandoned shamanism under pressure are now continuing their rites and healing. It was simply because it was impossible for shamans to refuse to help the sick or to disrespect the last will of a dying person. A shaman must fulfill his destiny as mediator between man and spirit: his gift is first and foremost a duty. He who does not answer such a call of the spirits falls ill and may even die. So says Kenin-Lopsan.

We see here a possible demonic and authoritarian tendency on the part of the spirits that inspire the Shaman. We will find this in all non-Biblical religions. And we add: also biblical religions in their abuses. Spirits, deities or ancestral souls ordered a 'candidate' and put him under such pressure that, if he refused, he could expect many problems, illness and even death. As already said, a certain demonism is not strange to the Bible either: let us refer to Job 4:18, where we read that God does not trust his own servants, and he catches his angels on anomalies.

Modernization

In 1992, Kenin-Lopsan founded Doungour, the first shaman's association. Farmers and hunters were torn from their nomadic existence and gathered in kolkhozes. This is how real villages were created and the capital Kyzyl became such an actual city. Before the exterminations, the shamans lived in their tents in the middle of an environment full of steppes, deserts, plateaus, taiga and hundreds of lakes. They were compensated by donations. In 1992, there were very few left. The new shamans were often townspeople. Most of them lived in Kyzyl. Where the traditional seers had an individual practice, the new healers wanted to act together, if only to cut down the charlatans. This is how the associations came into being.

Nadia is a member of the Doungour Association and says: " Many patients give us gifts in kind but we also need money to live. After the collapse of the USSR, there was disorder. We decided with a number of shamans to establish a practice in the same house. It went well, both spiritually and materially. Household expenses, electricity, meals and heating are now paid for by the community. Traditional donations have been replaced by fixed-rate donations. In the meantime, there are talented people who want to return to nature. Or there is one like Roza: she is simply dressed and regularly goes to the big cities where she can be consulted.

The theme 'mediators' or 'intermediaries' is in fact a logical consequence of the previous theme, which dealt with the experience of out-of-body situations. Mediators travel in their astral body with the intention of interceding between our world and the world on the other side. This presupposes, of course, that these intermediaries have the necessary mantic and magical talent to be able to act as mediators. This is far from obvious in our Western culture. It is completely different in cultures where shamanism is still practiced regularly. Here, the shaman is the ideal intermediary to present many practical problems to subtle creatures in order to reach a solution.

6.5. Summary

This whole chapter was about what is called an out-of-body experience. Many people have claimed and continue to claim that they can leave their biological bodies. They then find themselves with their consciousness in an astral body that remains connected to their biological body by an umbilical cord. Some say they spontaneously experience such an out-of-body experience. A smaller number of them say they can do it multiple times and of their own free will. Some people experience an NDE, a near death experience when they are in danger of dying. During which they see their whole lives unfold in front of them, down to the smallest details.

Those who are clairvoyant enough can also observe the death process of another human being, at the moment when the subtle body of the dying person leaves the biological body. This process can even be observed from the other world, by those who are themselves temporarily in their astral body.

Some gifted people claim to be able to help and guide those who have died and who do not immediately find their way to the other world.

There are also those who claim to have experienced a descent into hell, and that they can contact dead souls in the underworld. The shamans go even further: they tell us that they can also act as mediators. They try to convince the inhabitants of the underground world to free the people they keep in captivity through negotiations and sacrifices. Once released, then these people heal.

These are remarkable testimonies, which can be found throughout all times and in almost all places. However, it is quite clear that any nominalist axiomatic does not attribute any real value to all of this.

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